

LEON KOSSOFF

RECENT WORKS 1999-2010

8 September – 8 October, 2011

Opening reception: Thursday, 8 September, 2011, 6-8 P.M.

Venice, CA – L.A. Louver is delighted to announce an upcoming exhibition of recent work by the renowned British artist **Leon Kossoff** (b. 1926). The exhibition opens on 8 September, and includes over 25 paintings and drawings the artist has created over the past eleven years.

L.A. Louver has represented Leon Kossoff since 1979, which was also the year the artist's work was seen in the gallery's influential exhibition of British painters: *This Knot of Life*. Since this time -- during more than three decades of representing the artist (including exclusive worldwide representation since 1995) -- L.A. Louver has proudly assisted in the organization of museum exhibitions in Europe, the United States and Australia. However, **Leon Kossoff Recent Works: 1999-2010** marks the first time since 1993 that both paintings and drawings by the artist have been exhibited at L.A. Louver.

Captured in a series of paintings, and central to the exhibition, is Kossoff's poignant depiction of a lone cherry tree that stands in the garden of his north London home. Two wooden stakes support the leaning, aged tree, and bestow dignity upon its form. Painted over several years (2002-2008), Kossoff portrays the tree during the change of seasons, imbuing it with time and a fragile life force. Kossoff instills his noble subject with a vital presence, as it shares the picture plane with an occasional human figure, or train that passes in the distance.

In conjunction with the landscapes, Kossoff has painted a series of portraits, or to use Kossoff's own word, "heads." Intensely personal, and among the most intimate and revealing of his long career, Kossoff paints three models who have captured his imagination for several decades: his wife Peggy, artist John Lessore, and friend Fidelma Kavanaugh. The landscapes and figures are complemented by three large paintings of Hawksmoor's architectural masterpiece, Christchurch, in Spitalfields, London. Kossoff's first paintings of this subject were featured in his 1996 Tate retrospective, and graced the cover of the accompanying catalogue.



*Cherry Tree, Early January, 2004, oil on board
56 1/8 x 48 1/4 in. (142.5 x 122.5 cm)*



Head of Peggy I, 2003, oil on board
21 5/8 x 17 3/4 in. (55 x 45 cm)

The recent paintings will be recognized for Kossoff's customary use of thick impasto, compositions that seem to be sculpted out of oil, and for the threads and skeins of paint that trail across the surface of the work. Representational compositions appear through an open-weave of abstract mark-making that both energizes the work and conveys an impression of delicacy. The palette is lighter, with a more translucent and airy quality compared to previous paintings: pale greens, flesh tones, and muted yellows, blues and grays dominate Kossoff's spectrum. The influence of Kossoff's life long study of old masters -- including Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese, Poussin, Rembrandt, Rubens, Constable and Cézanne -- especially over the past 15 years, infuse these recent works.

The five drawings in the exhibition all depict the artist's beloved cherry tree. Created in charcoal, the drawings represent Kossoff's early and urgent response to the subject and were crucial to the development of the paintings.

Leon Kossoff (b. 1926) is one of Britain's greatest living artists. His most recent US museum exhibitions are *Drawn to Painting: Leon Kossoff, Drawings and Prints after Nicolas Poussin*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art (traveled to National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, in 2002) and *After Nicholas Poussin: New Etchings by Leon Kossoff*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York and the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, 2000. Exhibitions worldwide also include *Leon Kossoff: Drawing from Painting*, National Gallery, London, 2007; *Leon Kossoff: Selected Paintings, 1956-2000*, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humblebaek, Denmark, 2004-5 (traveled to Museum of Art Lucerne, Switzerland, 2005); a major retrospective at the Tate Gallery, London, 1996, and representing Britain in the XLVI Venice Biennale, 1995 (exhibition traveled to Düsseldorf Kunstverein, and Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam 1995-96).

Since 2000, L.A. Louver has partnered with Annely Juda Fine Art, London, and Mitchell-Innes & Nash, New York to strengthen Kossoff's representation worldwide. This presentation of the artist's recent paintings and drawings at L.A. Louver completes the tour of this exhibition, which began in London at Annely Juda Fine Art (28 October – 17 December 2010) and traveled to Mitchell-Innes & Nash in New York (5 May – 18 June, 2011). A fully illustrated hardback catalogue, with texts by Leon Kossoff and Lawrence Gowing, and co-published by L.A. Louver, Annely Juda Fine Art and Mitchell-Innes and Nash, accompanies the exhibition.

Concurrently on view in L.A. Louver's Second Floor Gallery

Tony Berlant: *Works from 1962-1964*

Media contact: Elizabeth East, Director, L.A. Louver, 45 North Venice Boulevard, Venice, CA, USA, Tel: 310-822-4955; fax: 310-821-7529;
e-mail: Elizabeth@lalouver.com, Hours Tuesday - Saturday 10am - 6pm, Validated parking available, www.lalouver.com