

BEN BROWN FINE ARTS

Press Release for Immediate Release

TONY BEVAN

24 May – 9 April 2011

Private View 23 May 2011 6-8:30pm

Ben Brown Fine Arts Hong Kong 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. Bevan's first foray onto the Asian art scene was in 2008, when he participated in the *Building Bridges* exhibition at the Today Art Museum in Beijing, showcasing works inspired by a recent trip to China. The current exhibition is Bevan's first solo show in Hong Kong, and 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 dovetails with a retrospective of five Self-Portraits by Tony Bevan which will open at The National Portrait Gallery, London in March 2011.

There is a direct relationship between Bevan's architectural drawings, landscapes and figurative heads. In his distinctive pigment-rich skeletal forms, Bevan highlights the structures inherent, through the thick lines and marks of pure colour. His use of charcoal and his own pure acrylic pigments gives his painting a remarkably opulent appearance and dramatic tactility. 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.

During the 1980s and 90s, Bevan developed his portraiture often working in series on individual subjects. His 'Heads' emphasize the unique structuring of the human body, often reducing portraits to a few intense strokes. These heads are often presented as floating, not to dislocate, but to remind the viewer of the all encompassing nature of the mind. Inspired by his recent travels to China, in particular his experience of the Giant Buddha of Leshan, and his ongoing interest of the 'character heads' of 18th century German-Austrian sculptor Franz Xavier Messerschmidt, the new paintings continue Bevan's exploration of self-portraiture in his practice.

Bevan's architectural interiors vary widely from vast corridors to furniture, and the stark repetition of these structural elements creates a sense of rhythm. This show includes some of Bevan's table-tops and studio tower subjects; images inspired by random assemblages of objects that the artist finds in his studio. They are composed of stark lines from mixed pigment and charcoal to produce energetic and emotive formations resembling a landscape or hillside village. Bevan effectively uses architecture and interiors in order to lead his viewer to 'the imaginative space of painting' in which both the art and the viewer can exist.

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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