

For Immediate Release:

Martin Kippenberger and Marko Lehanka

"Today: Spicesbreadcompetitioneating" or "Don't call me, I'll call you"

December 16th through February 3, 2001

Opening reception Saturday December 16, 6-9pm

Leo Koenig Inc. is pleased to announce an exhibition of works by **Martin Kippenberger** and **Marko Lehanka**.

Without question, Martin Kippenberger is considered to be among the most diverse, unpredictable and prolific artists of our time. Before his untimely death in 1997, Kippenberger initiated a freedom and levity within contemporary art practice that continues to confound and inspire. The works on view for this exhibition were created in 1991 in Tokyo, Japan. Highlighted will be a series of large-scale drypoint etchings. Focusing on "Americana," the etchings are extremely detailed and resolved. In addition, a box sculpture, rubber relief on canvas and a unique handmade book will be on view. This will be the first time these pieces are shown in the U.S.

Marko Lehanka continues with this tradition of wry wit and unexpected juxtapositioning. For this show Lehanka will be exhibiting sculptures which were previously on view at the Museum of Modern Art in Frankfurt, Germany. One sculpture is based on an Albrecht Durer drawing for *Peasants Monument*. In the drawing, Durer assembles a totem of agricultural products and equipment in the form of trophies. The drawing is topped by a pathetic peasant with a sword in his back, illustrating the rift between ruling powers and those who are ruled over, a composition of insoluble, diametrically opposed interests.

In Lehanka's updated version, there is also a collection of everyday farm products and tools stacked upon each other. The present day protagonist atop Lehanka's totem smokes a cigarette and is content, seemingly lost in thought. The figure is not representative of the rich or powerful, but obviously his fate is not as tragic as the peasant he is modeled after. There is no life and death struggle to signify, perhaps just a hint of resignation amidst dry goods and the status quo.

In another piece, constructed wooden benches will follow along one side of the gallery painted in a very specific set of colors. When asked about the reasoning for the colors, Lehanka responded that before making the benches, he had a dream that he was going to take a trip to the Caribbean (with the money he would make from the sale of the benches), and these are the colors of the Caribbean. This response, though typifying his approach, belies the complexity of the resulting piece. The benches with these undeniably inviting colors, effectively compel visitors to sit and talk.

What in fact drives Lehanka's work is conversation. Whether it be replying to historical statements or wry commentary on day-to-day life, Lehanka's responses are delivered in a relaxed unself-conscious manner, similar to a chat with an old friend. Not unlike a poet, he can infuse meanings that are at once absurd and profound. Above all, he is what all great conversationalists are, a good listener, one who is able to make succinct observations and convey them without sentimentality.

Marko Lehanka has exhibited extensively in Europe including the Museum of Modern Art in Frankfurt, Kunstmuseum Lucerne and in *Forwart* at the Banque Brussels. This is his first exhibition in the United States.

Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 10-6 pm. The gallery will be closed Christmas and open by appointment only until normal gallery hours resume on Jan. 2nd. For more information or visuals, please contact Leo Koenig or Elizabeth Balogh at the gallery.