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PRESS RELEASE

ERIK DIETMAN
(1937-2002)

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Dietman was a resolute independent, an unbridled champion of the sensuality, comedy and incongruity of life; an exposer of the pompous, the pretentious and the grotesque; a man whose company could be as dangerous as it was inspiring.

This exhibition, the third at the gallery devoted **Dietman**'s work (but the first for 16 years), will consist of two major works, one from 1990 and one from the last year of his life.

Prefiguration d'un pipe-line lingotique is a typically deflationary procession of pompous blocks, each one a deluded savant with a thoughtful pipe stuck in its bronze brick head, all trouping in to discuss weighty matters of no importance. But it is also a terrific sculptural conception, completely original, tradition and subversion forged into unlikely cameraderie.

In the last decade of **Dietman**'s life, increasingly monumental works in bronze and stone continue to be surrounded and infiltrated by self-important smaller characters and assemblages of parts standing in conversational counterpoint to the more monolithic statements. *Eloge de l'envie* is a major late work where the small guys come together in an extraordinary gathering of objects, shoved into cooking pots, raised up on platters, thumbing their noses, an opening up of s storehouse of the raw materials of creative potential, raised up to be picked over by the scavenging black crows perched on high. It is an act of self-exposure that invites those who so wish to dig around for tasty morsels in the body of ideas.

Dietman was a prodigious gastronome, a man for whom the quality of ingredients was the essence of profitable consumption. So it was with his art: for him the materials, truth to their nature and the suggestiveness of their form guaranteed the richest stimulation of the senses and the greatest satisfaction of the appetite. After this, anything was legitimate: **Dietman**'s is an art which can raise the finger in the midst of an embrace and be equally sincere with both.

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