

**LEO KOENIG INC.**

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*For Immediate Release:*

**Bill Saylor**

**"Softail-Project,"**

June 17 through July 26, 2003

Opening reception Tuesday, June 17, 6-8 pm.

Leo Koenig Inc. is pleased to announce the opening of an exhibition of new works by Bill Saylor entitled, "Softail-Project." For his second show at the gallery, Saylor presents a series of paintings, drawings and sculptures that revolve around his current interests in biker lore and imagery and the clash between nature and encroaching urban development. The images Saylor uses in his work seem mined from a collective psyche of a distinctly American counter-culture. They are ubiquitous, yet very personalized excerpts from a visual diary that comprises a hallucinatory landscape of incongruous beauty.

Saylor's process begins and ends with drawings. The drawings act as a kind of shorthand, a stream of consciousness informed by everything from, logos, tabloid headlines, texts from scientific, and sci-fi magazines, comics and visuals from satellite transmissions. Culled from imagination as well as his surroundings, a plethora of absurdist combinations arise and take form in paintings and sculptures as well. Strangely consuming compositions emerge, stemming from such imagistic memories as watching the picturesque Cayahoga river instantaneously combust from pollutants skimming the surface, to dirt bike riding in abandoned rock quarries, to a recent visit to Centralia, PA, where a coal mine has been burning, and is expected to burn for at least the next 40 years. It is this knife's edge where beauty and disquiet exists that Saylor initiates his journey.

The show's title becomes a reference point. "Softail Project" emanates from a motorcycle term meaning "hidden suspension." Technically, it is a kind of engineering that allows a chopper to ride comfortably while remaining an imminently sculptural machine. Saylor is enticed by the idea of "hidden suspension" as a key aspect that draws one to a work of art. It is this aspect that allows the viewer to accompany an artist through his/her personal topography. This tension between high and low, between action and stasis, between exuberance and concentration is the balancing act visible in each of Saylor's works. His use of counter-culture iconography allows a deceptively easy access into works that have ties to German expressionism, and Viennese action drawing, coupled with the muscularity and freedom exhibited in American Ab-Ex painting.

The element of risk remains a constant and key to Saylor's work. In many examples, Saylor seems to hover precariously between two gravitational axes. Sometimes, one may fear that he has momentarily veered a little too far with a certain gesture, color or form. But within another moment, the composition rights itself and makes perfect sense. For the artist, it is within this risk that lies the adventure.

Bill Saylor has been included in various exhibitions in the US and in Europe, including Eleni Koroneou Gallery in Athens, Voges & Partner in Frankfurt and Asbaek Gallery in Copenhagen. He holds a BFA from Cal State Long Beach. Bill Saylor lives and works in New York City.

Gallery hours are Tues.-Saturday, 10-6 pm. For more info/visuals, please contact the gallery.