

Michael Werner 4 East 77 New York New York 10075

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JANNIS KOUNELLIS: WORKS ON PAPER
27 MARCH THROUGH 24 MAY 2003

Michael Werner Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of works on paper by Jannis Kounellis (b. 1936, Piraeus, Greece).

An important member of the Arte Povera movement, Jannis Kounellis has continually challenged traditional notions of the appearance and role of contemporary art through his playfully disruptive sculptural objects and installations. His first solo exhibition in 1960, while he was still a student, featured sign-like stencils of letters and numbers. Looking to expand the possibilities of painting, Kounellis began using objects and found elements in his work, which by the late 1960s was concerned almost exclusively with sculpture; a famous work from this time consisted of 11 live horses installed in the gallery. In 1967 Jannis Kounellis was included in the important group exhibition "Arte povera e im Spazio", curated by Germano Celant, the first major exhibition to examine the growing practice of artists who embraced ephemeral materials and other "poor" forms of expression.

Somewhat less familiar are the artist's works on paper, which like the larger three dimensional works for which he is widely known, possess an uncommon directness of thought and feeling. Ranging from loose sketches to fuller, more finished works, the drawings of Jannis Kounellis abound with allusions to the artist's broad personal vocabulary of materials including earth, stone, steel, fire and gold. They embrace the fragmentary, depicting truncated figures and pieces of architecture with other images familiar within his oeuvre such as blocked passageways, smokestacks, locomotives, and sacks or mounds of elemental and industrial materials. This presentation of over 30 of Jannis Kounellis' works on paper offers viewers an intimate encounter with his sensibility and process.

Jannis Kounellis had his first New York solo exhibition at Sonnabend in 1972 and his first major U.S. museum exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago in 1986. Since the 1970s the work of Jannis Kounellis has been shown extensively around the world, including museum exhibitions at Centro de Arte Reina Sofia in Madrid; Musée d'art contemporain de Bordeaux; Staatliche Kunsthalle, Baden-Baden; Museum Ludwig, Cologne; Whitechapel Art Gallery, London; and the Stedelijk van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven. Jannis Kounellis has lived and worked in Rome since 1958.

A full-color catalogue will accompany this exhibition. Gallery hours are Monday through Saturday from 10am until 6pm. Please contact the gallery for more information.

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