

Gallerist

on view

'Bjarne Melgaard: Ignorant Transparencies' at Gavin Brown's Enterprise

By **Will Heinrich** | 10/01



Installation view. (Courtesy Gavin Brown's Enterprise)

Twelve feet tall and entirely naked except for his top hat, a cast-fiberglass Pink Panther stands in the front room of **Gavin Brown's Enterprise**. He has bloodshot eyes, dirt on his lips and fingers, bandages on his forearm and wrist, and a thickly impastoed rainbow smeared all over his back like shit. Despite his size, he retains the proportions of a small plastic toy, but the emaciation that makes his elbows and knees so pointy also lends him a seedy, spendthrift glamour, highlighting his archetypal core by burning away the inessential. Swimming around the green and brown walls, their projecting black fins like silhouettes of his own nose or churning omens of the black hole beneath the infinitely solipsistic monotony of his addiction, are a dozen or so cartoon sharks. With a jaunty panache inseparable from self-destruction, he carefully cocks one pink pinky over his blue glass meth pipe.

It's unclear whether he can see anything other than himself, or anyway the torrent that drives him to try to find and escape himself in others, but he is facing, at least, the doorway to the next room, beyond which is something like a nightmare Muppet Mardi Gras. Any of five patchwork Panther effigies dressed in colorful cast-offs and scraps, like fully unsublimated Lost Boys, all of them about the height of a tall man, lording it over the room of keys, loose coins, empty perfume bottles, dioramas and full bottles of Dr. Bronner's Magic Soap, with lamps, rugs, tables and rubber furniture by Jack Craig, Misha Kahn, Max Lamb, Kwangho Lee and Katie Stout, could look as cocky as the giant in the front, but the repetition erases them. More self-conscious poses, executed in acrylic on quartz, salt and sugar, in cockeyed wooden-block frames inspired by bismuth crystals, look down from the walls. Expressionist oil-paint exposures of the same face fill the next room, with outfit collaborations by fashion duo Eckhaus Latta, inside the pink orifice of the giant Pepto Bismol bottle that serves as a throne for the most stylish of the Panthers plays the video "Pepto Abysmal," made for the show by Gabe Bartalos. A stop-motion Pepto bottle in a remote, frozen cabin vomits up shiny bismuth crystals and gets back in the pink of health when he bottoms for another cocky Panther, this one wearing only a leather jacket.



Installation view. (Courtesy Gavin Brown's Enterprise)

This kind of explosive discontinuity, like its claustrophobic color, at once so unguardedly sexual and so thoroughly artificial, so frantic to get away from itself and so relentlessly fixated on the mirror, is a performance that can't be faked. (Through Oct. 26)