

Alice Neel Paintings and Drawings

Duration: 29 October 2010 – 14 January 2011

Private view: October 28, 6 - 9 p.m.

Location: Aurel Scheibler / ScheiblerMitte
Charlottenstraße 2, 10969 Berlin-Kreuzberg

Aurel Scheibler is pleased to present his second show of works by Alice Neel, one of the great American painters of the twentieth century. This is only her second exhibition in Germany to date and runs concurrently with her retrospective *Painted Truths* at the Moderna Museet in Malmö.

In collaboration with Jeremy Lewison, we are once again featuring an extensive range of portraits. For the first time, however, we are combining these with a small selection of still lifes and cityscapes, genres Neel is not as well known for but which she equally imbued with sensitive interpretations of the zeitgeist and her own condition. Together with several drawings, the show touches on nearly every phase of her artistic career and helps to flesh out the world beyond the living room chairs on which her sitters alighted.

Born near Philadelphia in 1900 and trained at the Philadelphia School of Design for Women, Alice Neel became a painter with a strong social conscience and equally strong left-wing beliefs. In the 1930s she lived in Greenwich Village, New York and enrolled as a member of the Works Progress Administration for which she painted urban scenes. Her portraits of the 1930s embraced left wing writers, artists and trade unionists.

Neel left Greenwich Village for Spanish Harlem in 1938 to get away from the rarefied atmosphere of an art colony. There she painted the Puerto Rican community, casual acquaintances, neighbours and people she encountered on the street. In the 1960s she moved to the Upper West Side and made a determined effort to reintegrate with the art world. This led to a series of dynamic portraits of artists, curators and gallery owners, among them Frank O'Hara, Andy Warhol and the young Robert Smithson. She also maintained her practice of painting political personalities, including black activists and supporters of the women's movement.

In the 1970s, Neel began to paint portraits of her extended family as well as a major series of nudes. Neel exhibited widely in America throughout the 1970s and in 1974 she held a retrospective exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. She was regularly invited to lecture on her work and became a role model for supporters of the feminist movement. She was elected a member of the National Institute of Arts and Letters (now the American Academy of Arts and Letters), the highest formal recognition of artistic merit in the USA, and received a number of national awards including the International Women's Year Award in 1976 and the National Women's Caucus for Art Award for outstanding achievement in the visual arts in 1979. She died in 1984.

Alice Neel was a pioneer among women artists. A painter of people, landscape and still life, Neel was never fashionable or in step with avant-garde movements. Sympathetic to the expressionist spirit of northern Europe and Scandinavia and to the darker arts of Spanish painting, she painted in a style and with an approach distinctively her own.

In addition to the current retrospective in Malmö, (previous stations were the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston and Whitechapel Gallery, London) over the last decade Alice Neel has had numerous solo shows in the United States and Europe and participated in significant group shows including *Wack! Art and the Feminist Revolution*. Her work is represented in such internationally known collections the Tate Modern, London; National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; and the Moderna Museet, Stockholm.

A catalogue will be available.



Image: Alice Neel, Hartley on the Motorcycle, 1966, Oil on canvas, 210.2 x 127.3 cm, 83 x 50 in.