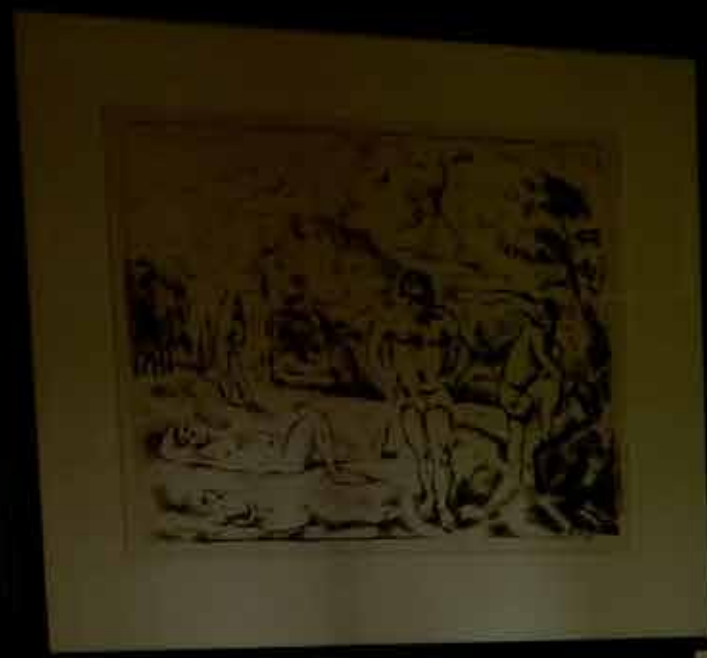


R.B.
KITAJ

L | A | LOUVER |



R.B. KITAI
IN THE AURA
OF CEZANNE
AND OTHER
MASTERS



R.B. KITAJ

10 October — 9 November 2013

L | A | L O U V E R |

VENICE, CALIFORNIA
LALOUVER.COM

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All works by R.B. Kitaj

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R.B. Kitaj, studio in Westwood, CA, March 2003

Foreword

In late spring 2003, L.A. Louver presented R.B. Kitaj's recent paintings and works on paper in an exhibition titled *Los Angeles Pictures*. Kitaj had created the exhibition through an outpouring of activity during the preceding three years. In preparing for the exhibition, I was privileged to visit Kitaj in his house and sunny studio located in the Westwood neighbourhood of Los Angeles. On each occasion, I enjoyed a finely choreographed tour at exactly 4:30 p.m., the hour he marked to receive visitors in his highly structured day. To enter Kitaj's home was, in a sense, to enter his art: an environment dense with alluring visual cues—paintings, drawings, photographs, letters, books—ordered disorder that was impossible to absorb with a casual glance.

Prior to this time, I had known Kitaj primarily through his paintings. But what paintings they are! I had seen work at the Tate and the Royal Academy in London, in museums in Europe and New York. My knowledge also came from books and catalogues, including L.A. Louver's *This Knot of Life*, 1979, and *The British Picture*, 1988, more than a decade before my own arrival to the gallery. So by 2003, L.A. Louver had enjoyed a long association with Kitaj, and we were extremely proud to present his first solo gallery exhibition in Los Angeles, the city he called home.

Since *Los Angeles Pictures*, there has been renewed interest and scholarship in Kitaj's work. Recently, the museum exhibition *R.B. Kitaj: Obsessions*, traveled from Berlin, to London and Chichester, UK, and Hamburg, Germany (2012–2013). This exhibition, and its accompanying catalogue, brought together a distinguished group of scholars and writers, who contributed new voices and a wider perspective through their nuanced examination of Kitaj's work. We are delighted that two of these scholars have contributed to our show: Dr. Eckhart J. Gillen, curator for Kulturprojekte, Berlin, and of the *Obsessions* exhibition, through his essay published here, and David N. Myers, professor and chair of the UCLA History Department, for his participation in the conversation *Kitaj's Life and Passions* at L.A. Louver on 28 October 2013.

L.A. Louver's exhibition includes paintings and drawings that encapsulate the breadth of Kitaj's abiding interests—art, movies, Jewish identity and his beloved late wife Sandra Fisher—as well as the scope of his creativity during the intense, volatile and poignant

last 15 years of his life. Kitaj created these works during his final years in London, and in Los Angeles, where he painted with renewed vigor. The exhibition culminates with a series of intimate, small-scale studies and self-portraits on coarse canvas, which are the hallmark of the two years that preceded his death, in 2007.

In organizing this exhibition, first and foremost I thank the Kitaj family, especially Lem and Dana Kitaj, and Tracy Bartley, director of the R.B. Kitaj studio and assistant to the artist during the last decade of his life. Tracy's love of the work, and of Kitaj, has permeated all our interactions, and I am most grateful for her insight, knowledge and grace. I thank Tracy also for her permission to reproduce a version of her text that first appeared in *R.B. Kitaj: Obsessions*. I give a depth of gratitude to Dr. Eckhart J. Gillen for his thoughtful essay and commentary on the exhibition's paintings. I am grateful for the co-operation of Marlborough Gallery, and thank Tara Reddi and Margaret Zwilling. As we developed this exhibition, many artists, scholars and friends expressed a deep sense of engagement and interest in the life and work of Kitaj, and in addition to Tracy Bartley and David N. Myers, I thank Joe Biel, Derek Boshier, Rebecca Campbell, Paul Holdengräber, Tom Knechtel and Tom Wudl, for their participation in conversations we have programmed in conjunction with our show. I also take this opportunity to acknowledge my wonderful and tireless colleagues at L.A. Louver, especially Christina Carlos, who has overseen the production of this catalogue, Tara Hadibrata for the care and management of the works in the exhibition, Susan Yi for her adroit handling of so many details, and for the unflinching support and counsel of Peter Goulds, Kimberly Davis and Lisa Jann.



R.B. Kitaj's yellow studio, 2007

Kitaj's Westwest

Tracy Bartley

I first met R.B. Kitaj at his home in Westwood on a late summer day in 1997. I was taken immediately by the piles of books on the floor, the stacks of artwork against the walls, and the bright yellow studio in the back garden, surrounded by pink bougainvillea.

For nine years as his personal assistant, I spent Monday through Friday with Kitaj, from his return from the café in the morning, through his early evening rituals. I would accompany him on trips, and chauffeur him around Los Angeles. We explored galleries, museums and bookshops together. I would take him to visit friends in their homes and studios, and assisted him as he was invited to lecture around the city.

Kitaj fondly called the house in Westwood "Westwest" after Kafka's Count in *The Castle*. The Spanish revival style house was built in 1935, and is rumored to have been the home of Peter Lorre. Kitaj turned every room, save his young son Max's, into a gallery and library: most famously the "Jewish Library" and the "Cézanne Room." Bookshelves came up every wall, and he filled them with his vast collections: Art History, Film, Judaica, American poetry.

His home was the incubator for his thoughts, writings and artwork. Every room was filled with memories and mementos and touchstones to experience. The sparse furnishings were punctuated with pieces that held great meaning: the large octagonal table in the front room covered with calling cards, books and clippings; the paint-splattered stool in his studio, both brought over from London. But it was the art and the books that one could not escape. The house was full of memories and stories. Kitaj once told me that one's home is one's greatest work of art. His home and studio were a testament to a man who lived for beauty and knowledge.

The front room of the house was his drawing studio, with walls designed to take pushpins and large blank sheets of his "porridge paper" hung from top to bottom. His friend David Hockney had introduced him to this rough textured paper in the 1970s. There

are few drawings on any other paper surface from that time on. The drawings would be done with pencil and charcoal — and on occasion, with the addition of paint. He would spray them with fixative until they had the leathery texture he liked. The same paper would be coated with a transfer medium so it could be used to create a stone for his lithographs — a method developed for him by Master Printer Stanley Jones at Curwen Press, that allowed the artist to work in the manner in which he was most comfortable with.

The drawings would be moved up and down the walls as he was working on them. Many would be worked at the same time. A thin bead of charcoal and pastel dust would line the room as he worked and reworked the surfaces. Next to each, or on the floor below, would be newspaper and magazine clippings that he used as source material. When not in active use, these clippings were kept carefully in a folder. Kitaj would sometimes use the same image many times over. He referred to them as a kind of “repertory company” — going back to the same “actors” again and again.

The painting studio was a garage conversion accessed through the back garden. Designed by Barbara Callas of Shortridge Callas, it was near completion when Kitaj arrived in Los Angeles in 1996. It included a zinc panel roof, meticulously installed and finished by hand. The roof was lifted and tilted to allow a bank of clerestory windows and the much-desired northern light of a painting studio. Kitaj would refer to this as his “Yellow Studio”: a bright chrome yellow that was reflected in the adjacent black-bottomed pool. It was the yellow of Van Gogh’s house in Arles and of Monet’s dining room. It was set next to the pool, overlooking the patio and gardens. Kitaj had told me of the time and care he had taken with his garden in London. Here in Los Angeles, he took less interest — but he enjoyed the giant ferns, fig trees and colorful blooming trees and bushes that grow so easily in Southern California.

Kitaj would often comment how un-L.A. it was: an intimate space, as he did not desire the large industrial spaces favored by most L.A. artists. A Mies van der Rohe daybed and shelves of books occupied one end, and more books covered the floor in stacks. The main space was filled with three easels, set on scattered carpets. The walls were covered with source images, drawings, and mementos. The studio was filled with paintings in various stages of completion — and ever

present were the portrait of his friend José Vicente, smoking, and *Sandra in Armani Suit* (1993). In actuality, the entire house was Kitaj’s studio — though the two spaces were where most of the work was developed. Every room was filled with books, tear-sheets of inspiration, and works he had collected over the years by those he admired most: Hockney, Auerbach, Kossoff and others.

Following an early visit to the café to read and to write, he would spend most of his days in solitude, focused on his work. When we were in the same room, we often wouldn’t speak to each other, working silently side by side. Other days I would leave him in his Yellow Studio, the door open to the sweet air of his garden. He would sit and stare at the canvas, then carefully lay a line of color. He would return to the house in the evening to watch baseball or movies, or visit family.

In his final year, the routine changed due to health concerns. And that, I believe, was the beginning of the end. I remember a man who made me laugh, who held kindness in the highest regard, who put family first, who was unwaveringly true to himself, who was uncomfortable with things that were not in his control.

He is a man I admire greatly.

Paintings and Drawings
1992–2007

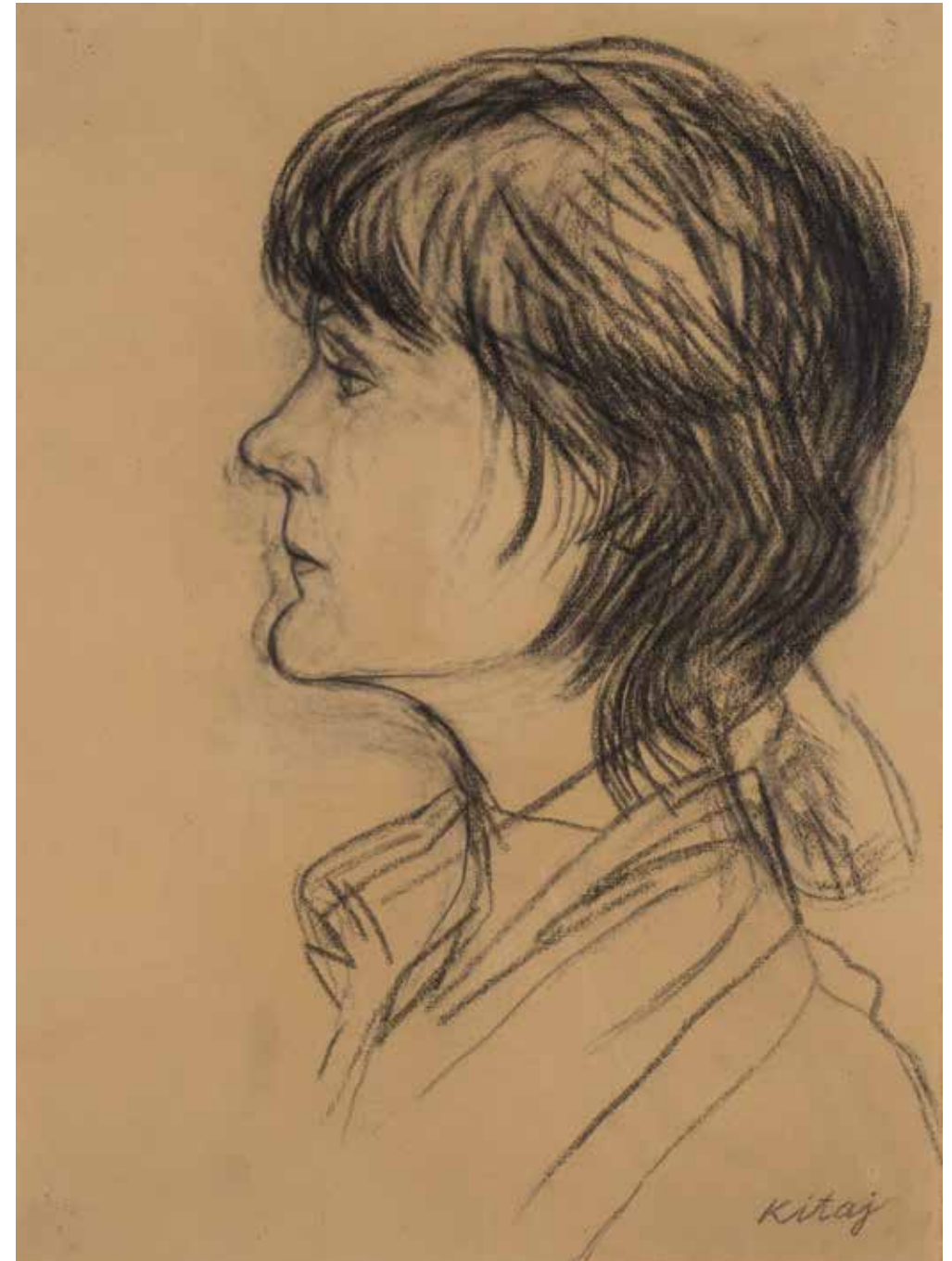
*Whistler vs. Ruskin (Novella in
Terre Verte, Yellow and Red)*, 1992
oil on canvas
60 x 60 in. (152.4 x 152.4 cm)



Movie Star, 1993
oil on canvas
60 x 33 1/4 in. (152.4 x 84.5 cm)



Miranda Richardson, 1996–97
charcoal on paper
30 1/2 x 22 in. (77.5 x 55.9 cm)





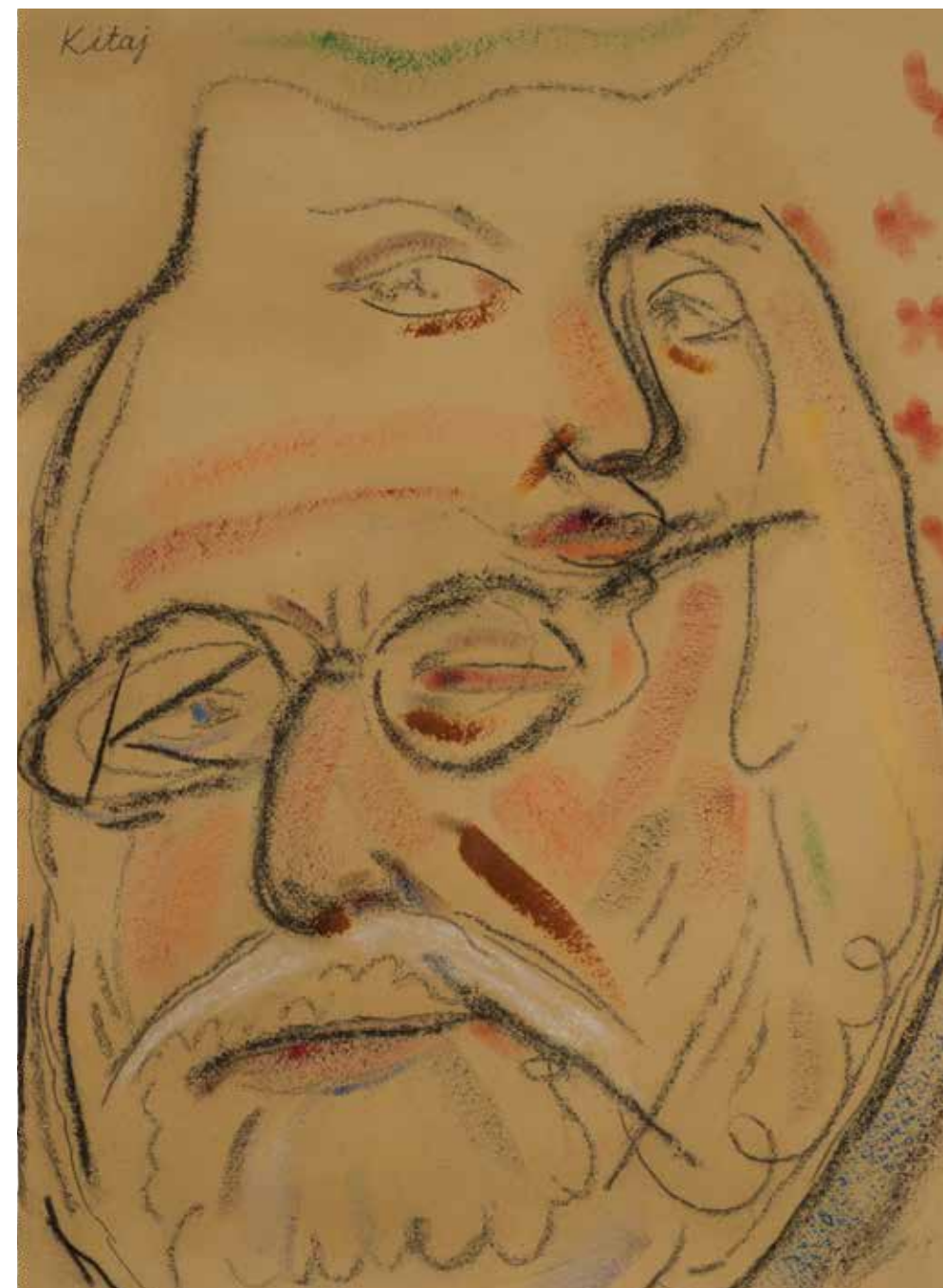
The Sexist (Miss X), 1999
oil on canvas
60 x 24 in. (152.4 x 61 cm)



Self Portrait (After Weegee), 2000–03
 pastel, charcoal and oil on paper
 22 1/2 x 30 in. (57.2 x 76.2 cm)



Sandra and Me, 2002–04
 pastel, charcoal and oil on paper
 30 7/8 x 22 5/8 in. (78.4 x 57.5 cm)



UCLA Blonde (After Van Gogh), 2001–04
 charcoal pencil on paper
 30 1/2 x 22 in. (77.5 x 55.9 cm)

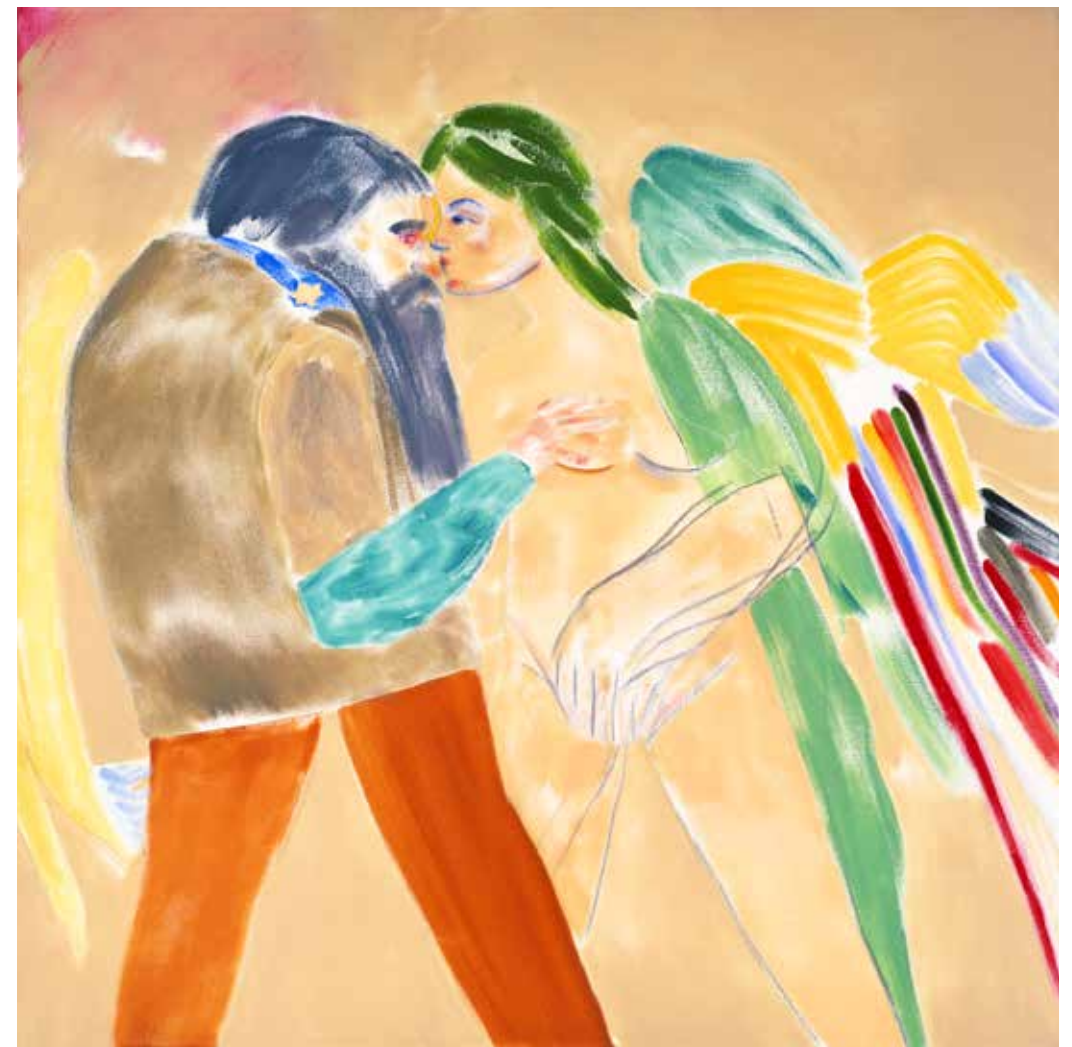


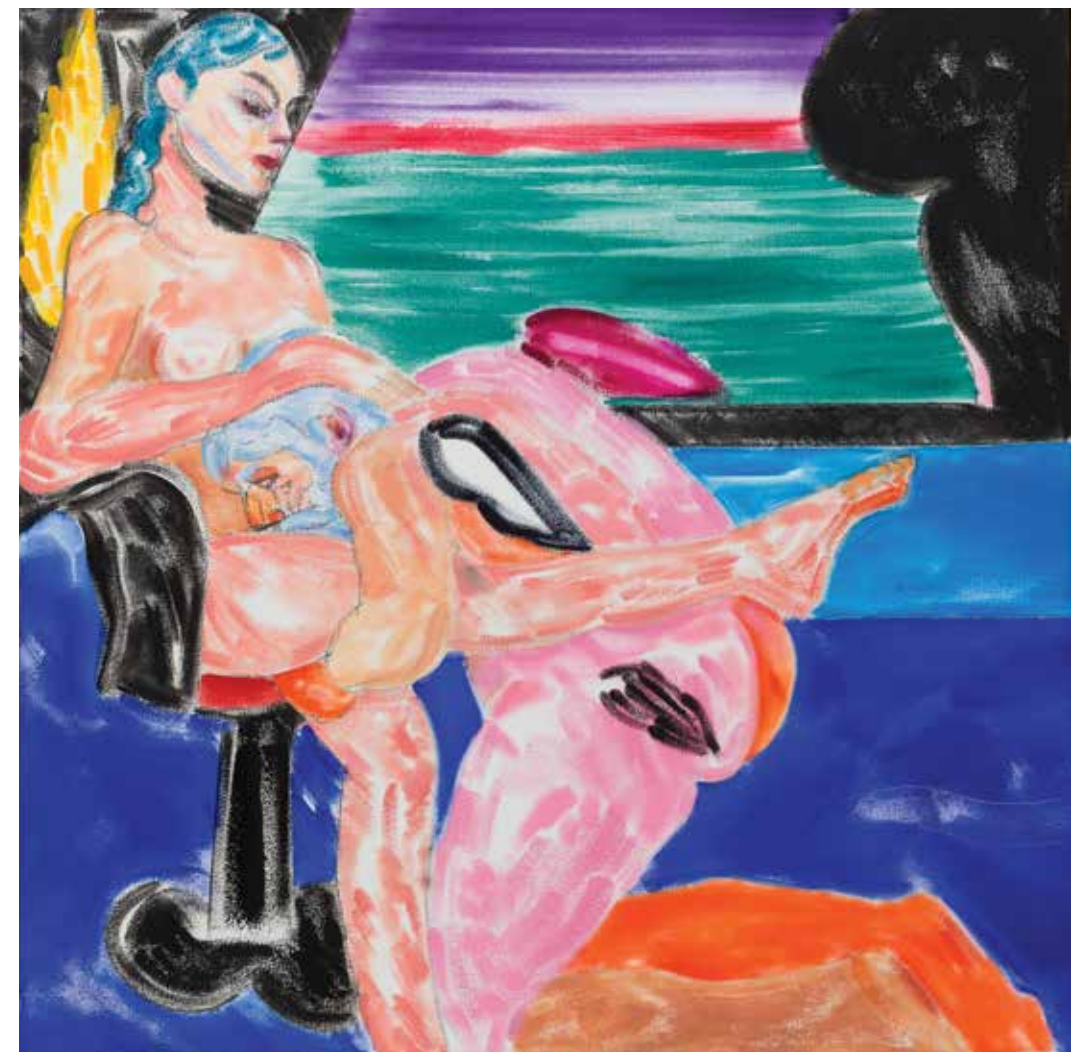
XXI Self Portrait, 2002–03
oil on canvas
24 3/4 x 24 3/4 in. (62.9 x 62.9 cm)











Los Angeles No. 29 (Me In You), 2004
oil on canvas
48 x 23 3/4 in. (121.9 x 60.3 cm)



Jewish Bargeman Whist, 2004
oil on canvas
24 x 24 in. (61 x 61 cm)







Indigo, 2005
oil on canvas
36 x 36 in. (91.4 x 91.4 cm)



The Studio Where I Died, 2005
oil on canvas
36 x 36 in. (91.4 x 91.4 cm)



Hollywood Hills, 2006
oil on canvas
18 x 12 in. (45.7 x 30.5 cm)





Sig, 2007
oil on canvas
18 x 12 1/8 in. (45.7 x 30.8 cm)



Jerusalem After Bomberg, 2006
oil on canvas
12 x 12 in. (30.5 x 30.5 cm)





Tzara After Giacometti, 2007
oil on canvas
12 x 12 in. (30.5 x 30.5 cm)



Jewish Bathers, 2007
oil on canvas
12 x 12 in. (30.5 x 30.5 cm)







Los Angeles — Kitaj’s Babylonian Exile

Eckhart J. Gillen
September 23, 2013
Berlin

After studying in New York, Vienna, at The Ruskin School in Oxford, and the Royal College of Art, R.B. Kitaj (1932–2007) began his career in London at the same time as David Hockney, Peter Blake and Eduardo Paolozzi. Artistically, he operated using techniques that included Surrealism and Dadaism, Pop Art and classical figurative painting (i.e., the pastel technique of Edgar Degas, which he rediscovered in the early 1970s). Kitaj’s work is not homogeneous, but full of leaps in form and content; it displays joy in experimentation, and is characterized by constant changes of style. All of his pictures are collages, in the sense that they involve the associative combination and opposition of elements of reality. In his compositions, the artist connects everyday objects and events lying far back in history, with mythological and autobiographical motifs and materials. The perspective alters again and again, and the pictorial space changes from external space to a sphere of consciousness, or often both at the same time.

As a loner, Kitaj aspired to a sense of belonging in a community. He found this, not in changing nations or in religion, but in the ideas and thoughts of his friends — the poets, painters and philosophers that inspired him. Books and his own library became his home [cf, *Unpacking my Library* (1990–91), following the essay by Walter Benjamin with the same title].¹ In a commentary on the painting *Reflections on Violence* (1962),² he formulated the notion that books were, to him, as trees were to a landscape painter.

Kitaj grew up as a free-thinker, an American with Austrian and Russian ancestors, and without religious education. The subject matter of his paintings addressed his own identity, which went hand in hand with debates on the relativity of perception.

In 1989, Kitaj suffered a mild heart attack, followed by symptoms of depression. Noticeably that year, he painted pictures with titles such as *Melancholy*; *Melancholy after Dürer*; *Up all Night (Fulham Road)*; and *Burnt Out*.³ The physical and mental crisis prompted him to paint more and more pictures that reflected his personal life. In the painting

My Cities (An Experimental Drama) (1990–93), he presented himself in youth, middle age and old age.⁴ Behind the figures is a drop curtain inscribed with historiated capital letters, referring to cities where he lived or loved. In the catalogue for his 1994 Tate retrospective, he wrote in his commentary: “The catwalk stage upon which the figures tread and stumble through life becomes the roof of a baseball dugout in which I’ve tried half-heartedly to draw some of my demons... colorless spectres only thinly isolated from the three leading players above as in a predella.”⁵ This image of colorless spectres is like a prophecy of coming events.

After living for 36 years in the UK, the Tate offered him his first museum show in England, in 1994. Like all artists, he included many of his recent works in this exhibition. Because of these very personal paintings, the bad and unfair reaction of the critics hurt Kitaj so much, that he waged a personal “Tate War” against them. He interpreted the sudden death of his wife Sandra Fisher as a consequence of the critics’ attacks: “Art Terrorists had tried to kill me off and they got her instead.”⁶ In his manifesto titled, “Tate War (I Accuse!)” he wrote: “Frank Auerbach summed it up perfectly, as usual. He said succinctly that I came from a different culture! Sandra’s death confirmed that I couldn’t belong in London, so I came home.”⁷ Consequently, Kitaj said farewell to London, and went back to the United States in 1997. The final chapter of Kitaj’s life started in Los Angeles. There, he continued to paint very personal pictures, in spite of the dogmas of modernism and the rules of the art market.

This L.A. Louver solo exhibition of R.B. Kitaj includes a fine selection of works that were all created—besides four works from the 1990s—during the last period of his life in Los Angeles. Before he left London, Kitaj had an affair with an English woman from the upper class, the mysterious “Miss X.” He portrayed her in 1999 as *The Sexist (Miss X)* (pp.24–25). In his unpublished autobiography, written in 2003, Kitaj remembered: “My London had been Sandra for 25 years, and then she disappeared, leaving me in a soul-destroying waste-city which just didn’t count for me anymore. Eight months after she died, her friend Hannah Rothschild introduced me to a fine woman... We entered into an affair and agreed to marry. Those close to me thought I was crazy... It was not a good idea said everyone. They were right... [She] came from the world of Brideshead and

Notting Hill... By then, I came to my senses. I was deeply in love with my Jewish Sandra.”⁸

In Los Angeles, Kitaj pondered the possibility of expressing his feelings to Sandra in his artwork. The answer was stimulated by an invitation from the National Gallery, London in 1999–2000, to create works that were inspired by Old Master paintings in the gallery’s collection. Kitaj decided to reference the last three compositions of Paul Cézanne’s *Les Grandes Baigneuses* (1894–1906).⁹ In L.A. Louver’s exhibition, Kitaj pays homage to the “Father of Modernism” in his portrait of Cézanne, titled *1906* (2007, p.64), and likewise to Van Gogh’s early painting *The Potato Eaters* (1885),¹⁰ in the little picture *A Modern Potato-Eaters* (2006–07, pp.62-63).

Instead of “Bathers,” Kitaj imagined “Lovers” (the title of a unfinished painting by Kitaj from 2001), and delivered seven versions of his famous Los Angeles paintings for the 2001–02 exhibition at the National Gallery. Up until 2004, Kitaj realized 22 more Los Angeles paintings, depicting two naked lovers. In these paintings, he imagines Los Angeles as a paradisaal space cultivating the Edenic atmosphere of Cézanne’s trio of late “Bathers.” The location is always his new house, the pool and the yellow studio in Westwood, where he is shown as a white bearded “Hermit Painter,” appearing like Abraham with wings, and Sandra as a beautiful young angel.

A pastel with charcoal and oil on paper, *Sandra and Me* (2002–04, pp.28–29), shows Kitaj’s head melting with Sandra’s in half profile. The “K” inscribed into his glasses refers to both writer Franz Kafka and to himself. The title is part of a quotation in his “Confessions” on the *Los Angeles Pictures*: “Then, like a shot, it came to me: Lovers would be *Sandra and me* (italics, E.G.). I would cast us as Angels – beings more than ‘real’ – Los Angeles – OK, sur-real. Sandra emerged into my life again from the dark of our loss into the bright lights of my (our) art. No more tears: she’s back.”¹¹

In the sense of Kitaj’s early Oxford readings of Warburg’s interpretation of the Apollo-Marsyas myth,¹² Kitaj left an earthly sensuous life behind him by bidding Europe farewell and nurturing a Platonic “heavenly” love for Sandra. Kitaj saw Sandra and himself as two Jewish angels, painted by himself, a Jew in Los Angeles, the third largest Jewish community in the world after New York and Tel Aviv. The city itself has a historic Jewish significance for Kitaj,

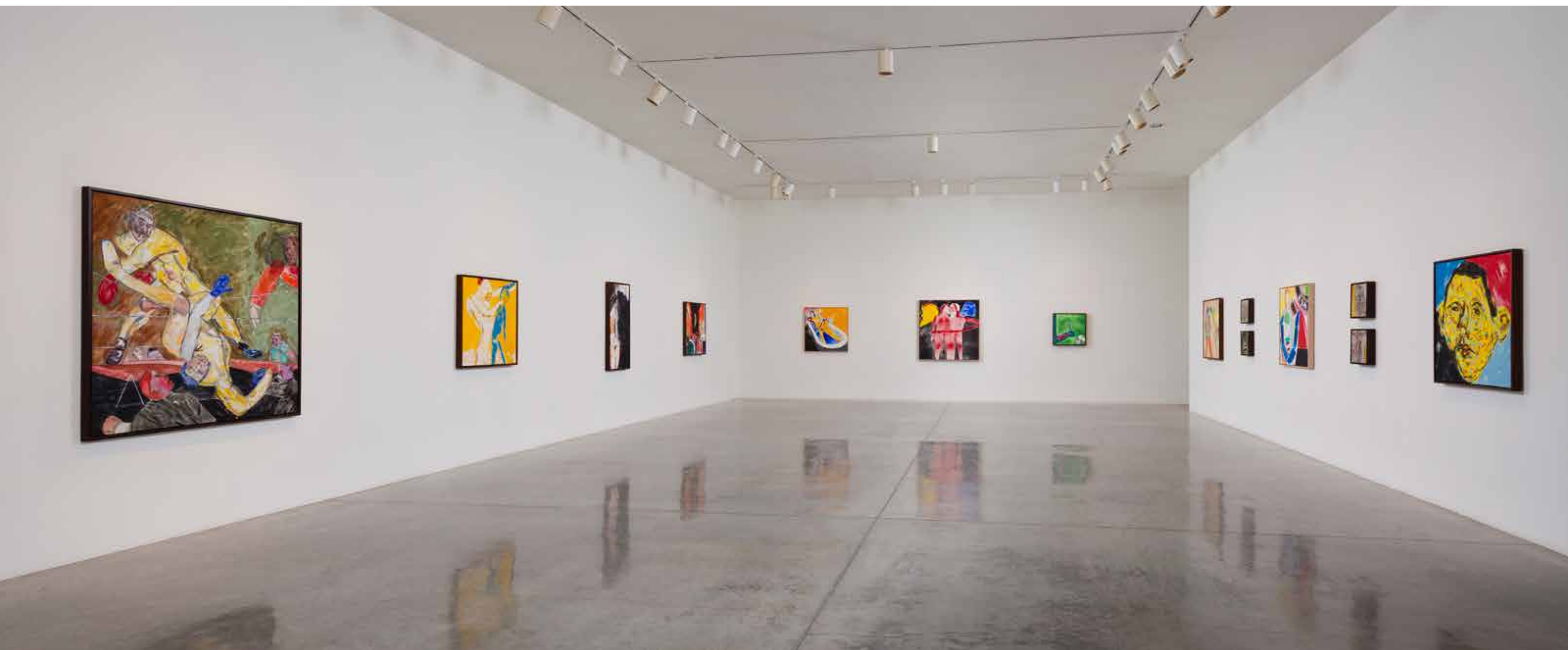
who noted that, during the 1930s and 1940s, Los Angeles served as a refuge for many prominent Jewish artists and intellectuals fleeing Europe, including the writers Bertolt Brecht, Lion Feuchtwanger and Thomas Mann; the composers Paul Dessau, Hanns Eisler and Arnold Schoenberg; the film director Billy Wilder; and the actor Peter Lorre who, as Kitaj always proudly said, was one of the previous owners of his house in Westwood. “Hollywood is its own Diasporist Manifesto,” wrote Kitaj. “100 years old, made largely by Jews”¹³ and “about the most generous Diaspora the Jews have ever known.”¹⁴

Analogously to the Talmud, in which the Shekhinah as the female presence of god followed the Jewish people into exile after the destruction of the First Temple, Kitaj believed that Sandra would follow him to his personal Babylonian exile of Los Angeles. Included in the L.A. Louver exhibition are *Los Angeles No. 11 (Bathtub)*, *Los Angeles No. 24 (Nose by Nose)*, *Los Angeles No. 26 (Nose Kiss)*, *Los Angeles No. 27 (Go Down)*, *Los Angeles No. 29 (Me In You)* (2002–04, pp.34–43). The *Los Angeles Pictures* were first exhibited at L.A. Louver in 2003, some of which have returned after ten years! In the catalogue for the 2003 L.A. Louver exhibition, Kitaj wrote: “I had begun some paintings in L.A. about my great romance with Sandra. These paintings were influenced by Cézanne’s bathers, which had driven Picasso and Matisse nuts a hundred years ago. They were both doing crucial Bather pictures in 1906, the year Cézanne died. Picasso’s revolutionary *Demoiselles* are bathers. Almost 50 years later, Matisse was cutting out blue paper bathers when I was a young artist in the 1950s. Bathers, as a subject didn’t interest me, but Lovers did.”¹⁵ *Los Angeles No. 24 (Nose to Nose)* (2003, pp.36–37) was directly influenced by the Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Levinas. In February 2004, Kitaj wrote in his diary about the painting: “In the picture, Sandra has a yellow wing-profile of my face and I have a blue wing-profile of her face. Levinas is the great philosopher of the human face. Levinas says that God comes to him when he encounters the face of the other, even though he says that he cannot prove God’s existence.” Kitaj continued themes similar to those explored in the *Los Angeles* pictures in paintings like *Transference* (2004, pp.48–49). Using the psychoanalytical term “transference” he implicates the transfer of his emotions to Sandra as his substitute and alter ego. In the painting *Los Angeles No. 29 (Me In You)* (2004, pp.42–43), Kitaj even imagines himself to be part of Sandra’s body.

In his last pictures, Kitaj developed more and more an aesthetic of the unfinished. He cited Cézanne’s three unfinished Bathers and Kafka’s three unfinished novels as metaphorical to what Cézanne said in one of his last letters: “In art, I still fail to gain the Promised Land... I’ll never get there, but I can dare it before I die.”¹⁶ This describes exactly Kitaj’s Diasporist idea: “Heimat,” or homeland, is forever out of reach. His home in the background of his *Los Angeles Pictures* is only another exile for the Diasporist artist.

¹ Kitaj, R.B. *Unpacking My Library*. 1990–91. Oil on canvas. Collection of Joseph Kitaj.
² Kitaj, R.B. *Reflections on Violence*. 1962. Oil on collage on canvas. Collection of Hamburger Kunsthalle, Germany.
³ Kitaj, R.B. *Melancholy*. 1989. Oil on canvas. Private collection.
Kitaj, R.B. *Melancholy after Dürer*. 1989. Oil on canvas. Collection of British Council, London.
(www.collection.britishcouncil.org/collection)
Kitaj, R.B. *Up All Night (Fulham Road)*. 1989. Oil on canvas. Marlborough International Fine Art. New York.
Kitaj, R.B. *Burnt Out*. 1989. Oil on canvas. Private collection.
⁴ Kitaj, R.B. *My Cities (An Experimental Drama)*. 1990–93. Oil on canvas. Collection of Tate, London.
(www.tate.org.uk)
⁵ Kitaj, R.B., and Richard Morphet. *R.B. Kitaj: A Retrospective*. London: Tate, 1994: 221. Print.
⁶ Kitaj, R.B. *Confessions*. 2003. TS. Kitaj papers, University of California, Los Angeles.
⁷ Kitaj, R.B. *Tate War. I Accuse!* 1997. TS. Kitaj papers, University of California, Los Angeles.
⁸ *Confessions*, op. cit.
⁹ Cézanne, Paul. *Les Grandes Baigneuses*. 1894–1905. Oil on canvas. Collection of The National Gallery, London;
1895–1906. Collection of the Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia; 1900–1906. Collection of the Philadelphia Museum of Art.
¹⁰ Van Gogh, Vincent. *The Potato Eaters*. 1885. Oil on canvas. Collection of Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam.
¹¹ *Confessions*, op. cit.
¹² Wind, Edgar. *Heidnische Mysterien in Der Renaissance*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1981. Print.
¹³ Kitaj, R.B. *R.B. Kitaj: How to Reach 72 in Jewish Art: Including the Second Diasporist Manifesto*. New York: Marlborough Gallery, 2005: 13. Print.
¹⁴ Livingstone, Marco. *R.B. Kitaj*. London: Phaidon Press Inc., 1999: 204. Print.
¹⁵ Kitaj, R.B. *Los Angeles Pictures*. Venice, CA: L.A. Louver Publications, 2012: 10. Print.
¹⁶ Lambirth, Andrew. *Kitaj*. London: PWP Contemporary Art, 2004. Print.







R.B. Kitaj's studio, 2007

List of Works

Kitaj's Documented References

Whistler vs. Ruskin (Novella in Terre Verte, Yellow and Red), 1992
oil on canvas
60 x 60 in. (152.4 x 152.4 cm)

Bellows, George. *Dempsey and Firpo*, 1924
oil on canvas
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York
www.whitney.org/Collection/GeorgeBellows

Movie Star, 1993
oil on canvas
60 x 33 1/4 in. (152.4 x 84.5 cm)

Miranda Richardson, 1996–97
charcoal on paper
30 1/2 x 22 in. (77.5 x 55.9 cm)

Bed and Sofa (After Abram Room), 1998
oil on canvas
24 x 72 in. (61 x 182.9 cm)

Bed and Sofa (Tretya Meshchanskaya)
Dir. Abram Room, 1927
film

The Sexist (Miss X), 1999
oil on canvas
60 x 24 in. (152.4 x 61 cm)

Self Portrait (After Weegee), 2000–03
pastel, charcoal and oil on paper
24 x 72 in. (61 x 182.9 cm)

Weegee (Arthur Fellig). *Villain*, 1950
gelatin silver print
International Center of Photography, New York

Sandra and Me, 2002–04
pastel, charcoal and oil on paper
30 1/2 x 22 5/8 in. (78 x 57.5 cm)

UCLA Blonde (After Van Gogh), 2001–04
charcoal pencil on paper
30 1/2 x 22 in. (77.5 x 55.9 cm)

Van Gogh, Vincent. *Head of a Girl*, 1888
drawing, ink on laid paper
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XXI Self Portrait, 2002–03
oil on canvas
24 3/4 x 24 3/4 in. (62.9 x 62.9 cm)

Matisse, Henri. *XXe Century NY: Homage to Henri Matisse*.
New York: Tudor Publishing Co, 1970
print

Los Angeles No. 11 (Bathtub), 2002–03
oil on canvas
36 x 36 in. (91.4 x 91.4 cm)

Los Angeles No. 24 (Nose to Nose), 2003
oil on canvas
48 x 48 in. (121.9 x 121.9 cm)

Los Angeles No. 26 (Nose Kiss), 2003
oil on canvas
36 x 36 in. (91.4 x 91.4 cm)

Los Angeles No. 27 (Go Down), 2003–04
oil on canvas
36 x 36 in. (91.4 x 91.4 cm)

Los Angeles No. 29 (Me In You), 2004
oil on canvas
48 x 23 3/4 in. (121.9 x 60.3 cm)

Jewish Bargeman Whist, 2004
oil on canvas
24 x 24 in. (61 x 61 cm)

Soutine (After His Self-Portrait), 2004
oil on canvas
36 x 36 in. (91.4 x 91.4 cm)

Transference, 2004
oil on canvas
36 x 36 in. (91.4 x 91.4 cm)

Indigo, 2005
oil on canvas
36 x 36 in. (91.4 x 91.5 cm)

The Studio Where I Died, 2005
oil on canvas
36 x 36 in. (91.4 x 91.4 cm)

A Modern Potato-Eaters, 2006–07
oil on canvas
12 x 18 in. (30.5 x 45.7 cm)

Hollywood Hills, 2006
oil on canvas
18 x 12 in. (45.7 x 30.5 cm)

Van Rijn, Rembrandt. *The Jewish Bride (Isaac and Rebecca)*, 1665–1669
oil on canvas
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. www.rijksmuseum.nl

Whistler, James Abbott McNeill. *Nocturne: Blue and Gold—Old Battersea Bridge*, 1872–75
oil on canvas
Tate, London. www.tate.org.uk

Soutine, Chaïm. *Self Portrait*, 1918
oil on canvas
The Art Museum, Princeton University, New Jersey

The Violinist of Florence (Der Geiger von Florence)
Dir. Paul Czinner, 1926
film still

Van Gogh, Vincent. *The Potato Eaters*, 1885
oil on canvas
Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam. www.vangoghmuseum.nl

Jerusalem After Bomberg, 2006
oil on canvas
12 x 12 in. (30.5 x 30.5 cm)

1906, 2007
oil on canvas
12 x 12 in. (30.5 x 30.5 cm)

Envy After Giotto, 2007
oil on canvas
12 x 12 in. (30.5 x 30.5 cm)

Jewish Bathers, 2007
oil on canvas
12 x 12 in. (30.5 x 30.5 cm)

Sig, 2007
oil on canvas
18 x 12 1/8 in. (45.7 x 30.8 cm)

Self-Portrait Mask, 2007
oil on canvas
12 x 12 in. (30.5 x 30.5 cm)

Tzara After Giacometti, 2007
oil on canvas
12 x 12 in. (30.5 x 30.5 cm)

Self-Portrait, 2007
oil on canvas
12 x 12 in. (30.5 x 30.5 cm)

Bomberg, David. *A Street in Jerusalem*, 1924
oil on canvas
Private collection

Cézanne, Paul. *Self-Portrait with a Hat*, 1890–94
oil on canvas
Bridgestone Museum of Art, Tokyo
www.bridgestone-museum.gr.jp

Giotto di Bondone. *The Seven Vices (Envy)*, 1306
fresco
Scrovegni Chapel. Padua, Italy.

Anonymous. Sigmund Benway
(R.B. Kitaj's biological father). N.d.
photograph
R.B. Kitaj Estate, Los Angeles

Giacometti, Alberto. *Tristan Tzara*, 1949
lithograph
Museum of Modern Art, New York
www.moma.org/collection



R.B. Kitaj, 1998

R.B. Kitaj was born in 1932 in Cleveland, Ohio. He traveled as a merchant seaman, before serving in the United States Army in Europe from 1956–1958. Settling in England, he attended the Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art at the University of Oxford, and in 1959 transferred to the Royal College of Art. Kitaj adopted London as his home for almost 40 years. However, disillusioned by the barrage of negative press surrounding his 1994 Tate retrospective, and the sudden death of his wife Sandra Fisher at the age of 47, Kitaj relocated to Los Angeles in 1997. Kitaj remained in Los Angeles until his death in 2007.

Throughout his lifetime, Kitaj was recognized for his outstanding accomplishments. In 1982, he was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Three years later, Kitaj became a Royal Academician — only the third American to be so honored in the Royal Academy’s history. In 1995, Kitaj received the Golden Lion Award, the grand prize for painting at the Venice Biennale, and the next year, he was awarded the Chevalier of Art and Letters by the French Government.

From 1962 on, Kitaj exhibited his work throughout Europe and North America. His paintings are included in numerous private and public collections including the Musée National d’Art Moderne, Centre Pompidou, Paris; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía and Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid; Genmeentemuseum, The Hague; The Israel Museum, Jerusalem; Kunstmuseum, Düsseldorf; Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebaek; Museum Ludwig, Cologne; Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art, Oslo; The British Museum, Royal Academy of Arts, and Tate, London; The Museum of Modern Art and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and The Cleveland Museum of Art.

Recent solo museum exhibitions include: *R.B. Kitaj Passions and Memory*, at the Skirball Cultural Center, Los Angeles, in early 2008; and *R.B. Kitaj: Obsessions*, a retrospective curated by Dr. Eckhart J. Gillen (Kultureprojekte), which traveled from The Jewish Museum, Berlin (21 September 2012–27 January 2013), to The Jewish Museum, London, and Pallant House, Chichester, UK (23 February–16 June 2013), and Hamburger Kunsthalle, Germany (19 July–27 October 2013).

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R.B.
KITAJ

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Inside front and back covers: R.B. Kitaj's home and studio in Westwood, CA, 2007.

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