

Ronald Feldman Fine Arts

For Immediate Release: May 21, 2007

CLEMENS WEISS

120 Days of Sodom + The Complaint of Art

June 9 – July 13

Reception for the artist and performance by the jazz composer Brian Jackson and trio
Saturday June 9: 6:00 to 8:00 – open to the public

Clemens Weiss, a New York based artist who also works in Germany, will exhibit recent drawings and objects based on the Marquis de Sade's famous novel, *120 Days of Sodom*, and an early medieval poem, *The Complaint of Art*, which personifies qualities of courtly behavior. Weiss, whose art reflects his theoretical concerns, has developed a distinctive oeuvre which includes the integration of text fragments and drawings with sexual imagery, the accumulation and profusion of objects, and constructions fabricated from industrial glass that both reveal and block access to information. In his new work, Weiss transforms these two works of literature into visual equivalencies that obliquely take as their subject matter philosophical questions relating to morality, the relationship of civilization to nature, and the existence of evil and perversion versus man's virtuous aspirations.

120 Days of Sodom consists of large-scale erotic drawings with allegorical significance, hung as a series of wall friezes, drawn so quickly as to seem to emanate from the subconscious. Journal books, containing hand-written text and hundreds of drawings, as well as half human/half creature ceramic figures, are displayed on and within freestanding glass shelving units and steles.

The installation, *The Complaint of Art*, inspired by Konrad Van Würzburg's poem from the year 1250 and related to an art exhibition/performance, written, directed and staged by Weiss, consists of a multitude of slender glass steles, which are sculptural miniature models for the stage. In the poem, "Art" pleads its case for the support of the arts and righteous behavior before the highest court. Imitating the format of the poem, which exists as an illuminated manuscript, Weiss has also created one-hundred and twenty books, each with sixteen drawings, which include his hand-written translations of the original poem into English and modern-day German.

Clemens Weiss was born in 1955 in Germany where he studied philosophy and medicine. His art exhibition/performance, *The Complaint of Art*, was included in the Ensembliä Festival in Moenchengladbach, Germany in June 2007. His sculpture will be included as part of the official program in Essen, Cultural Capital of Europe, in the year 2010. Weiss was included in *Das XX: Jahrhundert ein Jahrhundert Kunst in Deutschland (The Twentieth Century: 100 Years of Art in Germany)* organized by the Nationalgalerie Berlin in 1999. Commissions include the stage set for *Die Untersuchung eines Zufalls (The Investigation of a Coincidence)* by Alexeji Schipenko, which toured Germany in 2002. The German government donated a major sculpture by Weiss to the United Nations in Geneva on the occasion of the treaty to end nuclear testing in 1996.

Gallery Hours: **June:** Tuesday – Saturday, 10:00 to 6:00. Monday by appointment. **July:** Monday – Thursday, 10:00 to 6:00. Friday, 10:00 to 3:00. For more information, contact Sarah H. Paulson at (212) 226-3232 or sarah@feldmangallery.com.

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