

MoMA PRESENTS FIRST MAJOR U.S. RETROSPECTIVE OF INFLUENTIAL GERMAN ARTIST MARTIN KIPPENBERGER'S CHALLENGING AND PROVOCATIVE BODY OF WORK

Martin Kippenberger: The Problem Perspective

March 1–May 11, 2009

The Joan and Preston Robert Tisch Exhibition Gallery, sixth floor, and The Donald B. and Catherine C. Marron Atrium, second floor

NEW YORK, February 25, 2009—*Martin Kippenberger: The Problem Perspective* is the first major retrospective of the work of Martin Kippenberger (German, 1953–1997) to be mounted in the United States. One of the most significant and influential artists of our time, Kippenberger produced a complex and richly prolific body of work from the mid-1970s until his untimely death in 1997 at the age of 44. This large-scale exhibition includes paintings, sculptures, installations, multiples, drawings, photographs, posters, announcement cards, and books, offering a comprehensive examination of the artist's expansive 20-year career. The exhibition will be on view in MoMA's Joan and Preston Robert Tisch Gallery, sixth floor, from March 1 to May 11, 2009. Kippenberger's installation *The Happy End of Franz Kafka's "Amerika"* (1994) is installed in the Museum's Donald B. and Catherine C. Marron Atrium.

Martin Kippenberger: The Problem Perspective is organized by The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (MOCA), where it was on view from September 21, 2008, to January 5, 2009. The exhibition was curated by MOCA Senior Curator Ann Goldstein, Senior Curator at MOCA. At MoMA, it is organized by Ann Temkin, The Marie-Josée and Henry Kravis Chief Curator of Painting and Sculpture.

Kippenberger's life and work were inextricably linked in an exceptional practice that centered on the role of the artist in the culture and within the system of art. With references, subjects, and sources as wide-ranging and diverse as his production, his work examined and expanded upon that role as he also cast himself as impresario, entertainer, curator, collector, architect, and publisher. Kippenberger drew from popular culture, politics, history, art, architecture, music, and his own life. He was an exceptional appropriator—transforming and challenging his subjects with incisive criticism, self-deprecating humor and formal invention. Working with the support of Estate Martin Kippenberger, as well as public and private collections in Europe and the United States, this first American retrospective offers new insights into the accomplishments and complexities of the artist's remarkable practice.

Ms. Temkin says, "We are delighted to be able to present the work of an artist whose relevance has only increased since his death twelve years ago. The energy and intensity of

Kippenberger's production is reflected in galleries that nearly overflow with an astounding diversity of materials."

Kippenberger's last and largest sculptural installation, *The Happy End of Franz Kafka's "Amerika"* (1994), on view in the Museum's Atrium, reimagines a scene towards the end of Kafka's unfinished 1927 novel. In the book, the protagonist, a young German immigrant named Karl Rossman, arrives at a recruitment center for the so-called Theater of Oklahoma, bringing his naïve hopes to an obviously fraudulent enterprise. Kippenberger's sprawling installation provides a vast stage for scores of simultaneous interviews. The eclectic array of furniture includes classic examples of modern design as well as lawn chairs and bar stools purchased from flea markets, objects Kippenberger adapted from his previous installations, and works by other artists. Arranged on a green floor modeled on a soccer field and flanked by bleachers, this absurdist employment agency casts the ritual of the job interview as a spectator sport.

Installed on the platform outside the exhibition galleries on the sixth floor is the sculpture *Spiderman Studio* (1996). In 1996, Kippenberger was invited to exhibit at a gallery in Nice, located in a building where Henri Matisse had his studio in the early 1930s. In response to the site, Kippenberger created an exhibition he wittily called *Matisse's Studio Sublet to Spiderman*. Ready to leap from a studio full of paintings, the crouching wire figure, bearing a sculpted portrait of Kippenberger's face, embodies the myth of the artist as superhero.

The sixth-floor galleries include selections from Kippenberger's many bodies of work, including the renowned self-portraits that Kippenberger produced throughout his career in all media. Important series of paintings are featured in the exhibition, including several works from the series *Dear Painter, Paint for Me* (1981), and the painting, *The Problem Perspective. You Are Not the Problem, It's the Problem Maker in Your Head* (1986), from which the exhibition title comes. The exhibition reunites many of the key works from his breakthrough 1987 exhibition of sculpture in Cologne, Germany, entitled *Peter. The Russian Position* and other important sculptural installations such as *Now I am Going into the Big Birch Wood, My Pills Will Soon Start Doing Me Good* (1991).

As this exhibition demonstrates, Kippenberger repeatedly invoked canonical modern artists such as Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse, Joseph Beuys, and Gerhard Richter in his work. Featured prominently in the exhibition are three paintings in which Kippenberger depicts himself bearded, bloated, and wearing only underwear. Based on a famous photograph taken of an aging Picasso in boxer shorts, Kippenberger created the works while he was living in Madrid in 1988. Kippenberger's invocations were never simple tributes to famous predecessors nor attacks on them, but rather, nuanced examinations of their mythic personae, and by extension, decisively unglamorous representations of his own identity as an artist.

Selections from two of Kippenberger's later series are also featured. In the paintings from the series *Jacqueline: The Paintings Pablo Couldn't Paint Anymore* (1996), Kippenberger literally

cast himself as Picasso, taking up that artist's project by producing a series of portraits of Picasso's grieving widow and muse, Jacqueline, based on photographs of her taken after Picasso's death. The Raft of the Medusa (1996) was Kippenberger's last series of self-portraits. This series was based on the 1819 painting by Théodore Géricault portraying the aftermath of the wreck of the French ship Medusa, during which survivors clung to a raft adrift at sea, resorting to murder and cannibalism in order to survive. For this group of works, which comprises drawings, paintings, and lithographs as well as a rug woven with a diagram of the raft, Kippenberger cast himself as various figures from Géricault's painting.

The exhibition also features numerous examples of Kippenberger's hotel drawings—drawings on hotel stationery that he collected during his travels or that were given to him—and other works on paper; photographic works; and selections from the artist's prolific output of printed matter, including books, editions, multiples, and large-scale presentations of his exhibition posters and announcement cards—all of which are central to Kippenberger's production.

ABOUT THE ARTIST:

Born in 1953 in Dortmund, Germany, Martin Kippenberger attended the Hochschule für bildende Künste (University of Visual Arts) in Hamburg. He was a peripatetic artist, taking up residence in numerous cities throughout his career, including Florence, Berlin, Paris, Cologne, Madrid, Los Angeles, Frankfurt, and Vienna. A major retrospective of his work, *Respektive 1997–1976*, organized by Musée d'art moderne et contemporain in Geneva, opened just two months before he died in March 1997. Numerous survey exhibitions followed after his death, including several in 2003, on the occasion of the artist's 50th birthday year (in Karlsruhe, Tübingen, and Braunschweig, Germany; Eindhoven, The Netherlands; and Vienna, Austria). In 2006, Tate Modern, London, and K21 Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf, jointly organized *Martin Kippenberger*. This exhibition is the first major exhibition of Kippenberger's work to be mounted in the United States.

SPONSORSHIP:

Martin Kippenberger: The Problem Perspective is organized by The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (MOCA).

The presentation of the exhibition at The Museum of Modern Art is supported by Marie-Josée and Henry Kravis, Jerry I. Speyer and Katherine G. Farley, Sue and Edgar Wachenheim III, and The Contemporary Arts Council of The Museum of Modern Art.

Additional funding is provided by Benjamin Moore Paints.

MOCA's presentation was made possible by endowment support from the Sydney Irmes Exhibition Endowment. Major support was provided by Andre Sakhai, Audrey M. Irmes, Wonmi and Kihong Kwon, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Carol and David Appel, Blake Byrne, Galerie Gisela Capitain, David and Susan Gersh, Mark Fisch, The Margaret and Daniel Loeb-Third Point Foundation, Lois G. Rosen, Christina and Mark Siegel, Elizabeth Swofford, Sheridan Brown, Tim Nye and Foundation 20 21, Edward M. Israel, and John Morace and Tom Kennedy.

PUBLICATION:

Martin Kippenberger: The Problem Perspective is accompanied by a fully illustrated, 372-page hardcover catalogue, which constitutes a comprehensive and scholarly examination of the artist's career. Published by MOCA and co-published by The MIT Press, it features an overview essay by MOCA Senior Curator Ann Goldstein; new essays by art historian Pamela Lee, writer and Kippenberger scholar Diedrich Diederichsen, and MoMA's Chief Curator of Painting and Sculpture

Ann Temkin; reprinted excerpts from a 1991 interview with Kippenberger by artist Jutta Koether; and an illustrated exhibition history, chronology, and bibliography. Designed by the award-winning graphic designer Lorraine Wild of Green Dragon Office in Los Angeles, the book's cover features a photograph by artist Louise Lawler of Kippenberger's *Disco Bomb* (1989). Price: \$44.95

PROGRAMS:

Brown Bag Lunch Lectures

The Third-Best Dancer in Europe: Martin Kippenberger

Monday, March 16, and Thursday, March 19, 12:30 to 1:15 p.m.

Education Classroom B, mezzanine, The Lewis B. and Dorothy Cullman Education and Research Building

Join us for lectures on modern and contemporary art. You may bring your own lunch.

The lecturer Ágnes Berecz (PhD, Université Paris I/Panthéon-Sorbonne) teaches art history at the Department of Graduate Studies of The Fashion Institute of Technology and at MoMA.

Tickets (\$5; members, students, seniors, and staff of other museums \$3) can be purchased at the Museum at the lobby information desk, at the film desk, or in the Cullman Building lobby.

Panel Discussion

Knowing Kippenberger

Tuesday, April 14, 2009, 6:30 p.m.

The Roy and Niuta Titus Theater 2

Martin Kippenberger's *The Happy End of Franz Kafka's "Amerika"* stages the scenario of America as the land of the job interview. In the spirit of this work, tonight's program takes the shape of a series of interviews between artists, art dealers, and friends of Kippenberger's. Together they help to form a collective portrait of this complicated figure.

Tickets (\$10; members \$8; students, seniors, and staff of other museums \$5) can be purchased online, or at the lobby information desk and the Film desk.

AUDIO GUIDE:

An audio program featuring commentaries by Ann Temkin and Ann Goldstein is available at the Museum free of charge, courtesy of Bloomberg; on MoMAWiFi at www.moma.org/momawifi; and as a podcast on www.moma.org/audio and iTunes. MoMA Audio is a collaboration between The Museum of Modern Art and Acoustiguide, Inc. Available in English only.

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For downloadable high-resolution images, register at www.moma.org/press.

MoMA Monday Nights:

MoMA will remain open until 8:45 p.m. on selected Mondays, giving visitors extended hours to view special exhibitions and the museum's collection. The evenings will include entertainment and a cash bar. Regular admission applies. The museum will stay open from 10:30 to 8:45 on the following Mondays: March 9, April 6, May 4, and June 8

Public Information:

The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street, New York, NY 10019

Hours: Wednesday through Monday: 10:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Friday: 10:30 a.m.-8:00 p.m.
Closed Tuesday

Museum Admission: \$20 adults; \$16 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D.; \$12 full-time students with current I.D. Free for children 16 and under. Free for members.
Admission includes admittance to Museum galleries and film programs.
Free admission during Target Free Friday Nights 4:00-8:00 p.m.

The public may call 212/708-9400 for detailed Museum information. Visit us on the Web at www.moma.org.