

# SKARSTEDT

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

*MARTIN KIPPENBERGER: HAND PAINTED PICTURES*

**OPENING RECEPTION: NOVEMBER 11 2017, 6-8PM**

**20 East 79<sup>th</sup> Street, New York**



*“The fulcrum of his artistic ideas was his own persona. It was always the person Martin Kippenberger that faced up to everyday reality. He described himself as ‘one of you’ and declared that ‘every artist is also a human being’, turning Beuys’s famous dictum the other way. His own individuality, with all its vulnerability and particular life circumstances served as a source of inspiration for his art” (E. Meyer-Hermann, ‘Yes, I am also a woman. Tragedies of the Flesh’, Kippenberger Meets Picasso, exh. cat., Museo Picasso, Malaga 2011, p. 63).”*

Skarstedt is pleased to present *Martin Kippenberger: Hand Painted Pictures*, an exhibition of the artist’s self-portraits on view from November 11 – December 16, 2017 at Skarstedt Upper East Side, 20 East 79<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, NY 10075.

Painted in 1992, the series was created on the island of Syros, Greece and in the artist’s Frankfurt studio. *Hand Painted Pictures* represents the second of three major cycles of self-portraits in Kippenberger’s oeuvre and demonstrates the artist’s preoccupation with the subject of self-representation. The paintings were first exhibited at Max Hetzler Gallery in Cologne, Germany in October of 1992. This fall, 12 of the 23 works initially shown together

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in '92 will be reunited at Skarstedt, marking the first exhibition dedicated entirely to this series since their initial debut.

Masterfully painted, the portraits were derived from two sets of photographs of the artist: some taken by Jory Felice in Venice Beach, L.A. in 1989-1990 and others taken later on in Frankfurt in 1992. Each radically unlike the other, these diverse portrayals of the artist reflect on his own conflicting perceptions of the artist's role in society. Throughout his whole body of work, Kippenberger challenges pre-existing notions of the art world's status quo. In keeping with his relentless assault against traditional styles, techniques and ideologies, Kippenberger notoriously created work that was "styleless."

Classical art history celebrates portraiture as one of the highest genres of art for its ability to elevate the status of the sitter. Here, Martin Kippenberger scraps that institutional notion and instead offers an inglorious, sometimes grotesque, series of self-portraits. Kippenberger is portrayed in "theatrical contortions, exaggeratedly cramped positions, in tight cycling shorts and top, engaged in a cosmic struggle with himself, upside down a la Baselitz, as a skinny-legged naked Olympic sprinter, as a fabulous dancer." (Daniel Baumann, "The way you wear your hat" in: Exhibition Catalogue, Basel, Kunsthalle Basel, *Martin Kippenberger*, 1998) Kippenberger's extended stay in Syros also influenced the subject matter and composition of the paintings, many of which include German phrases translated into Greek letters.

Throughout the series, Kippenberger uses two opposing approaches to the painterly surface. One employs sketchy lines: the artist's figure becoming increasingly fragmented, even transparent. The second approach is inundated with detail – both in its compositional approach and creative expression. The latter picture planes are either divided into fourths, with different colors delineating the partitions, or are built upon a broad-brush, monochromatic surface. His multi-disciplinary approach to painting re-enforces his unclassifiable artistic style.

Often referencing modern icons and historical figures in his paintings, Kippenberger's *Hand Painted Pictures* are at once comical and tragic, serious and subverted, and some of the most important paintings in his oeuvre.

## About Martin Kippenberger

Martin Kippenberger was born in Dortmund, Germany in 1953. He studied at the University of Fine Arts of Hamburg, but left the city in 1976 without a degree. An extremely prolific artist, Kippenberger worked in a wide range of mediums including painting, sculpture, installation, drawing, photography, multiples, prints and collages. Works by Sigmar Polke and Gerhard Richter influenced his career and early work. Through the years, he developed a diverse style that did not shy away from sometimes caustic political commentary. His criticism of the artistic status quo and daily life issues would become evident through provocative imagery and recurring motifs that in many cases represented the artist himself that aimed at shocking and disturbing the viewer. Kippenberger's humorous works called into question the artist's role within society and culture at large, as well as deeper issues of general culture and humanity - commentary that did not go unnoticed. This unrestrained, bountiful commentary about the world around him is what makes Kippenberger's oeuvre so powerful and compelling.

Martin Kippenberger exhibited extensively throughout the United States and Europe. Major



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solo exhibitions of his work have been held in institutions such as the Musée d'art moderne et contemporain, Geneva and the Castello di Rivoli, Turin in 1997-1998; the Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, Vienna and the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven as well as the ZKM Museum für Neue Kunst, Karlsruhe and Kunsthalle Tübingen in 2003. In 2004, his work was shown at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid and in 2006 at Tate Modern, London and K21 Kunstammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf. His works have also been shown in exhibitions in major institutions including the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles and the Museum of Modern Art, New York in 2008-2009; the Hamburger Bahnhof, Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin in 2013 and Kunstforum Wien, Vienna in 2016. Kippenberger participated in several Biennales in Venice and other countries and his work has been featured in multiple publications. Martin Kippenberger died in Vienna in 1997.

## About Skarstedt

Skarstedt (20 E. 79<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, NY) was founded in 1994 by Per Skarstedt to mount historical exhibitions by Contemporary European and American artists. The New York gallery's program focuses on concepts such as representation, authorship, identity, and sexual politics across a wide-range of media. Skarstedt's unique relationship with artists allows it to present museum-quality exhibitions both on the primary and secondary markets, creating a dialogue between the generations.

Located at 8 Bennet Street, Skarstedt's new London gallery is situated in the historic district of St James's, on the corner of Arlington Street and Bennet Street, both named after Henry Bennet, Earl of Arlington. Known as 'ministerial street' in the 17th and 18th centuries, the street was previously home to Prime Minister, Sir Robert Walpole and his son Horace Walpole, an esteemed collector and connoisseur. Measuring 5,000 square feet, with the main exhibition space at ground floor level, the three interconnected galleries enable Skarstedt to continue its program, of historically-researched and museum-quality exhibitions.

Skarstedt opened a Chelsea space at 550 W. 21st Street in May 2014 with the inaugural exhibition Klein and Warhol: Fire and Oxidation Paintings, adding to the gallery's existing locations on New York's Upper East Side and in London. For over three years the Chelsea gallery allowed Skarstedt to expand on its core program of historically researched exhibitions from modern and contemporary masters.

The gallery works with the following artists and artists' estates: Francis Bacon, Georg Baselitz, Jean-Michel Basquiat, George Condo, Willem de Kooning, Eric Fischl, Peter Fischli & David Weiss, Lucio Fontana, Keith Haring, Jenny Holzer, Mike Kelley, Martin Kippenberger, Yves Klein, Jeff Koons, Barbara Kruger, Juan Muñoz, Cady Noland, Albert Oehlen, Richard Prince, David Salle, Thomas Schütte, Cindy Sherman, Rosemarie Trockel, Cy Twombly, Andy Warhol and Christopher Wool.

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**Image Details:** Martin Kippenberger, *Untitled* (from the series *Hand Painted Pictures*), 1992, oil on canvas, 71 7/8 x 59 1/16 inches (180 x 150 cm) © Estate of Martin Kippenberger, Galerie Gisela Capitain, Cologne

