

# TONY BEVAN

## Press Release

Exhibition extended until the 23<sup>rd</sup> January, 2010

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**Michel Soskine** is pleased to present, for the second time in Madrid, a selection of recent paintings and works on paper by British artist Tony Bevan (Bradford, UK 1951). This will be Bevan third show in Spain since the impressive IVAM exhibition (Instituto Valenciano de Arte Moderno) organized in 2006 by Kosme de Barañano.

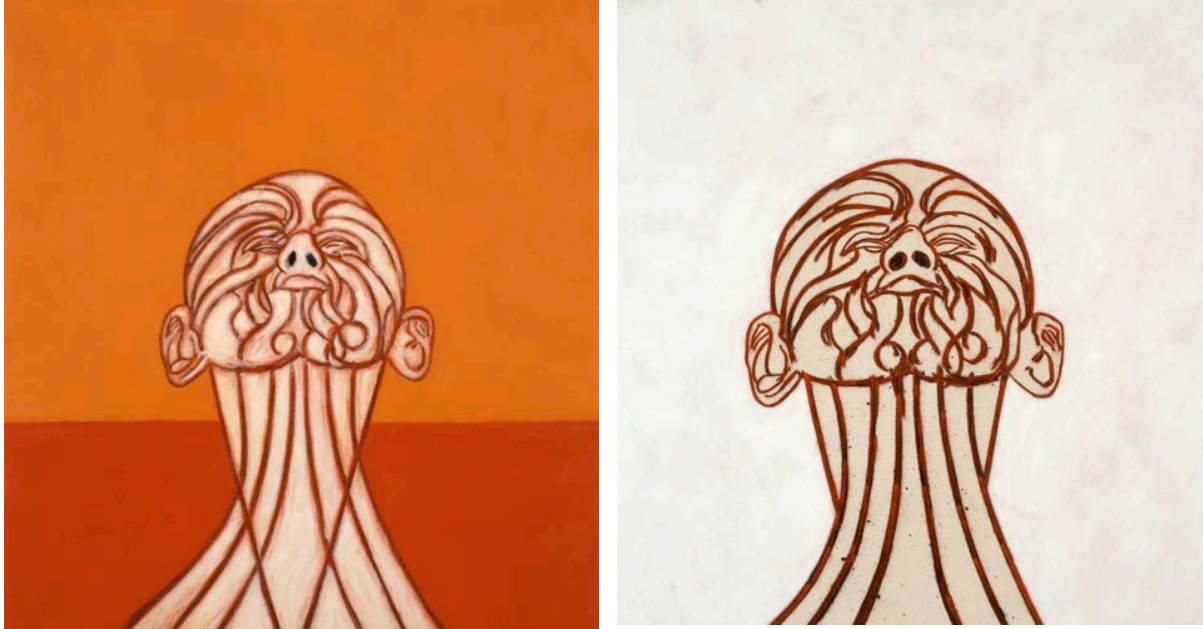
It has been said that Tony Bevan is on the broadcast frequency of Alberto Giacometti, Francis Bacon and Zoran Music: *"Like Giacometti, he is a painter of portraits and still-lives; like Music, he is a painter of human solitude: like Bacon, he is a painter for whom drawing and painting are not differentiated."*

There is a contrast between the artist traditional self made pigment mixing - *alla maniera antica* - and the modern manner in which he confronts his work: **Bevan paints on the floor**, kneeling over a non stretched canvas, after having pondered and roamed all over it. The paint is applied with all of its physical and affective load: intense colors such as red, orange and blue are used in conjunction with black charcoal, bits of it sticking out from the surface of the canvas.

Charcoal is a material/medium in which the artist recognizes himself, vigorous as his wild and physical gesture. In Bevan's painting process not only the mind but **the body is engaged**.

From his first exhibition at the Institute of Contemporary Art of London, Tony Bevan has maintained an unmistakable style. Even back from his student days at Bradford School of Art - then at Goldsmith's College and Slade School of Fine Art - the tactile nature of his drawings was a recognizable mark of Bevan's work. There is something essential and archaic in the process of working with **charcoal**. As Jon Bird remarks - on the foreword to the monographic dedicated to Bevan at the IVAM- charcoal defines the pre-history of

the image and the Pre-Historic painting. So Bevan does define his paintings, using the charcoal as their visible skeleton.



PC0910. Self Portrait after Messerschmidt, 2009. Acrylic on canvas. 110 x 105 cm  
PC0912. Self Portrait After Messerschmidt, 2009 Acrylic on canvas. 121x114 cm

Bevan intends to express **psychological states**: This exhibition will gather around three subjects, through which the artist searches for a particular kind of *reflexive existentialism*:

- **Self-portraits through Architecture:** In the "Heads", summarizing the whole body, Tony Bevan depicts the face as a landscape seen through architecture, merging both, as part of a unique inner labyrinth. The sense of space seems to always be present. Scaffoldings and building structures are in construction and intertwined. The defining architecture lines and the facial lines come together, creating a dense and vibrating rhythm. One can observe an *expressionist topography* of the artist own head, where the features are turned into incisive scars.
- **Self-portraits after F. X. Messerschmidt (1736 –1783):** These self-portraits take root and inspiration from the famous series of bronzes depicting extreme facial expressions that Messerschmidt realized in the 18th century and which can be seen at the Belvedere Museum of Vienna. Ever since Bevan came across these sculptures in the 1970's they have kept fascinating

him. Over the years, elements from the sculptures have surfaced in his paintings, not being explicit until 2009. *"The recent paintings are the first that I have directly used the sculptures as a structure for the self portraits."*

- The **Table Tops** are the third theme in this exhibition: Non-described objects over a table, from where we reckon bottles, jars, painting materials... These objects can be also read like cities or landscapes, made out of a group of lines, which make us think on the perspective problematic developed in Cézanne landscape paintings.



PC0917 Table Top. Acrylic on canvas, 2009. 140 x 170 cm

Tony Bevan lives and works in London. He has participated at the Venice and Sidney biennials and his work can be found at public collections such as the **National Portrait Gallery, the Tate Modern Gallery, The British Museum, MoMA, The Israel Museum in Jerusalem or the IVAM** among others. A major traveling exhibition is scheduled for 2010, starting at Leeds Museum and expected to travel amongst several European museums.

The artist will be present at the opening, November the 5th, from 20.00 h. Calle Padilla, 38. 1ºD. 28006. Madrid.

Until the 16th of December, 2009.

Tuesday to Saturday. 11.00 – 14.30 / 16.30 – 20.30 h.

For further information please contact the gallery:

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Still Life. White. 2009. Acrylic and charcoal on paper. 82 x 113 cm

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