

David Zwirner
525 West 19th Street
New York, NY 10011
tel (212) 727 2070 fax (212) 727 2072
info@davidzwirner.com
www.davidzwirner.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: **April 15, 2005**

EXHIBITION: **NEO RAUCH – *Renegaten***

DATES: **May 9 – June 18, 2005**

OPENING RECEPTION: **Monday, May 9, 2005, 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM**

Opening on Monday, May 9, 2005, David Zwirner is pleased to present an exhibition of new work by German painter Neo Rauch. In 2004, Rauch was the subject of a solo show at the prestigious Albertina in Vienna, Austria, and in June, 2005, his work will be featured in a solo exhibition at Cento de Arte Contemporáneo, Malaga, Spain. Among his recent group exhibitions are the *2005 Carnegie International*, Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, PA; *From Leipzig*, Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, OH; Site Santa Fe's Fifth International Biennial Exhibition, Santa Fe, NM; *Life After Death: New Paintings from the Rubell Family Collection*, Mass MoCA, North Adams, MA; *Generation X*, Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, Wolfsburg, Germany; and *Contemporary Voices: Works from the UBS Collection*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY. This will be the artist's third solo exhibition at the gallery and will include ten new paintings.

Educated at the now legendary Leipzig Academy by the old school of Social Realist painters, Neo Rauch has become one of the Academy's most influential graduates. His fusion of industrial symbolism, painterly figuration, and unique brand of Neo-Romanticism are influenced in part by his exposure to Communist-era advertising in former East Germany. In his words, this "atmosphere of permanent fear" had a lasting effect on his work. The paradoxical combination of proletarian ethic and stoic inactivity give Rauch's paintings the quality of being frozen in another time. In many of his compositions, athletic figures engaged in manual labor work against a backdrop of architectural elements, futuristic (yet also oddly old-fashioned) industrial devices, and barren landscapes. In a series of vignettes, characters are introduced and their tasks defined by "props," among them tools, books, hoses and other recognizable objects. More ambiguous images also populate these spaces, pushing the narrative into less familiar territory. Each element, whether cartoon-like or realistically rendered, is deftly balanced by political and visual authenticity; the artist's technical ability and sincere connection to his vernacular are ever apparent.

Rauch's fascination with the figure and work-related props allow for a formal exploration, based in part on the properties of paint itself. A glob of paint draped over an arm, for example, or a rake dragged through a patch of grass, leave behind marks and swirls that blur the line between rendered object and reference to the simplicity and necessity of the artist's materials. It is as if the figures enable, or are perhaps in a state of reacting to, their own painted environments. In *Lösung* (2005), a series of events unfolds around the exposed window of a flat-roofed home in the country. A couple wrestles behind a partially drawn curtain, while three simultaneous events occur against a brooding sky and the impossible perspective of an enlarged terrace railing outside. In *Leporello* (2005), a Hookah pipe is the central image among several Middle Eastern references, including a pyramid and palm tree mural. To the left, a wide, empty road disappears into the horizon. Though his style is undeniably influenced by 20th-century German advertisements, the artist does not use existing imagery or models for his paintings – they are products solely of his imagination.

Art critic Rudij Bergmann has stated, "For Neo Rauch, painting is reflection on what is no longer present. His has a decidedly romantic attitude of refusal that gives deeper meaning to figures frozen strangely in motion – as an allegory of universal alienation from the world and rejection of technology and as a melancholy homage to the unfulfilled promise of freedom and human happiness."