

# KÖNIG GALERIE

BJARNE MELGAARD  
RELAPSE

21 JUNE – 24 JULY  
ST. AGNES | CHAPEL

KÖNIG GALERIE is pleased to present Bjarne Melgaard's solo exhibition RELAPSE at the CHAPEL of ST. AGNES. In his new series of paintings, specially produced for this exhibition, Bjarne Melgaard brings back Les Super the Minipig, a recurring character featured in his shows in Germany since 2006.

Today, Les Super returns from his many adventures strutting his stuff in a suit and tie while behind him minipig acolytes try to coo him back into the underworld. Through this fictional figure that allegorises his own biography, Melgaard paints our relationship to a class society divided by the mirage that money and wealth provide. Yet, unlike some of his other works that showcase the darker side of human existence, these paintings are about the consequences of life at home, the hazards of love, and the fear of abandonment. In a series of three small paintings, we meet Sophie, a French bulldog, and her friend, Light Bulb Man. As the latter embraces her fondly, he can't stop himself from crying out, "You don't love me anymore."


Melgaard's paintings respond to the contemporary interest in portraiture, yet without ever representing race, gender, or identity politics. Instead, his avatars are like actors on a filmset with roles that reflect the persona that each one of us may adopt at some point in our lives. There is Light Bulb Man – now an NFT that was sold out within seconds – and other creatures, ranging from apes to tigers, pink panthers, chihuahuas, and half-dogs who perform within Melgaard's elaborate painted environments. In these new works, Les Super the Minipig plays a feral character transformed into a cute house pet yet with a wilful, sometimes aggressive instinct.

For Bjarne Melgaard, painting is about surviving in the instant. Both hating and loving the medium, he dives into the canvas and while the pigment is still wet and fragile, he forms an open space of emancipation for himself and for others. Relapse may be related to habit-forming experiences, but as he shows us in these deeply seductive paintings, it can also involve alternative forms of addiction, ones that locate intoxication in the obsessive need for affection and domestic stability. "Will we last?", he asks. "Don't you think we relapse all the time? We stumble, and then we're back in the same loop again, even if we think we've moved on."

These portraits radiate tenderness, as if Melgaard sought to capture the intensity of an encounter between two beings. Against a backdrop of superimposed rainbow colours ranging from soft lilac to acrid green, yellow, pink, and blue, we see figures scored out in black paint. These are representations of what it means to capture a moment of self-respect, to "be cool" (Guillaume Dustan) whatever the context. Melgaard shows us how intensification is not only a condition of existence but the ultimate substance of his paintings.

Melgaard has always observed and portrayed the weakness of class. In 2000, he worked on the parallel worlds of Norwegian working-class fraternities, body building practices, Black Metal subculture, and the excesses of drug use. With the exhibition BLACK LOW at Marta Herford (2002) he took this area of research to the brink of censorship. His paintings often taunt contention by showing too much cock, too much debauchery, too much depression, too many drugs, too much colour, and too much viscosity. His practice as an artist resonates with a wide range of late writers and activists from Kathy Acker (1947-1987, "Blood and Guts in Highschool"), to Elizabeth Wurtzel (1967-2020, "Prozac Nation", "A Memoir of Addiction"), and Guillaume Dustan (1965-2005, "In my Room"), and while he references their

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Penumbra  
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DENNIS OSADEBE  
Modern Magic  
LONDON  
16.06 – 16.07.2022

BOSCO SODI  
VIENNA  
01.06. – 03.07.2022

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Opening Hours  
Tue – Sat 10 AM – 6 PM  
Sun 12 PM – 6 PM

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work, he never attempts to illustrate their words. Instead, his portraits pay respect to those who have dared to confront the status quo of existence, and in so doing, to reveal the daily grind of desire and downfall.

Text: Clémentine Deliss

Bjarne Melgaard (b. 1967 in Sydney, Australia) lives and works in Oslo, Norway. His works have been shown in many international solo and group exhibitions, amongst others: the Julia Stoschek Foundation, Berlin, (2019); Deichtorhallen Hamburg - Sammlung Falckenberg, Hamburg (2019); S.M.A.K., Ghent (1996, 2019); Musée d'Art moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris (2017); Munch Museum, Oslo (2015); Sørlandets Kunstmuseum, Kristiansand, Norway (2005, 2007, 2014); Whitney Museum of Art, New York (2014); Haugar Museum of Art, Tønsberg, Norway (2005, 2012, 2013); 5th and 12th Biennale d'Art Contemporain de Lyon, Lyon (2000, 2013); La Biennale Di Venezia, 54th International Art Exhibition, Palazzo Contarini Corfù, Venice (2011); Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna (2005, 2006); Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2004); Bergen Kunsthall, Bergen (2003); Frankfurter Kunstverein, Frankfurt am Main (2002); Kunsthal Charlottenborg, Copenhagen (2000); Kunstmuseum Bonn, Bonn (1999) and Manifesta II, European Biennale of Contemporary Art, Luxemburg (1998).

Melgaard's works are part of renowned public collections, such as The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York; The National Museum, Oslo; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Munch Museum, Oslo; Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), Los Angeles; High Museum of Art, Atlanta; Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art, Oslo; Billedgalleri, Norwegian Art Council, Oslo; Haugar Art Museum, Tønsberg; KIASMA Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki; Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall, Stockholm; Malmö Konstmuseum, Bergen; Marta Herford Museum, Herford; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; Musée de Strasbourg, Strasbourg; Museet for Samtidskunst, Oslo; The National Gallery, Oslo; Collection S.M.A.K., Ghent; amongst others.



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