

Leo Koenig Inc.

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For Immediate Release:

**Inaugural Exhibition at new space: "Sexual Sunrise," new works by Tony Matelli
December 6 through January 13, opening reception December 6, 6-9pm**

Leo Koenig Inc. is happy to announce the opening of our new space at 249 Centre Street. For our inaugural exhibition, we are pleased to present "Sexual Sunrise," new works by Tony Matelli. For this exhibition, Matelli offers works that are at once witty, self-mocking caricatures while remaining a vaguely troubling self-portraiture. Directly addressing the isolated process of self-reflection, the sculptures convey the warping effects this process can sometimes take on one's mirrored psyche.

In "Sexual Sunrise," there are four works which each represent a stage in a developing self-awareness. In the first state of isolation, the gallery walls are surrounded by an endless horizon. In effect, Matelli transforms the gallery into a self contained island whose sole inhabitants are his own multiple, ever-distorting visages.

The first inhabitant one encounters is "The Hunter." This sculpture depicts Matelli, complete with oversized head and exaggerated features. In one hand is a coil of rope with which he is setting a trap while the other hand is held up to his nose as he vigorously sniffs it. Creeping through the woods, spurred by inspiration or merely habit, Matelli is obviously hot on the trail of something unknown.

Next, there is "Sexual Sunrise," a combination of digital prints and reflective foil on canvas. Located on the eastern wall just above the ocean horizon, this picture depicts dozens of ecstatic faces bursting from behind a tropical landscape. This is the epiphany, your own image reflected within a sunburst of orgasmic faces.

Finally there is "Reverie." Here, Matelli is lost in thought, charmed by his own music as he strums a small guitar. With his eyes rolled back and a smile on his face, Matelli is either post-coital or presently drugged. Behind him is a tree strung loosely with 50 feet of rope. Clearly enough with which to... "Reverie" perhaps is to become the last stop.

Tony Matelli's works are manifestations of an intensely personal dilemma. Desires, fantasies, ego and expectations sometimes collude in isolation, to form disquieting compositions. But it is precisely this personal experience that is at the core of Matelli's work. In his own words, "I wanted a more humanizing, more subjective art, one in which I am completely represented.... The subjective as metaphor, the artist as foil." By exploiting a theme so universal, so basic to the human condition, Matelli's evocation of the personal becomes even more acute. In sexual Sunrise, Matelli deftly manages to convey an almost embarrassingly personal insight while the viewer maintains the familiar acknowledgement that we've all been there.

Tony Matelli holds an MFA from the Cranbrook Academy of Art. Most recently, his work has been included in the exhibition "The Americans," curated by Mark Sladen at the Barbican Galleries in London and "Vral que Nature" at the capc, Musee d'art contemporain de Bordeaux. He was also included in the Greater New York Show at PS1 and "Small World at MOCA San Diego among others. Tony Matelli lives and works in New York City.

Gallery hours will continue to be Tuesday through Saturday 10 – 6 pm. For more information or visuals, please contact Leo Koenig or Elizabeth Balogh at the gallery.