

Paul Renner "Die Weihung Der Bar / The Consecration Of The Bar" and Hermann Nitsch "Die Apotheke / The Pharmacy"

March 25 – April 30, 2011

541 W. 23rd Street

Leo Koenig Inc. presents an exhibition by the notoriously theatrical Austrian artist, Hermann Nitsch. The gallery will be exhibiting paintings by the artist alongside a virtual "cabinet of curiosities." The cabinets, which line the walls of the back of the space, house all manner of accoutrements for Hermann Nitsch's performances slated for the evening of the 25th and midday on the 26th.

Nitsch will select "ingredients" lined within the cabinets, such as paint, spices, oils, pigment and vestments, all from previous performances, and will create a work atop a long table covered with white cloth. Nitsch has always believed that his performances should engage all the senses, sight, smell, taste, and not least of all sound. With this in mind, the Nitsch Quintetto will be accompanying Nitsch's action. The Quintetto is comprised of 5 musicians that have worked with Nitsch for several years, performing new compositions created by Nitsch specifically for this event.

Several large-scale, dynamic paintings made between the years of 1973 and 2000 will be on display. Symbolic of ritual, these works create an animated proscenium for the performances (or their evidence) further inside the space. The paintings stand as both embodiment and record of Nitsch's actions.

The catalyst for Nitsch's theatrical and often symbolically violent actions is the belief that humankind's instincts have been buried, anesthetized or sublimated by contemporary modes and the media. Knitting together threads from the psychoanalytical theories of Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung and Wilhelm Reich with rituals from the Catholic Church, and the decadence of the cult of Dionysus, Nitsch continues to perform ritualized actions directed towards the releasing of repressed energy in both the participants and the audience.

Hermann Nitsch's works are in the collections of some of the world's most prominent museums such as the Museum of Modern Art, NY, The Guggenheim Collection, the Walker Art Center N.Y., the Tate Gallery, London, and the Georges Pompidou in Paris to name but a few. Most recently, Hermann Nitsch has shown at Mike Weiss Gallery, in N.Y. and at the Denver Art Museum in Colorado. This exhibition is conceived in collaboration with Mike Weiss Gallery.

Concurrent with Hermann Nitsch's exhibition, Leo Koenig Inc. Projekte is pleased to present a solo exhibition by Austrian artist Paul Renner. "The Consecration of the Bar" is an exhibition in dialogue with the "Die Apotheke / The Pharmacy". This is Mr. Renner's second show at Leo Koenig Inc.

At the center of Renner's installation is a bar filled with various kinds of Austrian Schnapps, homemade pates and marinated fruits contained in laboratory vessels, distillation flasks, and Murano glass. Inspired by Renner's designs, the artist Roland Adlassnigg created the bar counter, and Murano glass expert Massimo Lunardon designed various glass vessels and a special schnapps glass. The bar will remain open, serving drinks until the stock has run out, that is until it has been drunk dry, and all the food has been devoured. This process is what Renner refers to as an applied form of social sculpture and could last several days. This work carries on Renner's interest in those historical moments when the culture

becomes so refined that it falls back into itself...Decadence.

The exhibition also presents Renner's latest series of paintings, "Tableau Personnel." These works revolve around the most essential concepts of Renner's creative work and aim to transform the bar into something of the sublime.

The pairing of the artists Paul Renner and Hermann Nitsch is no accident. The two artists have a long history. Mr. Renner was Hermann Nitsch's assistant in the 1970's and directed Nitsch's three-day action performance in 1984. He has been cooking at Nitsch's actions since 2000. The artists collaborated in Renner's *Theatrum Anonomicim* at the Kunsthaus Bregenz (Austria) in 2007. In 2004, Paul Renner, Medlar Lucan and Dorian Gray staged special performances called the "Hellfire Touring Club" which traveled through locales in Europe, including the Kunsthalle Wien. Paul Renner will be creating another social sculpture at the Timken Museum of Art, San Diego.