

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Irreverent Object: European Sculpture from the '60s, '70s and '80s

November 7 – December 19, 2009

Luhring Augustine is pleased to present *The Irreverent Object*, a group exhibition of European sculpture from the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. The exhibition includes work by Arman, Joseph Beuys, Louise Bourgeois, Marcel Broodthaers, Lucio Fontana, Georg Herold, Martin Kippenberger, Jannis Kounellis, Piero Manzoni, Mario Merz, Reinhard Mucha, Giulio Paolini, Michelangelo Pistoletto, Gerhard Richter, Dieter Roth, Jean Tinguely, Rosemarie Trockel and Franz West.

The Irreverent Object examines the subversive nature of sculptural practice employed by European artists from the 1960s through the 1980s. These artists expanded the historically limited definition of the sculptural object through an elevation of non-traditional media and a rebellion against the accepted canon. Unorthodox construction, diverse pairings and alternative materials blurred the conventional distinction between aesthetic and utilitarian forms, opening the floodgates for limitless appropriation and giving rise to a dynamic new formal vocabulary.

Referencing Marcel Duchamp's infamous ready-mades, artists such as Marcel Broodthaers, Giulio Paolini, Jean Tinguely and Joseph Beuys bucked tradition through the re-contextualization and display of recognizable objects. Broodthaers' wall piece, *Moule*, presents a dense group of empty mussel shells affixed to board, and Paolini's *Intervallo (Torsi)* divides the classical plaster cast of a figure which emerges from opposing walls. Disparate mechanical parts appear functional in Tinguely's ultimately impractical floor and wall sculptures, and Joseph Beuys' *Fluxusobjekt* is a grouping of intentionally arbitrary elements such as a cardboard box, fat, oil, a rubber ring, and a child's toy. By removing ordinary items from their familiar context, these artists often use humorous presentation and language to highlight the artistic potential that lies within the objects around us.

Other artists employed everyday items to address existential notions of mortality. Dieter Roth's *Motorcycle Driver's Misfortune* reflects this somber perspective through the implied demise of the titular character and the decaying composition of the organic materials that make up the work itself. Similarly, Martin Kippenberger's *Baby Püppi* uses dark humor to address issues of mortality and artistic legacy. The absurd juxtaposition of a baby stroller and a bronze cast of a pig leg in place of a child elevates the sculpture to an object of high art and, in a literal replacement of progeny, suggests that his artwork is his lasting contribution to humanity.

For further information, please contact the gallery at (212) 206.9100 or kristen@luhringaugustine.com.