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EXHIBITION: NEO RAUCH

DATES: April 4 – May 4, 2002
Reception: Thursday, April 4, 6 to 8 PM

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

Opening on Thursday, April 4th, the gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition of new works by the German painter, Neo Rauch. This will be the artist's second solo exhibition with the gallery. Rauch's work will also be featured in *8 Propositions on Contemporary Drawings* at PS1 and the Museum of Modern Art, New York this fall, as well as *Dear Painter, Paint Me*, at the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, this June. A survey of his work was most recently seen at the Haus der Kunst, Munich; the Kunsthalle Zurich; and the Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst Leipzig last year. Rauch was also recently awarded the prestigious Vincent Prize, 2002.

Neo Rauch was born in 1960 in Leipzig, and was age 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.

Starting from a tiny sketch drawn directly on the canvas, Rauch builds his images in a deft and fluid manner. His palette, as well as details such as clothing, hairstyles, airplanes and paraphernalia, suggests that his paintings are set in the past, oftentimes recalling a cold-war atmosphere of secret missions and spy activities. Central to all compositions are human figures, alone or in groups interacting with their surroundings. His protagonists seem completely absorbed by tasks—*work* and *production*. Yet at the same time, they seem suspended in “*a weirdly concrete dream of production, athletic strength and socialist modernity dreamed in a time and place that no longer exists.*”

Rauch's paintings are also informed by the advertising style of former East Germany. Stores and labels were matter of fact, colors impure and washed out. The goal of product design was *not* to captivate the consumer but to make him buy. Rauch's paintings employ this disturbing ambivalence, heightened by the emotionless, paralyzed expression of his figures. Set in an atmosphere of archetypal figures and faraway, almost utopian landscapes, the figures in Rauch's paintings are painted with a virtuous hand, yet they remain caught in a world in which a sense of danger is imminent and where violence may erupt at any moment—a human condition that once seemed remote and part of our recent history, but now more and more part of our present.

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