

**FOR
IMMEDIATE
RELEASE**

**AVNER BEN-GAL
NEW PAINTINGS**

September 12 - October 14, 2006

Bortolami Dayan is proud to present Avner Ben-Gal's first solo exhibition in New York. These new paintings depict various intense, often neglected locations such as agricultural fields, prisons and smoky interiors, whereby theatrical scenes play out. The scenes present ghostly, roughhewn and often low life figures that are bare and hardened. The parallel between Ben-Gal's raw way of painting and his tough, ambiguous subject matter allows a unique intensity within his paintings. Ben-Gal creates dense atmosphere and while some elements are apparent, the vagueness of the human presence, the internal spaces and the natural landscape help build intrigue, wariness and a sense of sinister oblivion.

Ben-Gal constructs the picture plane with frames and windows that separate scenes, enclose figures and delineate interior and exterior spaces. These divisions create a voyeuristic gaze within the painting and in some cases draw boundaries between the living and the dead. The living appear almost dead with their ethereal, nebulous gaze, while skeletons appear to have life. This is also true for some inanimate objects such as bones or rotary phones that create a feeling of uncertainty and anxiousness as they nearly pulse with life. The artist's interest in voodoo, religion and paganism can be felt in the dark symbols and references throughout the work.

Avner Ben-Gal was born in Ashkelon, Israel in 1966. He currently lives and works in Tel Aviv. In 2007 he will have a solo show at The Museum Fur Gegenwartskunst in Basel. Ben-Gal had a solo exhibition at Sadie Coles HQ in London, 2005. He has been in numerous group shows including, *Clandestine* at the 50th Venice Biennial, 2003, *Infinite Painting*, Villa Manin, Codroipo, 2006 and *Dark*, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, 2006.

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