

## LUHRING AUGUSTINE

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**Martin Kippenberger***“I Had A Vision”*

7 May – 18 June 2011

Opening reception:

Friday, 6 May 2011, 6-8pm



Luhring Augustine is pleased to announce *“I Had A Vision”*, an exhibition of sculptural work by Martin Kippenberger (1953—1997). The pieces selected allow for a partial reconstruction of two large-scale shows from the summer and fall of 1991 that shared much of the same content: *New Work (Put Your Eye In Your Mouth)* at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and *Martin Kippenberger. Tiefes Kehlchen (Deep Throat)*, which occupied an unused tunnel between two subway stations in Vienna and was part of the city’s *Topographie* series of public art. Like much of Kippenberger’s sculptural work, the objects evince a self-mocking disposition expressed through the transmogrification of domestic décor (lamps, mirrors, wallpaper). Typical of his irreverence toward art world conventions and his taste for kitsch, the inclusion of electric vehicles denotes an exhibition as a kind of theme park.

*“I Had A Vision”* was also the title of the catalogue of the San Francisco show (the *Tiefes Kehlchen* catalogue also had a different name, *T.K. (D.T.)*) and seems quite appropriate to the works’ emphasis on seeing and the artist’s own direction of what is to be seen. *Broken Kilometer* (1990), a series of boxes identical in length but with resin inserts that become shorter and shorter, aims to concretize optical perceptions of size and distance. The *Kippenbinky* lamp (1991) and *Cineastenabgang (Cineastes’ Egress)* (1990) not only supply but foreground illumination, the lighted steps in particular functioning as a guide. *Mirror for Hang Over Bud* (1990) presents a mirror made out of aluminum foil instead of glass, eliminating the possibility for a viewer to see anything but a hazy reflection of himself. *Heavy Burschi (Heavy Lad)* (1990) comprises a dumpster full of paintings that Kippenberger had asked an assistant to make, thematically based on other paintings of his, which were then destroyed by Kippenberger. Exhibited alongside photographs of the paintings in their original state, it embodies a paradox of presentation and representation—work that the artist shows to the public only through the process of its own demolition, abetted by the photographic likenesses of the pictures.

Known for his dispersion of output across a variety of media (painting, drawing, records, books, posters, architecture, performance), Kippenberger also relocated frequently. He once referred to himself as “a traveling salesman” dealing in ideas, and his characteristic itinerancy is felt in *Untitled (Carousel with ejection seat)* (1991). This looped train track was placed in the center of the San Francisco show, enabling visitors sitting in the motorized van seat to view the exhibition’s contents, which had been arranged in a circle, in perpetual motion. This echoed Kippenberger’s own continual transit and encouraged the beholder to synthesize the works into a panoramic whole. In Vienna, an electromobile carried a resin-cast figure of the artist himself, wearing a suit jacket, white shirt, tie, dark shoes, and jeans, and traveled one-way down a track, underlining Kippenberger’s conception of the show as an “art ghost train” with himself as the driver.

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Both *Put Your Eye In Your Mouth* and *Tiefes Kelchen* alluded to a correlation between the temporary nature of exhibitions and that of Kippenberger's own domiciles; many of the objects had appeared in prior exhibitions and would reappear, recontextualized, in subsequent ones, almost as if he was moving house. It becomes clear that as with the rest of his oeuvre, Kippenberger's sculptural work was permeated by his persona as well as his psyche, and his exhibitions were just as much of an extension of himself as one's living quarters would be.

Martin Kippenberger was born in Dortmund, Germany in 1953 and he died in 1997 at the age of 44. His work has been the focus of major retrospectives including *Martin Kippenberger: The Problem Perspective*, at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, and the Museum of Modern Art, New York, as well as *Martin Kippenberger* at the Tate Modern, London and K21, Düsseldorf. Luhring Augustine has included the artist in multiple group exhibitions, and in 2005 the gallery presented a solo exhibition devoted exclusively to his self-portraits. Luhring Augustine Hetzler hosted solo exhibitions of Kippenberger's work in 1990 and 1991.

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