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# DIRK WESTPHAL

## *Super Über*

*Very Extreme, Maybe Even Hysterical*  
C-print, edition of 5  
40 x 50 inches

MARCH 19–APRIL 18, 2009

OPENING: THURSDAY, MARCH 19, 6–8PM

Mixed Greens is thrilled to announce a solo exhibition by Dirk Westphal. This show will mark the completion of Westphal's fish series and serve as a swan song to the body of work with which he is most associated.

Almost a decade ago, Mixed Greens began working with Westphal's bizarre and irresistible photographs of mutant goldfish. Each photo commented on different perceptions of natural and manmade beauty with wit and virtuosity. Subsequently, Westphal staged shark sightings, built surfboards, made sculptures from snack cakes, participated in gladiator brawls, and explored the brilliance of medicinal fluids. However, despite the various bodies of work in which Westphal investigated artificiality, he consistently returned to fish collecting, husbandry, wrangling, and documenting, each time with a different point of view.

Westphal renders overbred fish (from his neighborhood in Chinatown, NYC) in brilliant color and hyper detail on glowing white backgrounds. Anachronistic, large-format cameras and custom-made posing tanks allow him to capture features and distinctive markings that elude the naked eye and provide land-bound viewers with a startlingly intimate glimpse into a fish's private world. To add a level of dark comedy, Westphal employs various titling techniques and adopts classic photographic approaches—from police-style profiles to fat cat tycoon poses. While some images are complete "portraits," his most

recent images verge on the abstract and have more in common with painting than the hard-edged, technical photography that creates them. Final prints are embedded in acrylic, which mimics the sheen of still, clear water and imbues the fish with monumental beauty and grace.

After much thought, Westphal has decided to turn his attention to other subjects. So *Super Über* not only represents the "best of" his recent fish photos, but it also marks an end to the subject in this form. Using the play on words from the German 'über,' meaning not only 'above,' but literally 'over and or above,' Westphal is closing this chapter in his artistic career with a large-scale and breathtaking final farewell.

*Dirk Westphal received his MFA from the California Institute Of The Arts. His solo shows include Mixed Greens (2004, 2006), Tim Olsen Gallery in Sydney, Australia (2003, 2005, 2008), Harley Baldwin Gallery in Aspen, Colorado (2002, 2007), and Cat Street Gallery in Hong Kong (2007). Group exhibition venues include the Susquehanna Art Museum, The Arts Club of Washington DC, The Museum of the City of New York, Irvine Contemporary in Washington DC, Black and White Gallery in Brooklyn, Art In General in New York City, and Exit Art in New York City. His work has been featured in The New York Times, Paper Magazine, the New York Post, Metropolitan Home, Art in America and artforum.com.*