

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MARIA LASSNIG

curated by Andrea Teschke

November 19 – December 23, 2005

Opening reception: Saturday, November 19, 6-8 pm

Friedrich Petzel Gallery is pleased to announce a solo exhibition of paintings and drawings by Vienna-based artist Maria Lassnig curated by Andrea Teschke. This is the artist's second gallery show in New York since 1989.

Maria Lassnig is considered one of the most preeminent international artists today. Her work has been exhibited in galleries, museums and institutions since the early 1950s. She has become well known for her body-awareness paintings, drawings for which she first started creating in 1948:

At first I called my body awareness "paintings", then "introspective" experiences; later on I did not call them anything at all after I had been ridiculed for claiming that my blobs and piles of color were "self portraits." I recommend my body awareness paintings as an ideal application of art because the subject matter can never be exhausted. I have only abandoned this "content" when outside events were stronger than I was, when I encountered love, death and oppression and had to submit to or revolt against something.¹

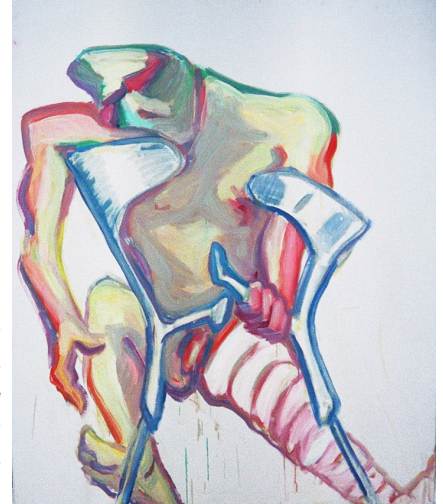
For this exhibition, the artist selected a group of 11 paintings and 11 drawings, all of which feature the artist as her own model in different emotional and physical states. These pictures are not traditional self-portraits; instead they express the artist's inner awareness. Four paintings show the artist in different positions on crutches. Despite displaying a disability they are funny and grotesque because, according to Lassnig, "imperfections may be overcome through humor." The figures are painted on a white background with strong contours as in "Death and the Girl" which shows the artist dancing with a skeleton.

Numerous retrospectives have been devoted to Maria Lassnig's paintings and drawings, among them the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam in 1994, Kunstmuseum Düsseldorf in 1985, the Centre Pompidou, Paris in 1995, and the Museum of Modern Art, Ludwig Foundation, Vienna in 1999.

Maria Lassnig was born in Carinthia, Austria in 1919. She studied at the Akademie der Bildenden Künste in Vienna. After several stays in Paris in the 1950s and a 12-year residency in New York, she returned to Vienna in 1980 and represented Austria that same year at the Biennale di Venezia. Maria Lassnig received the renowned Max Beckmann award in 2004.

A catalogue will be published on the occasion of the exhibition with an essay by Robert Storr. The exhibition will open November 19, with a reception from 6-8 p.m. and will be on view through December 23. For further information, please contact the gallery at 212-680-9467 or info@petzel.com.

¹ Lassnig, Maria, *Die Feder ist die Schwester des Pinsels. Tagebücher 1943 – 1997*, edited by Hans Ulrich Obrist, Cologne: DuMont, 2000, p. 32

**MARIA LASSNIG**Untitled (crutches, broken leg)

2005

Oil on canvas