



Alice Neel, *Richard Gibbs*, 1968
oil on canvas, 64 x 50 in. (162.6 x 127 cm)
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Alice Neel: *Paintings*

in association with Jeremy Lewison Limited

20 May through 26 June 2010

Opening reception:

Thursday, 20 May, 6-8 p.m.

Venice, CA -- L.A. Louver is delighted to present our first exhibition of paintings by **Alice Neel** (1900-1984). The show is organized in collaboration with Jeremy Lewison, independent curator, and advisor to the Estate of Alice Neel.

The exhibition includes sixteen paintings that Alice Neel created over four decades, between 1940 and 1978. Represented in the exhibition are both single figures and couples, who range widely in age and background. The exhibition includes portraits of Horace Cayton, a prominent social scientist, literary critic and writer; Red Grooms and Mimi Gross, artists; Linus Pauling, Nobel Prize-winning chemist and peace activist, and his wife, Ava Helen, human rights activist; and Ann Sutherland Harris, art historian, with her infant son, Neil.

*I like it not only to look like the person, but to have their inner character as well,
and then I like to express the Zeitgeist. -- Alice Neel*

Fiercely independent, free-spirited, and working at a time when figurative painting was unfashionable, Alice Neel pursued her art fearlessly. Painting in relative obscurity into her 60s, Neel received acclaim late in life, and is now valued as one of the most important American painters of the 20th century. Neel's subjects were her sons, grandchildren, friends and acquaintances, art world figures, and sometimes people she encountered on the street. While some of her sitters were, or became, people of renown, most were simply those who caught her eye.

In her art, Neel sought to convey the individual, and to reveal their inner life. Neel described the experience of painting: "I become the person for a couple of hours, so when they leave and I am finished...I have no self." As Lewison states, "Neel entered into them, exploring their folds, creases and idiosyncrasies with her brush, sculpting them as though they were extensions of herself." Neel's paintings are imbued with a powerful understanding of her subject within an incisive temporal and social context.

The Artist

Alice Neel (1900-1984) was born near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and studied at the Philadelphia School of Design for Women (now Moore College of Art), 1921-25. Her first marriage, at age 25, to Carlos Enriquez, took her to Cuba, where she avidly painted street scenes and began to develop her painting style. Following various personal disasters, including the loss of a child, a nervous breakdown and attempted suicide, Neel settled in Greenwich Village, New York, in 1932. During the 1930s, Neel was enrolled in the Works Progress Administration and continued to develop a strong social conscience and left-wing beliefs. Hoping to escape the claustrophobia of the art world, Neel left the Village for Spanish Harlem in 1938, where she lived and worked for over two decades, working in relative obscurity. In 1962, she moved to the Upper West Side, which led her to paint a series of dynamic portraits of curators, gallery owners and artists (including her renowned painting of Andy Warhol, and the young Robert Smithson), as well as political personalities, including black activists and supporters of the women's movement.

The 1970s marked a period of increasing public recognition for Neel, and she exhibited widely during the decade, including a retrospective exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art in 1974. In 1976, Neel was elected a member of the National Institute of Arts and Letters (now the American Academy of Arts and Letters). In the same year, she received the International Women's Year Award, and was awarded the National Women's Caucus for Art Award for outstanding achievement in the visual arts in 1977. Neel's work was first seen by a Los Angeles audience in 1983, just one year before the artist died, in the exhibition *Alice Neel: Paintings 1933 - 1982* at the Loyola Marymount University Art Gallery.

Alice Neel's work is represented in museums throughout the United States, including the Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois; the Cleveland Museum of Art, Ohio; Denver Art Museum, Colorado; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, National Museum of American Art, National Museum of Women in the Arts and National Portrait Gallery, Washington, D.C.; Los Angeles County Museum of Art and Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, California; the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Overseas, Neel is represented in the Lieve Van Gorp Foundation for Women Artists, Antwerp, Belgium; Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden; and Tate Modern, London, England.

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Concurrent to the L.A. Louver exhibition, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, presents a major retrospective exhibition of the work of *Alice Neel Painted Truths*, 21 March - 13 June, 2010. Curated by Jeremy Lewison and Barry Walker, Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at the Museum of Fine Arts, the exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue with text by Lewison, Walker, Tamar Garb and Robert Storr. The exhibition travels to the Whitechapel Gallery, London, 9 July - 19 September, and the Moderna Museet, Malmö, Sweden, 10 October, 2010 - 2 January 2011. This is the first major museum show of Alice Neel's work in Europe.

Further information and visuals please contact:
Elizabeth East, L.A. Louver
45 North Venice Boulevard, Venice, CA 90291
telephone: 310-822-4955, fax: 310-821-7529
e-mail: elizabeth@lalouver.com, www.lalouver.com



Alice Neel, *Ann Sutherland Harris and Neil*, 1978
oil on canvas, 40 x 30 1/8 in. (101.6 x 76.5 cm)
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