

**LEO KOENIG INC.**

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For Immediate Release:

**Aidas Bareikis**

“Rise Up Solitude”

February 10<sup>th</sup> Through March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2004

Leo Koenig Inc. is pleased to announce the opening of an exhibition of new works by Aidas Bareikis entitled “Rise Up, Solitude”. In sharp contrast to his previous exhibitions which are usually room sized installations, this time, Bareikis has fashioned seven free standing figures. As if awakened from a sleep of reason, Bareikis' figures emerge as the inhabitants of a subconscious fraught with the implications of both a ferociously decadent past as well as the promise of an eternally tormented future. Far from being menacing however, the figures convey instead, a sense of grotesque jubilation, of lonely but comic monsters.

In the tradition of artists such as Dieter Roth, Bareikis is an archiver of throw-away items. His constructions are made entirely of things found discarded on the street or purchased at ubiquitous 99-cent stores, flea markets and thrift shops. He chooses objects that “look weird but also betray a certain cruel exploitation in their purpose or in the way that they were manufactured”, Bareikis states. In addition, these objects are not only selected, but altered in some way. Obsessed with notions of alchemy, Bareikis subjects his collections to a succession of trials by fire or other transforming treatment, including (but not limited to) chemical, pressure and exposure. In many cases color is achieved through the introduction of food-based organic materials such as coffee and soy sauce.

Humanity's struggle with it's history as it leaps into the future seems a pervasive aspect of Bareikis' work. Contemporary anachronisms are collected and transformed into a tableaux of orchestrated chaos. Bareikis surveys the detritus resulting from consumer culture, environmental decay and decomposition alongside the philosophical and emotional limbo modern society can produce. The artist has confined his creations to a perceptual purgatory, between a world of excess and exploitation and one of conscience and intent. As well, Bareikis re-asserts that it is the artist role, not only to produce work that excites the eye, but also to expose the monsters created by the human condition.

Aidas Bareikis was born in Vilnius, Lithuania in 1967 and graduated from the Vilnius Art Academy in 1993. He came to America the same year and completed the MFA program from Hunter College in 1997. He was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship and has been the recipient of a Soros Foundation Grant. Bareikis has had solo exhibitions at the Zacheta Center for Contemporary Art, Warsaw, Poland and at the Contemporary Art Center in Vilnius. In addition he has participated in shows such as “Generation Z,” and “Greater New York” at PS1/MOMA “Crossing the Line” at the Queens Museum. Aidas Bareikis lives and works in New York City. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 10-6 pm. For more information or visuals, please contact Elizabeth Balogh or Kai Heinze at the gallery.