

PREVIEW, JANUARY 14, 2010
IRVING PETLIN
MAJOR PAINTINGS 1979-2009

Kent Gallery is pleased to present a compelling group of large scale canvases by the New York/Paris based painter Irving Petlin. Using the raw material of pastel, oil paint and unprimed linen, Petlin has expressed the human condition with a startling and enduring relevance for the last fifty years. Drawing has always been at the heart of Petlin's discipline. Through the emphasis on the materiality of the surface, the space within the composition both evaporates and reforms as if history is lost and then found again.

Beginning with his involvement with the construction of the *Peace Tower* (1964) in Los Angeles, Petlin has been an active critic of the US engagements in Vietnam, as well as in the Middle East. Similar to the oeuvre of John Heartfield, political engagement has been the catalyst of a series of large scale works, four of which are being installed here beginning with *Revolution Pastorale* (1979), *The Stolen Blessing* (1985), *Hebron* (2001), and most recently *Gaza/Guernica* (2009).

It is an article of faith with me that good and true artists will always represent the human face and figure and presence until the end of time. Some will not. Those who will, as they always have, will transform the depictive art by power of unique gifts and character and personality and doggedness and luck and though the courtesy, as it were, of the time and place in which they live and interact.

Do not be impatient with those of us, like Petlin, who are having to reread our depictive history slowly, as if in this era of later modernism that history is written in a lost distant tongue.

R.B. Kitaj, Catalonia, 1977

Works by Petlin may be found in over 20 public collections including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Art Institute of Chicago, Centre Georges Pompidou, the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, the Museum of Modern Art, the Stedelijk Museum, and most recently the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.

We have prepared a free PDF online publication of 88 pages documenting in full works to be included in the project, as well as complete biographical information on the artist. This information can be accessed thru the website homepage.

For further information, please contact Douglas Walla at (212) 627 3680, or you may access information from the gallery's website at www.kentgallery.com