

## FELIS STELLA



*Marcel Breuer  
Chaise, 1935-36  
Embroidery on cotton washcloth, 12"x12"*

## IKEA My House: Part I

**April 19 – May 17, 2008**  
**Reception: Saturday, April 19, 7 – 10 pm**

L2kontemporary Gallery is pleased to present our first solo exhibition from **Felis Stella**, Artist, Designer and celebrated member of the L.A. Art Girls, *IKEA My House: Part I*. The exhibit opens April 19, and continues through May 17.

*post industrial art for the post industrial age*

Felis Stella was born in a country that no longer exists – the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. During the Cold War between the USA and the USSR, both countries generated ongoing propaganda that highlighted the importance of image making. In the USA, the world of high art reflected the cult of personality and the political and economic bravado of the West, dwarfing the more intimate and less profitable world of craft. In the Soviet Union, standardized designs proliferated, depersonalizing homes similarly stripped of an individual aesthetic. Today, Christie's and Sotheby's happily sell one-of-a-kind masterpieces to Russian billionaires, while a Big Mac tastes exactly the same in Moscow and in Washington D.C.

Stella learned the art of needlepoint from her grandmother as a way to imbue the drab mass-produced Soviet clothing with a unique personal expression. In *Ikea My House: Part I*, she deftly embroiders portraits of influential economic minds and images of designer furnishings onto Ikea washcloths. The twenty-five brightly colored cloths are mounted like stretched canvas and presented as paintings, collapsing the distance between mass production and the rarified images, sentient or manufactured. The intense monochromatic backgrounds are inimical to Minimalism and its more popular offspring – the clear look of Mid-Century Modern classic design icons. The sixteen portraits are exhibited in a chronological line, while the nine designer furnishings occupy a playful tic-tac-toe grid.

Stella's "tapestries," down to their very fibers, stitch a through-line connecting the past centuries' disparate producers of the means of production and their philosophical systems. The visages of such theoreticians and practitioners as Adam Smith, Karl Marx, Ray Kroc, Fidel Castro and Ingvar Kamprad (Founder of IKEA) adorn cheap cotton washcloths as would silk monograms on expensive linen towels. The furnishings, which at a first glance resemble popular items sold at any neighborhood Ikea, are carefully chosen iconic forms designed by such visionaries as Le Corbusier, Marcel Breuer, Isamu Noguchi, Charles and Ray Eames and Eero Saarinen.

In the third section of the exhibition, Stella draws inspiration from the work of Danish cartoonist Herluf Bidstrup, whose wordless comic strips used everyday scenes to lampoon the flaws inherent in both Fascist and Capitalist systems. Stella, who was first introduced to Bidstrup's satire at a tender age of three, pays homage to his comic drawing style on four large bath towels: she depicts the handyman from the Ikea instruction manual (likewise mute and yet universally understood) being driven to drink out of frustration in attempting to assemble the aptly named "Docent" entertainment wall unit. The four panels are accompanied by a video recording of the artist assembling a similar wall unit with her friends. The viewers are invited to sit back and relax in a faux Breuer chaise – dimly lit by a faux Henningsen Artichoke lamp – and enjoy the do-it-yourself experience. Viewer discretion advised: this program uses strong language and repetitive motion. Välkommande! Welcome to *IKEA My House: Part I*.

For further information, contact **L2kontemporary Gallery** at **626-319-3661**