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a contemporary art space

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**SITE SANTA FE PRESENTS
LIFE AFTER DEATH: NEW LEIPZIG PAINTINGS FROM
THE RUBELL FAMILY COLLECTION
April 22-June 4, 2006**



Santa Fe, NM— SITE Santa Fe is pleased to present the exhibition *Life After Death: New Leipzig Paintings from the Rubell Family Collection* on view from **April 22 through June 4, 2006**. The exhibition includes over 60 works by: Tilo Baumgärtel, Tim Eitel, Martin Kobe, Neo Rauch, Christoph Rückhäberle, David Schnell, and Matthias Weischer. There will be a media preview of the exhibition on **Thursday, April 20, from 11 am to 12 noon**. There will be a free public opening on **Friday, April 21, from 5 to 7 pm**. The exhibition is made possible in part by Christie's Fine Art Auctioneers.

Neo Rauch, *Demos (Demonstrations)*, 2004
oil on canvas, 118 1/8 x 82 3/4"
Courtesy of the Rubell Family Collection

In December 2000, a group of five young German artists, all recent graduates of the prestigious Leipzig Art Academy, organized a small exhibition of their works in Leipzig. Unsurprisingly, the exhibition attracted no notice from the international contemporary art community. From that humble beginning, the "New Leipzig School" has expanded to a dozen artists and has grown to be an international phenomenon—its painters making work that has museums and collectors in its thrall.

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These painters breathe new life into the East German tradition of social realist figure painting with enigmatic narratives and surrealist overtones. The New Leipzig School is the 21st century's first bona fide artistic phenomenon. In addition to their affiliation with the Leipzig Art Academy, the New Leipzig School painters share stylistic concerns, which are shaped in part by the tradition of the school and East German social realism more generally. A strange surrealism and a discordant palette pervade their interiors, cityscapes, and landscapes, which are often populated by disaffected figures. A general feeling of world-weariness and ennui speaks to the East German political situation—these are depictions of places and people that are not prepared to integrate into the brand-new optimistic West. Unready to face the new, they are nostalgic for the old, but more from habit than any affection.

The Leipzig Academy, founded in 1764, is one of the oldest art schools in Germany. It is highly regarded for its tradition of figure painting, which, before the reunification of Germany in 1989/90, was bound to state-mandated “social-realist” painting. While academies in the West eschewed figurative painting, and sometimes painting itself, in favor of abstraction and work in new media, the Leipzig Academy produced some of East Germany's most highly regarded figure painters.

The undeniable buzz that surrounds the New Leipzig School is due in part to the enthusiasm that collectors Mera and Don Rubell have shown for their work. Always bellwethers, the Rubells first visited Liga, the Leipzig gallery that these artists maintained between March 2002 and April 2004, in its inaugural year. They began acquiring their work immediately and have continued to support many of the artists.

Housed in a nondescript 45,000-square-foot Miami warehouse that once served as a Drug Enforcement Administration storage facility, the Rubell Family Art Collection features some of the edgiest and most important contemporary work of the last 40 years. The collection, which contains 6000 pieces by celebrated artists including Keith Haring, Peter Halley, Damien Hirst, David Salle, and Cindy Sherman, is a representation of every major influence in contemporary art over the last three decades. It includes paintings, sculptures, drawings, photographs, installation, and videos.

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Minimalism, neo-expressionism, neo-geo, photography, and identity politics are the art movements best exemplified by the body of work the Rubells—father Don, mother Mera, and children Jennifer and Jason—have lovingly assembled by seeking out the small studios of emerging but undiscovered artists in the U.S., Europe, Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

Art & Culture

SITE will present several programs related to the Leipzig exhibition. On Tuesday, **April 25, at 6 pm, Mark Coetzee and Laura Heon** will have a conversation about their experience in organizing the exhibition and the significance of this important and influential body of work. On **Tuesday, May 16, at 6 pm, Mark Haxthausen**, Director of Graduate Art History at Williams College, Williamstown, MA, will speak on **Gerhard Richter/Neo Rauch: Painting Media**. On **Tuesday, May 23, at 6 pm**, SITE will present a screening at Center for Contemporary Arts Cinematheque of **Good Bye Lenin!** (2003), a Wolfgang Becker film, which examines the contemporary German nostalgia for the old life in East Berlin.

The exhibition is organized by MASS MoCA, and co-curated by Laura Heon, Director/Curator of SITE Santa Fe, and Mark Coetzee, director and curator of the Rubell Family Collection. It is accompanied by a 150-page color catalogue. After its presentation at SITE Santa Fe, the exhibition will travel to the Katzen Arts Center Museum, American University, Washington, DC; Frye Art Museum, Seattle, Washington; and the Salt Lake Art Center, Salt Lake City, Utah.

SITE Santa Fe is located at 1606 Paseo de Peralta, Santa Fe, New Mexico. SITE Santa Fe Hours: Wed–Sat, 10 AM–5 PM; Friday, 10 AM–7 PM; Sunday, 12 PM–5 PM. Museum admission is \$8 for adults and \$4 for students, teachers and seniors; members are free. Free admission is offered on Fridays, made possible by a grant from The Brown Foundation, Inc., of Houston. Tours by SITE Guides are available free of charge to the public with paid admission and are also regularly scheduled on Fridays at 6 pm, and Saturdays & Sundays at 2 pm. SITE Santa Fe gift certificates are available. Call 505.989.1199 for more information.

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