

Leon Golub: Live & Die Like a Lion?
April 23 – July 23, 2010



Leon Golub, *LIVE & DIE LIKE A LION?*, 2002, Oil stick on Bristol, 8 x 10 inches. Anthony and Judith Seraphin, Seraphin Gallery.

Main Gallery

Opening Reception: Thursday, April 22, 6:00–8:00pm

For further information and images, please contact
Emily Gaynor *Public Relations and Marketing Officer*
212 219 2166 x119 | egaynor@drawingcenter.org

February 8, 2010

New York, NY – The Drawing Center announces *Leon Golub: Live & Die Like a Lion?* on view in the Main Gallery from April 23–July 23, 2010. The first major museum exhibition to focus on the late drawings of the American artist Leon Golub (1922–2004), this presentation will feature approximately 50 oil stick and ink on Bristol board and vellum drawings made between 1999 and 2004. It will also include Golub’s only existent unfinished painting—a chalk sketch of two lions—which he started in 2001 but never completed, as well as preliminary ‘background’ drawings and the artist’s original source material from a variety of wide-circulating periodicals. This exhibition is curated by Brett Littman, Executive Director of The Drawing Center, and will travel to the Mary & Leigh Block Museum of Art at Northwestern University, Evanston, IL (September 21, 2010–December 12, 2010) and The Museum Het Domein, Sittard, Netherlands (January 22, 2011–April 24, 2011).

Although he was most often noted as a painter, Golub used drawing as a foundational tool in his practice. The late drawings on view mark a stylistic and thematic shift from a long-term preoccupation with the atrocities of the external world towards an exploration of the personally revelatory. Departing from his earlier formal constraints, the drawings made after 1999 reveal a liberation of the line and transparency in the mark-making process. Incorporating both pure abstraction and representational forms, Golub used icons such as animals, species composites, and highly-sexualized females in dialogue with skeletons to expose his interest in human virtues, attributes, and shortcomings. Never fully abandoning the political, the drawings often include farcical or contextually specific text. The results are candid examples of an aesthetic immediacy and newfound freedom in the artist’s late work.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Leon Golub was born in Chicago in 1922 and studied art history at the University of Chicago before serving in the U.S. Army as a cartographer during the Second World War. When he returned to Chicago he enrolled as a painting student at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, where he received an M.F.A. in 1950, and took his first series of life drawing classes. Along with a group of like-minded artists, including Cosmo Campoli, George Cohen and Nancy Spero, whom he married in 1951, Golub sought to develop a figurative style that responded to the political and existential conditions of the postwar period. Golub drew upon diverse iconography including Greek and Roman sculpture, photographs of athletic competitions, and an archive of journalistic images and mass media. Following a short stint of teaching in the Midwest, Golub and Spero moved to Paris in 1959. Returning to the U.S. by 1964, the artist moved to New York where he created his signature large-scale paintings that responded directly to current events, many of which he staunchly opposed.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Sunday, April 25, 2:00pm

Brett Littman, the exhibition's curator and Executive Director of The Drawing Center, will give an exhibition walk-through.

Thursday, May 6, 6:30pm

Panel discussion devoted to the life and work of Leon Golub, including an esteemed group of artists, curators, art critics, and colleagues, who will share their personal experiences and recollections of the artist. Each panelist will be asked to discuss a specific drawing from the exhibition as it relates to his or her own relationship with Golub, and the lessons learned from his important legacy. Panelists will include Samm Kunce, Leon Golub's studio assistant; Robert Storr, artist/critic, and Dean of the School of Art at Yale University; Susan Harris, independent curator and writer; and Douglas Dreishpoon, Chief Curator of The Albright Knox Art Gallery. Moderated by Brett Littman, the exhibition's curator and Executive Director of The Drawing Center.

Saturday, May 8, 2:00pm

In celebration of New York Gallery Week, Brett Littman, the exhibition's curator and Executive Director of The Drawing Center will give a VIP walk-through of the exhibition.

PUBLICATION

To accompany the exhibition, The Drawing Center will publish a 120-page volume including over 50 color plates and featuring essays by Brett Littman, Executive Director of The Drawing Center and Eduardo Cadava, author and professor of English at Princeton University. The publication will be available for sale for \$20 in April 2010.

HOURS & ACCESSIBILITY

Gallery hours are Wednesday, 12pm–6pm, Thursday, 12pm–8pm, and Friday–Sunday, 12pm–6pm (closed Mondays and Tuesdays). The Drawing Center is wheelchair accessible.

CREDITS

Leon Golub: Live & Die Like a Lion? is made possible by the National Endowment for the Arts and The Dedalus Foundation.

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MISSION STATEMENT

The Drawing Center is the only not-for-profit fine arts institution in the country to focus solely on the exhibition of drawings, both historical and contemporary. It was established in 1977 to provide opportunities for emerging and under-recognized artists; to demonstrate the significance and diversity of drawings throughout history; and to stimulate public dialogue on issues of art and culture.

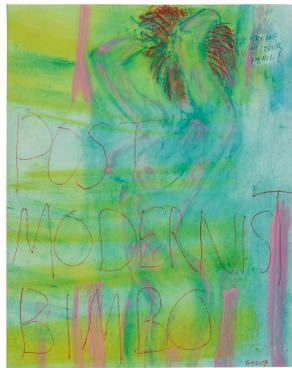
Leon Golub: *Live & Die Like a Lion?*

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Main Gallery

Images Available for Reproduction

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LG26: *POST MODERNIST BIMBO*, 2002, Oil stick and ink on vellum, 10 x 8 inches. Courtesy Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, New York. Art © Estate of Leon Golub/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY. Photography by: Cathy Carver.



LG39: *LIVE & DIE LIKE A LION?*, 2002, Oil stick on Bristol, 8 x 10 inches. Collection of Anthony and Judith Seraphin, Seraphin Gallery Philadelphia, PA. Art © Estate of Leon Golub/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY. Photography by: Cathy Carver.



LG14: *THE HIEROPHANT*, 2002, Oil stick and ink on vellum, 10 x 8 inches. Courtesy Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, New York. Art © Estate of Leon Golub/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY. Photography by: Cathy Carver.



LG54: *AGING GOLDEN SPHINX*, 2002, Oil stick and ink on vellum 8 x 10 inches. Courtesy Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, New York. Art © Estate of Leon Golub/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY. Photography by: Cathy Carver.



LG85: *HELL'S FIRES WAIT YOU!*, 2003, Oil stick, acrylic and ink on Bristol, 10 x 8 inches. Courtesy Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, New York. Art © Estate of Leon Golub/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY. Photography by: Cathy Carver.



LG99: *THE RED STAR*, 2003, Ink and acrylic on vellum, 8 x 10 inches. Collection of Ulrich and Harriet Meyer. Art © Estate of Leon Golub/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY. Photography by: Cathy Carver.