

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**MARIA LASSNIG**

October 29 – December 22, 2010

Opening reception: Friday, October 29, 6-8 pm

Friedrich Petzel Gallery is pleased to announce a solo exhibition by Vienna-based artist Maria Lassnig. This is Lassnig's third solo exhibition in New York since 1989.

Maria Lassnig's current exhibition consists of a selected group of twelve paintings created over the past four years. The new paintings, exhibited in her solo exhibitions from the Serpentine to MUMOK, depict the tumultuous nature of gender relations. Lassnig's sparsely painted fields create an extreme figure-ground relationship to her lush fleshy figures that contort in the void.

*it is not only the black background that evokes the night, but also the artificial light cast on the figure from below. Shrouded in a transparent foil, the figure has found its own tactile and fragile space, located nowhere in the dark.<sup>1</sup>*

Since the 1950s, Maria Lassnig has established her own style of painting through a history of genres that she has lived and worked through. These 'isms', from Realism to Surrealism, Expressionism, Automatism, and Feminism (to name a few) have coalesced into her own style of figurative mark making that emanates psychologically charged scenes. Her newest paintings depict pared-down figures situated in monochromatic backgrounds. They possess a unique blend of the realism she had mastered as a student and the spontaneity of automatic drawing - inherited from her study with André Breton which she has dubbed "Body-Awareness" – describing the body not as it is perceived from the outside but as it is experienced from the inside.

Numerous retrospectives have been devoted to Maria Lassnig's paintings and drawings, among them the Lenbachhaus in Munich in 2010, the Museum Moderner Kunst (MUMOK) in Vienna in 2009, the Serpentine Gallery in London in 2008, the Contemporary Arts Center in Cincinnati in 2008, the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam in 1994, Kunstmuseum Düsseldorf in 1985, the Centre Pompidou, Paris in 1995, and the Museum Moderner Kunst in 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.

The exhibition will open October 29, with a reception from 6-8 p.m. and will be on view through December 22, 2010. For further information, please contact the gallery at 212-680-9467 or [andrea@petzel.com](mailto:andrea@petzel.com).

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<sup>1</sup> Friedel, Helmut, *Maria Lassnig, Die Kunst, die macht mich immer juenger*, exhibition catalogue Lenbachhaus, Munich, 2010, p. 33