

## **PRESS RELEASE. GEORGE MELLY: THE BLIND SWIMMER.**

**A Celebration of the Life of George Melly** 1926 – 2007. An exhibition from the collection of George Melly, Curated by Michael Woods, at the **EAST WESTGALLERY**, 8 Blenheim Crescent, London W11 1NN. The exhibition will be from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> of November. 2007.

**PRIVATE VIEW:** 6.30-9.30pm, 1<sup>st</sup> November 2007.

The collection includes works by Edith Rimmington, ELT Mesens, Anthony Earnshaw, Arthur Moyses, Patrick Hughes, Adrian Henry, Maggi Hambling, Clive Barker, Philip Core, Barry Flannagan, David Bailey, Koo Stark, Litchfield, Arthur Dooley, and many more. Prices start from around £150.

A few months before he died, George Melly charged me to organise and curate an exhibition of his remaining collection. He abhorred the idea of a memorial service, but an exhibition held in his memory, where collages, drawings, paintings and sculpture, not only reflected his visual tastes, but distilled his personality and essence of self, enthused and captured his imagination.

In his many discussions with me about the planning and structure of such an exhibition, he delighted in walking me through the galleries of his mind (a perilous undertaking), setting out exactly how he wanted it to look. "Scatter everything around. Nothing must appear contrived. Randomly place objects together", he commanded, denoting a model of the early Dada and Surrealist exhibitions prevalent in Paris during the 1920's and 30's. As to the venue, he was adamant it should be the East West Gallery, partly I suspect as a token of his affection for David Solomon, a partner in the gallery, but also because he (correctly) perceived that David would give me a modicum of freedom to construct the exhibition in the style he outlined.

If George entrusted me to be a conduit (communicating vessel), through which his ideas would be translated and materialised, he must have taken into account that I would bring to the exhibition an element of my own creativity. How could I not? Therefore I have attempted to follow his instructions and become what Andre Breton termed, *The Blind Swimmer*, where eyes are closed to outside reality and one navigates through the mysterious waters of the unconscious, thus keeping faith to the surrealist spirit pertaining to the Marvellous, yet aware that such uncharted territory can lead to madness. So, in preparing and curating the exhibition, I have periodically swum to the surface for air, and a glimpse of daylight, and included certain themes and ideas of my own.

Michael Woods  
Café du Flore,  
September 2007

**Michael Woods** is available for interview, and can be contacted by tele: 020 8968 9047. Mob: 07910339378. Email: [michael.woods@walkergeorgefilms.co.uk](mailto:michael.woods@walkergeorgefilms.co.uk) For further information about the exhibition and to obtain images from the show, contact **David Solomon** at **East West Gallery**. Tele: 020 7229 7981. Email: [david@eastwestgallery.co.uk](mailto:david@eastwestgallery.co.uk) Website: [www.eastwestgallery.co.uk](http://www.eastwestgallery.co.uk)

Watch out for the new documentary about the last days of George Melly by **award winning Walkergeorgefilms**, 7<sup>th</sup> November, 2007. BBC4. For press details and images, contact **Walkergeorgefilms** Tele: 020 8743 7733, or Email: [michael.woods@walkergeorgefilms.co.uk](mailto:michael.woods@walkergeorgefilms.co.uk)