

BEN BROWN FINE ARTS

Press Release for Immediate Release

TONY BEVAN

Private View 11 May 2011 6 – 8 pm

12 May – 17 June 2011

Ben Brown Fine Arts is delighted to present an exhibition of new paintings by Tony Bevan, an artist who has been at the forefront of British visual arts for almost thirty years and is widely considered to be one of Britain's leading figurative painters. The exhibition highlights the artist's intense thematic investigations over the past three decades with his consistent, yet progressive focus on the human head, architectural interiors and most recently, landscapes. This exhibition is particularly exciting, as it coincides with a retrospective of five Self-Portraits by Tony Bevan at prestigious National Portrait Gallery, London which is open until 11 December 2011.

Throughout Bevan's works there is a unifying elemental structure among his new landscapes, architectural drawings, and figurative heads. In his distinctive pigment-rich skeletal forms, Bevan highlights strong angles, through the thick lines and marks of pure colour. Bevan's profound aesthetic owes much to his use of charcoal and self-produced acrylic paints. Many of his works are produced while lying flat on the ground of his studio, allowing Bevan to force the pigment into the pores of the canvas or paper.

In this exhibition, Bevan delves into three central themes of architecture, metaphysics, and self-portraiture. Bevan's self-portraits take root and inspiration from the famous series of bronzes depicting extreme facial expressions that Messerschmidt realized in the 18th century. In his psychologically imposing heads, Bevan places his own body and head at the centre of his work, going so far as to even include multiple representations of his likeness in a single work. As Paul Moorehouse, 20th Century Curator of the National Portrait Gallery London notes, *'In presenting radical approaches to the genre of portraiture, I have long felt that Bevan's way of working would add fresh insights – not least in exploring the long-held assumption that a portrait has to depict a person's features literally.'*

It is highly appropriate given the Messerschmidt show at the Louvre and Neue Galerie in New York, that Tony Bevan should pay homage to the great 18th century German-Austrian sculptor in arguably one of the strongest series he has ever created.

About Tony Bevan

Tony Bevan studied at the Bradford School of Art (1968–71) and then in London at Goldsmiths' College (1971–74) and the Slade School of Fine Art (1974–76). Since 1976, Bevan has exhibited widely, including his first solo U.S. show at L.A. Louver in 1989. Bevan has also exhibited at the ICA, London, in 1987-88; Staatsgalerie Moderner Kunst Haus der Kunst, Munich, Whitechapel Art Gallery, London and the Israel Museum, Jerusalem, 2003. A major retrospective was presented by the Institut Valencia d'Art Modern (IVAM) in Valencia, Spain in 2005.

In March 2007, Tony Bevan was elected as a Royal Academician of the Royal Academy of Arts in London. His work exists in many prominent international collections such as the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, The National Portrait Gallery and the Tate Gallery, London.

The artist will be in attendance at the Private View and is available for interviews. A catalogue is available with a text written by Paul Moorhouse, 20th Century Curator, National Portrait Gallery, London.

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