

Philip Akkerman: Self-Portraits

February 9 – April 14, 2007

For immediate release

Mireille Mosler Ltd. is pleased to announce *Self-Portraits*, an exhibition of fifty self-portraits by the Dutch painter Philip Akkerman, with works from the 1980s to the present. Since 1981, Akkerman has exclusively painted self-portraits and has realized over two thousand to date.

In seventeenth century Holland, Rembrandt started to paint tronies: pictures of models, himself or a colleague, sometimes in oriental costume. They were meant as studies of expression, type, physiognomy, or any kind of interesting character like an old man, a young woman, or an exotic person, but never served as portraits. Garments that looked foreign, antique or luxurious were of interest and offered opportunities to show off painterly techniques. Rembrandt had more freedom to experiment in a tronie than in a commissioned portrait, and he used them to practice depicting different poses and expressions. Tronies were very thought after and perhaps the most famous example of this genre is Vermeer's *Girl with a Pearl Earring*.

Unequivocally, Akkerman is very much indebted to this heritage and many of his paintings reference his predecessor Rembrandt. Like an old master, Akkerman starts each painting with a preparatory drawing, followed by a thorough preparation of the panel, in order to apply several layers of glazes. However, Akkerman's restriction to his own countenance has led to an exploration of painting's possibilities and other references. These pictures bear witness to his journey through art history: from Rembrandt via Van Gogh, through pointillism and back to Jan Sanders van Hemessen. All self-portraits share a magnitude of epochs, techniques and styles.

In a certain way, Akkerman's artistic method follows a conceptual plan. Although it is easy to compare his artistic output with self-portraits by the old masters, in fact Akkerman might have more in common with Cindy Sherman's photographs. On Kawara's *Date Paintings* come to mind as well. Both Akkerman and Kawara share a rigorous methodical approach. Kawara's paintings can be perceived as purely conceptual, just as Akkerman's paintings place a great deal of importance on the virtual act of making art.

Philip Akkerman lives and works in The Hague. Akkerman has had numerous solo exhibitions in Dutch museums. In 2006, his work was shown in De Vleeshallen, Haarlem. He is included in collections of the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam and the Hirshhorn Museum, Washington D.C.

Philip Akkerman *Self Portraits* will be on view at Mireille Mosler Ltd., 35 East 67th Street. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 10:00am to 6:00pm. For more information contact (212) 249-4195 or info@mireillemoslerltd.com.