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EXHIBITION: NEO RAUCH

DATES: February 19 – March 18, 2000

Gallery hours: Tuesday – Saturday, 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM

Opening on Saturday February 19th, the gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition of new works by the German painter, Neo Rauch. This will be the artist's first solo exhibition in the United States.

Neo Rauch was born in 1960 in Leipzig and was 29, when the Berlin wall fell. His childhood and formative years were spent within the confines of the East German communist regime, with little exposure to the discourses of the west. Trained at the Leipzig Academy by the old school of Socialist Realist painters, Neo Rauch worked through various stylistic changes finally embracing a distinctly figurative approach to his work.

Rauch is a virtuosi painter, his paint application is deft and fluid. Using a tiny sketch as impetus, Rauch works his images directly onto the canvas with the oil paint. Central to all compositions are human figures, alone or in groups interacting with their surroundings. Rauch's protagonists seem completely absorbed by tasks—*work* and *production*.

Although Rauch's subject matters seem clear at first glance, they do not fully expose themselves through close inspection. They seem to be suspended in a world parallel to normal sensory experience, somewhere between memory and dream. The palette of Rauch's work, as well as details such as clothing, hairdos and paraphernalia, suggests that his paintings are set in the past, somewhere in the 60s.

Anybody who has visited the former East Germany will remember the strange way products were advertised. Stores and labels were matter of fact, colors impure and washed out. The goal of product design was *not* to captivate the consumer and make him buy. Rauch's paintings employ this disturbing ambivalence, heightened by the emotionless almost paralyzed expression of his figures. Although these figures go about their respective projects and are seemingly calm, Rauch's work exudes a sense of imminent danger. The tension created by composition and subject matter, as well as Rauch's peculiar palette, brings to mind a moment of calm just before violence erupts.

For further information, please contact the gallery at 212-966-9074.

