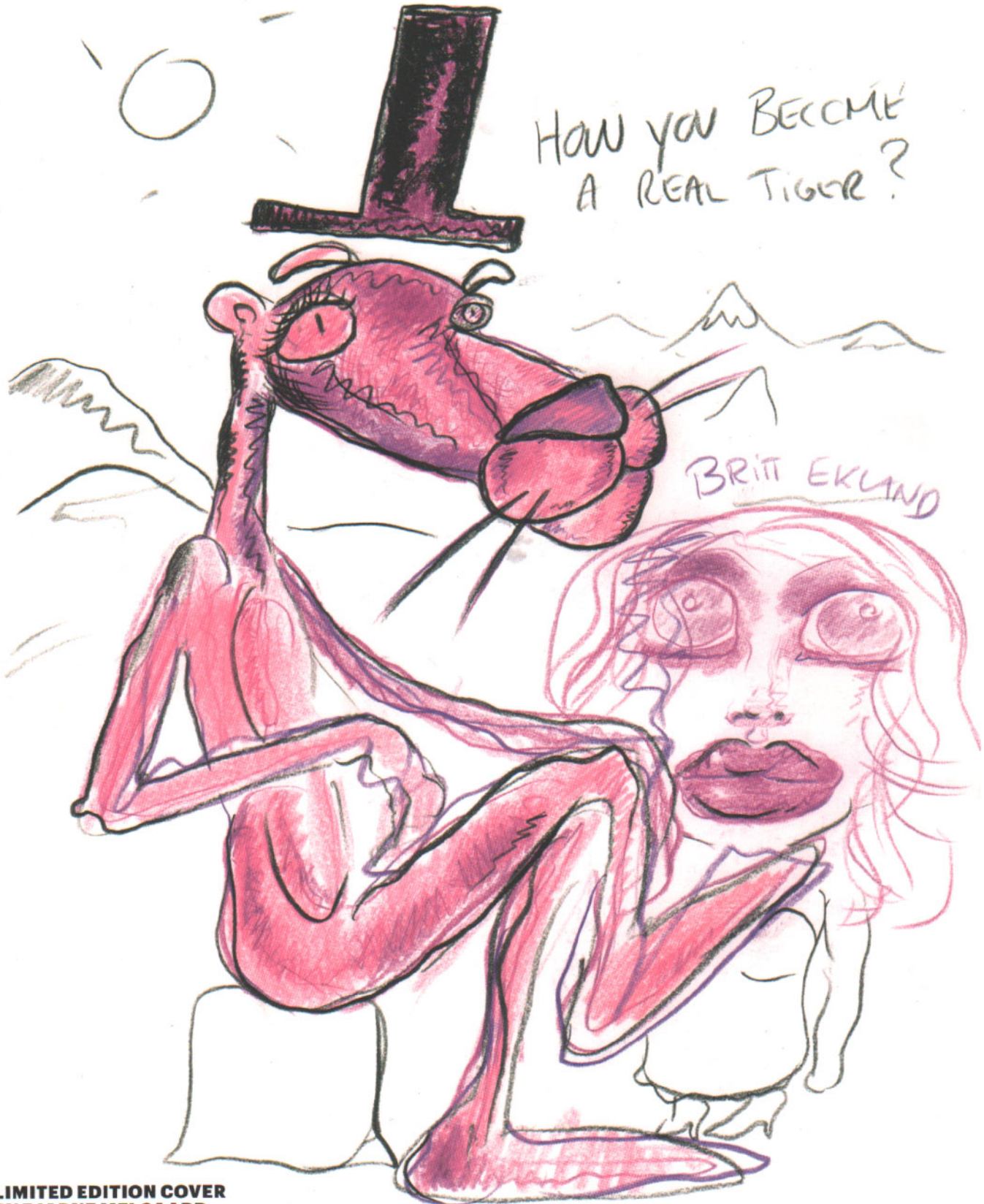


Wallpaper*

DECEMBER 2012

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LIMITED EDITION COVER
BY BJARNE MELGAARD

070 | ART

PRETTY IN PINK
The artist Bjarne Melgaard
in his Brooklyn studio,
wearing his own
custom-made suit by Brioni



Bjarne free

From homoeroticism to sadomasochism to HIV and Aids, there isn't a taboo subject that New York-based Norwegian artist Bjarne Melgaard isn't afraid to let his imagination loose on

PHOTOGRAPHY: FRANCOIS DISCHINGER WRITER: MARINA CASHDAN PRODUCER: MICHAEL REYNOLDS

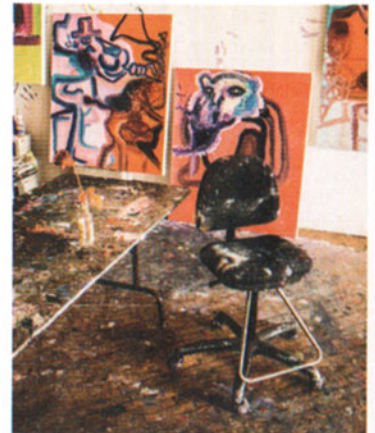




of falling in and out of love with the art world (and the art world falling in and out of love with him). Eventually he says he didn't care any more. 'Are you supposed to be this well-behaved, well-proportioned, well-received artist that people are supposed to place? For me it was important to really disfigure that and also to make it less obvious about what kind of roles I had in the art world.'

In the upper gallery at the ICA, Melgaard disfigures that notion even further, with a series of large-scale paintings and figurative sculptures that he made with a group of untrained artists who suffer from schizophrenia and other mental/emotional disabilities. Earlier this year, Melgaard worked with them in his Brooklyn studio, a refreshing detachment from the art world. 'I was very interested

ARTISTIC LICENCE
 Above, artist Richard Munson and Melgaard on 'Bed Couch' by Friedrich Kiesler, upholstered by Backhausen, with fabric designed by Melgaard, for Wittmann. On the wall is two parts of Melgaard's *You Scare Me* triptych. Top right, the artist's work in progress. Right, Melgaard's limited-edition cover featuring the Pink Panther and Britt Ekland, available to subscribers, see Wallpaper.com
 ★ Visit Wallpaper.com to see a gallery of Melgaard's work



in the total non-professional attitude towards art,' he says. The Tic Tac-orange walls on which the paintings hang, the textile-hewn carpet (made by Melgaard, who has worked with Maharishi in London), and the Sørenhøttedesigned sculptural furniture is how Melgaard imagines the interior of his house will be.

Imagination is a big part of Melgaard's work, which he allows to run even wilder in his novels. His current show in New York's Luxembourg & Dayan gallery, is the presentation of his most recent (and first officially published) novel, *A New Novel*. The non-linear narrative follows the protagonist's infatuation with a doorman and includes characters like Savannah, a porn star, and three men in suits. The exhibition comprises over 90 dolls of different sizes – made from fabric, wire, papier mâché, foam – all interpretations of these characters through the minds (and hands) of collaborators including Jessica Scott, Gabe Bartalos and Jojo Baby. The dolls are installed as various vignettes where custom-made furniture and stacks of the novel serve as the stage. Designers Hernando Lazaro and Jack McCollough of Proenza Schouler collaborated on a capsule collection of clothing based on the characters of the novel; and Billy Cotton worked on the furniture and rug, using Proenza Schouler and Ossie Clark textiles. There's also an animated film and a series of tiger paintings and abstract small-scale oil paintings by Melgaard, who said he sees the show as furthering 'the existential feeling of pain or confusion'.

However, while his novels, films and installations revolve around these questionably real stories, Melgaard rarely directly reveals his own. 'I'm actually a very private person,' he confides. 'I'm more interested in telling a good story than a boring truth.' ★

'A House To Die In' is on show at the ICA until 18 November, www.ica.org.uk. *'A New Novel'* is on show at Luxembourg & Dayan until 22 December, luxembourgdayan.com