

Art & Design

ART IN REVIEW

Bjarne Melgaard

'Ignorant Transparencies'

Gavin Brown's Enterprise
620 Greenwich Street,
at Leroy Street, West Village
Through Oct. 26

Some fiction writers speak of a novel's first draft as the vomiting stage. In the art realm, Bjarne Melgaard is a projectile vomiter, and like Linda Blair in "The Exorcist," he seems possessed by a demonic force.

Mr. Melgaard unleashes his infernal id here in an exuberantly messy, three-room onslaught of sculptures, paintings and instal-



THOMAS MUELLER, COURTESY THE ARTIST AND GAVIN BROWN'S ENTERPRISE

The Pink Panther appears in various forms in Bjarne Melgaard's show at Gavin Brown's Enterprise.

lations. At the center of the first gallery stands a 12-foot-tall representation of a jaunty, top-hatted, crystal-meth-smoking Pink Panther slathered here and there with thick paint. A mural on one wall has the blurry image of an approaching woman above big, white letters spelling, "You are a monster sometimes."

The second, darkened room, including sofas and tiger-theme carpets, gives the impression of a comic horror-movie hotel lounge. There are seated Pink Panther figures in fanciful costumes holding literary and philosophical paperbacks; Pink Panther portraits made on surfaces of ground quartz and rock salt; and doll houses filled with little figures and all kinds of rubbish that look as if made by an insane person.

The third room presents cartoon-expressionist paintings, much enlarged gay pornographic photographs on polyester banners and, taped up here and there, fascinating, typewritten accounts of disaffected, sexually frustrated young people that sound like case studies by a cruel psychotherapist. All of this is exciting in many of its details but confusing and enervating as a whole. It's hard to say what Mr. Melgaard is getting at. Is he a Wildean dandy, a transgressive expressionist or a self-loathing narcissist? Perhaps he's all of those. What he's not is a good digester.

KEN JOHNSON