

Neon Parc is proud to present an exhibition by the late Los Angeles artist Mike Kelley (1954 – 2012) consisting of *Pansy Metal/Clovered Hoof*, a series oversized silk banners, and seminal video works.

This will be the first solo exhibition of Mike Kelley in Australia and the most significant showing of his work since his inclusion in the 5th Sydney Biennial in 1984. Considered to be one of the most influential artists of our time, Neon Parc Director Geoff Newton states:

“Kelley was a key contemporary artist whose confluence of post-punk, high art, and social critique reverberates through contemporary art practice today”.

His practice explores sexuality, class, modernism and transcendence, which he casts in a bleak rawness and quasi-psychedelic sentiment. The banners were produced in 1989, a crucial period for contemporary art in Los Angeles which saw the emergence of key practices including Mike Kelley, Paul McCarthy, and Raymond Pettibon.

Kelley had said that:

“My entrance into the art world was through the counter-culture, where it was common practice to lift material from mass culture and ‘pervert’ it to reverse or alter its meaning...Mass culture is scrutinized to discover what is hidden, repressed, within it.”

*Pansy Metal/Clovered Hoof* riffs on the theme of clovers and their purported luck, playing on the artist’s Irish-American heritage. Loaded imagery is reconfigured into forms that are sophisticated and confrontational, including a tie dyed skull, perverted swastika, and playing cards turned macabre with the addition of bones and dripping blood. The banners were originally conceived as costumes for a performance in collaboration with the choreographer and performer Anita Pace, which was enacted to Motörhead. The heavy metal motifs that weave through the work are dually coopted and satirised.

The exhibition will also feature video works, tracking Kelley’s collaboration with seminal figures in LA contemporary art scene. As a performer, Kelley exhibits a psychodramatic intensity; his collaborative video projects inhabit a peculiarly American landscape infused with irony and pop cultural debris.

The exhibition will include a Live Program of music performances and a movie screening.

Melbourne artist Philip Brophy on 5 November at 6pm will perform Stadium, a quasi-orgiastic celebration of rhythm staged theatrically within the framework of a mock 'rock gig'. Menstruation Sisters, an avant noise band from Sydney, will perform on 19 November at 6pm. Described as putrified rock abstractions the Sisters conduct a cacophony of percussion and earthy vocals. "Unlike anything book or animal, the M.Sisters destroy wholly" - Thurston Moore, Sonic Youth. On 10 December at 6pm a screening of Mike Kelley's feature length film *Day is Done* (2005-2006) will be held at a TBC location. *Day is Done* is a carnivalesque opus, a genre smashing epic in which vampires, dancing Goths, hillbillies, mimes and demons come together in a subversive musical theatre/variety revue.

Born in Detroit, Kelley lived and worked in Los Angeles from the mid-1970s until his death. Throughout his thirty-five year career, he worked in a variety of mediums including print, video, sculpture, drawing, performance, music, photography, and painting. A prolific writer and critic himself, and his writing has been featured in numerous publications. He participated in multiple Whitney Biennials, and others held internationally and exhibited extensively throughout the United States and Europe. *Pansy Metal/Clovered Hoof* was restaged at the Stedelijk Museum in 2012 and MOMA PS.1 in 2013 in addition to other venues. A major retrospective exhibition opened at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, in 2012 and travelled to MOCA, Los Angeles and MoMA, PS.1 in 2013/14. His works are held in the world's most prestigious public and private collections, including those of MoMA and the Whitney and Guggenheim in New York, the Pinault Collection in Paris and Venice, the Reina Sofia in Madrid, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Detroit, MCA Chicago and the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris.

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