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EXHIBITION: MICHAËL BORREMANS *TRICKLAND*

DATES: February 13 – March 8, 2003
Opening reception: Thursday February 13, 6–8 PM

On February 13, the gallery will open an exhibition of new paintings and drawings by Belgian artist Michaël Borremans. This will be the artist's first solo exhibition in the United States. His work was recently included in *Pertaining to Painting*, curated by Paola Morsiani, at the Contemporary Arts Museum in Houston and at the Austin Museum of Art.

Borremans' command of his medium, both on paper and on canvas, is astonishing. He references the great figurative painters, not so much of the 20th century, but from earlier periods. Upon closer inspection, the works reveal idiosyncrasies: light sources, perspectives, points of view, croppings, distinguish these paintings and place them in a contemporary context. Borremans cites as source materials for his work old text books, early photography, pre-war American comics and of course, like so many artists today, film.

For the show at David Zwirner, the artist has made 13 paintings and 6 drawings. The two largest paintings in the show and the namesakes for the exhibition, *Trickland I* and *Trickland II*, show respectively a group of women and a group of men hunched over, while performing mysterious manual labor on a miniature landscape. Although focused on their activities, they seem completely disengaged not only from their endeavors, but also from each other and their physical environment. Here, Borremans's subjects are placed in Kafkaesque situations, where individuals are unimportant, and engage in herd-like activities, as if they are subjected to a force greater than themselves. Crucial information is deliberately withheld, and this void creates a space that is open to different levels of interpretation, and narratives.

All works in *Trickland* suggest an artificial environment and/or reality, created by human figures. While an initial reading of the work could suggest toy factories or model train landscapes, it quickly becomes clear that these constructs really hint at an alternative reality. Other paintings in the group, such as the portrait-like works, *Tempted*, *Where is Ned?*, *The Soil*, and *The Conman (Part II)*, seem to suggest that the inhabitants of *Trickland* are really puppets. His figures appear more like objects arranged in an environment rather than living organisms, and the compositions seem like frozen moments or film stills. Although no literal narrative exists between the paintings of this exhibition, a shared atmosphere prevails. The purpose of *Trickland* and the identity of the creator of these landscapes and figures, remains a mystery. Ultimately Borremans' alternative realities present a metaphor for the activity of painting and art making per se. Because what else is a figurative painting, but an alternative reality?

For additional information, please contact the gallery at 212.727-2070. If you would like to receive future press releases via email, please contact: info@davidzwirner.com