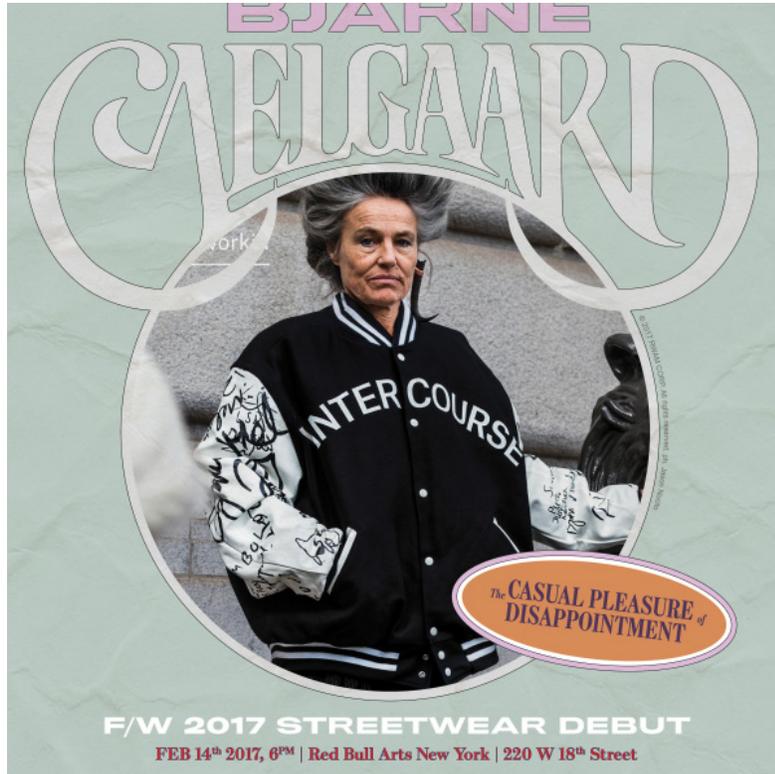


BJARNE MELGAARD

The Casual Pleasure of Disappointment



Above: © Bjarne Melgaard, muppet in collaboration with Jim Henson Company and Babak Radboy, 2016. Image courtesy of Red Bull Arts New York.

February 11 - February 19, 2017

Bjarne Melgaard & BJØRG
The Casual Pleasure of Disappointment
Gavin Brown's enterprise
291 Grand Street, New York

February 14, 2017, 5-8PM

The Purge
Red Bull Arts New York

ON VIEW:

February 16 - April 9, 2017

The Casual Pleasure of Disappointment
Red Bull Arts New York

"Bjarne Melgaard is really a 'bad dad.' Though as much as this is truly his character and not some contrived act, he knows, too, that 'bad dad' is also a canonic artist subjectivity— an art world meme that remains in circulation because it allows in social violence and public transgression, elements that those who reside in the protected, connection-ist culture sphere seem to love or at least love to hate."

— Caroline Busta,
"In The Name of The Father"

(NEW YORK - January 10, 2016) — **Red Bull Arts New York** is pleased to announce that its inaugural exhibition, under its new moniker, will be the first large-scale presentation of Norwegian artist **Bjarne Melgaard's** ongoing project, ***The Casual Pleasure of Disappointment.***

Coinciding with New York Fashion Week, Melgaard launches ***The Casual Pleasure of Disappointment,*** an unrelenting multi-site, multi-night, culmination of his ongoing 'fashion' project. Centered around Red Bull Arts New York, which Melgaard and company have transformed into a multilevel psycho-pathological department store that opens to the public on February 16, Gavin Brown's enterprise will function as the jewelry department – hosting the American launch of his collaboration with jeweler Bjørg Nordli-Mathisen (BJØRG). The same collaborative jewelry collection made its European debut at the Astrup Fearnley Museum this past November in Oslo.

Produced in collaboration with creative director **Babak Radboy,** the exhibition will feature a presentation of the eponymous menswear/unisex clothing line, ***The Casual Pleasure of Disappointment,*** which violently embraces the obsessive and self-destructive aspects of fashion and consumerism. For Melgaard, fashion is a vague nothing at the intersection of a subject and an object — between inadequacy, self-deceit, victimization, ethical compromise, intellectual humiliation, financial/romantic entanglements and corporeal decay — driven by an infinite cycle of disappointment and desire.



Red Bull Arts New York will be transformed into a derelict department store populated by an army of genetically enhanced mannequins in bespoke looks produced in collaboration with artist/fashion stylist **Avena Gallagher**.

Returning the space to its previous life as the site of the Barneys Co-op, Melgaard's New York becomes a total environment to facilitate an emotional and physical purge in which the artist will give away — free of charge to the public — the indefensible quantity of designer fashion and high-end streetwear he has amassed over the years.

Debuting as part of New York Fashion Week, Fall/Winter 2017, the launch of the *Melgaard* brand suggests the retirement of Bjarne Melgaard as a fine artist, abandoning the humiliating context of the exhibition platform for the much worse context of cult streetwear: a market pretending to be a community, pretending to be a violent assault on reproduction.

Melgaard poses Narcotic Anonymous as the ultimate streetwear brand — with its decentralized structure, in which deep individual solidarities, an ideology, a program and a shared experience of trauma crystalize in an ensemble of idiotic symbols and slogans, and form a network of distribution and production uniquely separate from the rest of society. In its place, Melgaard projects an entrée of confessional communities based on his most self-serving and subjective opinions:

A collection of sweats and track jackets devoted to building solidarity between older men of means against the emotional and financial exploitation perpetrated by the young — with slogans like, “The more you pay, the less they care” and “Your Loans, Your Problems.”

An all black collection of threadbare T-shirts and bombers give voice and cause to practicing drug users — against the trite reductionism, self-delusion and anti-emancipatory stupor of 12 step programs.

An orange ensemble of hoodies, flight jackets and T's revive the militant queer Bash Back movement of the early 2000s — advocating the necessity of armed struggle for queer liberation and rejecting the homonationalism, which has measured progress by the right to marry, have children, serve in the military and work (all institutions which must be destroyed). And other things.

Adopting the strategies of commercial marketing, ***The Casual Pleasure of Disappointment*** will be accompanied by a suite of fashion editorials, look books, and brand identities, which will dress the windows of the installation. A music video made in collaboration with Jim Henson Company will be on view within the exhibition. Available for sale at the gift shop will be a limited edition magazine-cum-exhibition catalog containing dozens of self-contained booklets, posters, and ephemera featuring photos, drawings, texts and collaborations including Roe Ethridge, Jason Nocito, Miguel Adrover, Heji Shin and more.

Related Programming

This Valentines Day, ahead of the US debut of his ongoing project, *The Casual Pleasure of Disappointment*, Bjarne Melgaard will be giving away his personal collection of designer fashion and streetwear FREE of charge to the public, on a first come, first serve basis. In groups of 100, the shoppers will have 15 minutes to fill their custom MELGAARD garbage bags with as much as they can carry. Once the 15 minutes are up, shoppers will be immediately evacuated from the premise. No RSVP required, free and open to the public.



The Casual Pleasure of Disappointment Collaborators

Bjarne Melgaard - Artist
Babak Radboy - Creative Director
Avena Gallagher - Stylist
Kate Hawkins – Producer
Erin Knutson – Art Director
Charlap Hyman & Herrero – Architects
Max Wolf - Chief Curator, Red Bull Arts New York
Candice Strongwater - Associate Curator, Red Bull Arts New York

About Red Bull Arts New York

An experimental, non-commercial arts space, Red Bull Arts New York is dedicated to offering new opportunities to local and international artists by supporting bold ideas and ambitious projects. Red Bull Arts New York focuses on extending the boundaries of exhibition making; supporting the production of new work by emerging and established artists; presenting historical surveys and large-scale presentations; and exploring the intellectual and philosophical provocations of our contemporary ethos. Recent projects include *TOTAL PROOF: The GALA Committee 1995-1997* (2016); *We All Love Your Life* (2016) by George Henry Longly, *BIO:DIP* (2016), a two-person solo show with Hayden Dunham and Nicolas Lobo (2016); *Scenario In The Shade* (2015) by Justin Lowe, Jonah Freeman, and Jennifer Herrema; *NEW INC End-of-Year Showcase* (2015) presented in collaboration with the New Museum; *Alone Together* (2015) by Ryder Ripps; *Spaced Out: Migration to the Interior* (2014), a group exhibition curated by Phong Bui and The Brooklyn Rail Curatorial Projects; *Living* (2014) by Peter Coffin; and *DISown: Not for Everyone* (2014), by art collective DIS and curator Agatha Wara.

About Bjarne Melgaard

Bjarne Melgaard is a Norwegian artist (b. 1967 in Sydney, Australia), who lives and works in New York. Melgaard started out in the mid 1990's with a neo expressionistic, frantic style of painting, sculpture and installation. His intense way of almost attacking the canvas with paint paired with a total control of the line where the brush strokes and splashes of paint forms a base for an explicit and sometimes offensive narrative. Organized chaos is one of the main principles both regarding composition and content. Melgaard's way of focusing on capturing the tension of the creative moment makes his stylistic role models, like Edward Munch and Emil Nolde's ever present. The variety of dazzling layers in different techniques gives the works a painterly quality that literally sweep the viewer into a myriad of color form and expression. Bjarne Melgaard's art deals with the dark side of humanity, such as self-destruction, deviant sexuality and odd religious beliefs. It provides an insight into subcultures and parallel worlds that exists alongside the world of normality. It often discusses, investigates and pushes the boundaries of societal acceptance. The work tells the story of exclusion and fear and it raises questions about instinct and passion, morality and normality. A male subject that can be seen as one of the artist's many alter egos often populates the complex and chaotic imagery. As a viewer you sometimes feel like a voyeur with total access to a strangers most intimate sphere. The same motifs and references appear over and over in Melgaard's imagery almost as an obsession: the ape, the dog, black holes and male genitals. It's almost as if the artist is trying to convince his audience by pounding his vision into their minds and it is not entirely without success - Bjarne Melgaard's art leaves few unmoved.

Melgaard has had more than forty-five solo exhibitions in leading galleries around the world. His work has been seen in numerous group shows and at international art fairs; he is a frequent curator and collaborator, has written more than a dozen novels, and produced seven films. His latest book, *A New Novel* (2012), is the first English language novel published by Norwegian publishing giant Aschehoug. Melgaard's work is owned by leading museums and art collections including, among others, the Museum of Modern Art (New York), Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art (Oslo), Sammlung Friedrichshof (Vienna), The High Art Museum (Atlanta), Billedgalleri, Norwegian Art Council (Oslo), KIASMA Museum of Contemporary Art (Helsinki), Malmö Konstmuseum (Bergen, Norway), MARTa Herford Museum (Herford, Germany), Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall (Stockholm), Munch Museum (Oslo), Museet



for Samtidskunst (Oslo), National Museum (Oslo), Stedelijk Museum (Amsterdam), Moderna Museet (Stockholm), Musée de Strasbourg (Strasbourg, France), The National Gallery (Oslo), The Rubell Family Collection (Miami), Saatchi Gallery Collection (London), and Collection S.M.A.K. Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst (Gent). In 2011, Melgaard represented Norway at La Biennale Di Venezia, 54th International Art Exhibition, Venice. He has twice participated in the Biennale de Lyon. In 2011, Melgaard was given a mid-career retrospective at the Astrup Fearnley Museum in Oslo. In 2014, Melgaard participated in The Whitney Biennial and in January 2015 Melgaard was the focus of the first of six important exhibitions at the Munch Museum in Oslo. *MELGAARD + MUNCH The end of it all has already happened* placed Edvard Munch's oeuvre in direct dialogue with works by Melgaard. In late 2016, Skira Rizzoli published the first comprehensive monograph of the artist's career.

Social, political and ideological issues are at the core of Bjarne Melgaard's oeuvre. With reference to political and social issues, often in the form of marginal and subcultural phenomena, Melgaard's art often raises provocative and critical questions.

Press Contact

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Please be advised "The Casual Pleasure of Disappointment" exhibition contains mature content. Anyone under the age of 18 must be accompanied by an adult.

