

BARBARA GLADSTONE GALLERY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Marisa Merz

January 24 – February 21, 2004

Barbara Gladstone Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition of new drawings by Marisa Merz.

Marisa Merz's expressive yet tranquil drawings reveal a deeply personal world teeming with intricate mazes of figures and signs. Her gestures subtly inhabit distinct spaces, as the delicately drawn portraits seem to emerge from a smoky, sumptuous field. Though these portraits maintain an air of intimacy, the underlying themes associated with the Arte Povera movement nevertheless continue to inform her work. The Italian movement, which formed in 1967 and counts Merz and her late husband Mario Merz as founding members, called into question established ideas and assumptions about the processes and materials that had come to define Western art. Though the name has no literal translation, it can be roughly interpreted as "impoverished art," and Merz, along with the other innovative, seminal artists associated with Arte Povera, began using everyday and organic materials in an effort to subvert the elite status that the art object had attained in its role in the consumerism-based culture of advanced capitalism.

Merz's attention to sinuous, organic forms, her focus on subjectivity, and the way in which her work negotiates 'low' types of art such as craft underline her position on the relationship between art and life. "There has never been any division between my life and my work," she has said. Merz advanced this critical framework by drawing on traditional customs associated with female domesticity. Thus she began knitting and the idea of home as a feminine space, a private, intimate realm became central to her work. Merz's 1966 work *Untitled (Living Sculpture)* was comprised of thin strips of aluminum that weaved and swirled throughout space and was made for a gallery installation as well as her own home. This led to Merz's construction of metal threads woven like clothing, capable of fitting parts of the body. Passionate though calm, her personal investigations continue today in her delicate portrait drawings.

Marisa Merz was born in 1931 in Turin, Italy. She continues to live in and work in both Turin and Milan. Merz's solo exhibitions include the Musée National d'Art Moderne Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; the Kunstmuseum Winterthur, Switzerland; and the Villa delle Rose, Galleria d'Arte Moderna, Bologna. Selected group exhibitions include the Guggenheim Museum, New York, "The Italian Metamorphosis, 1943-1968"; Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, "Die italienische Metamorphose, 1943-1968"; Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin, "Zeitlos"; the 1988 Biennale di Venice; P.S.1., New York, "The KNOT Arte Povera at P.S.1"; Kunsthaus Zürich, Zürich, "Spuren, Skulpturen, und Monumente ihrer praezisen Reise"; and "Documenta 7", Kassel.

Gallery Hours: Tuesday – Saturday, 10am – 6pm
For further information please contact Miciah Hussey
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