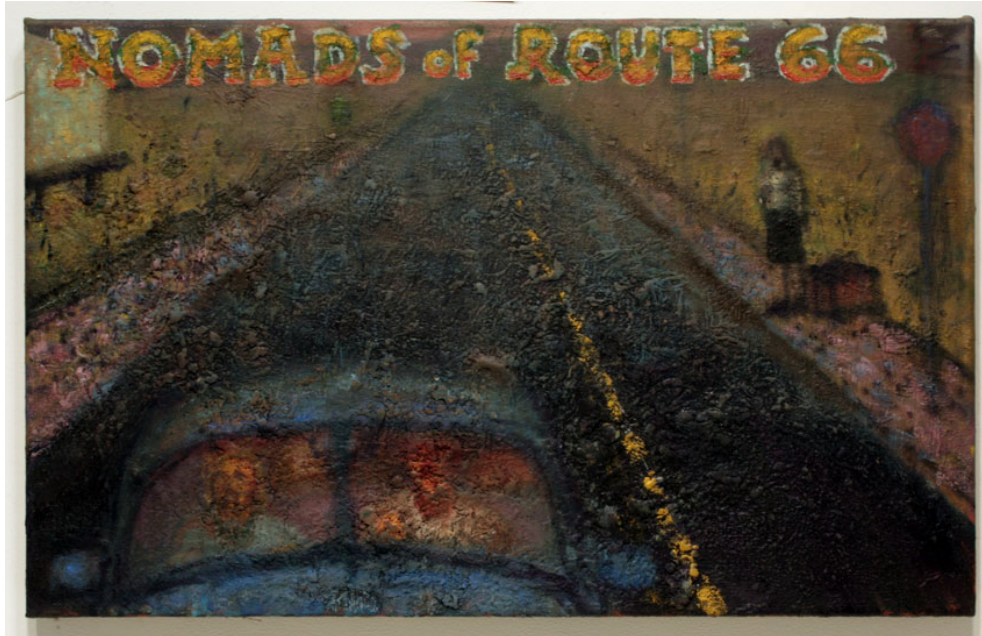


BETTY CUNINGHAM GALLERY

PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

John Lees

April 8 – May 14, 2011



NOMADS OF ROUTE 66
2011
Oil on canvas
20 x 32 inches

New York, NY – Betty Cunningham Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition of new work by John Lees, opening on April 8th. This will be the artist's second solo show at the gallery, located at 541 W. 25th Street, between 10th and 11th Avenues. The artist will be present for an opening reception on Friday, April 8th; the exhibition will remain on view through Saturday, May 14th. An illustrated catalogue will accompany the show.

The exhibition will feature recently completed work, although many of the paintings were started decades ago. Lees characteristically spends years working and reworking his paintings and drawings. The build up and sanding down of paint, tears, patches and even written diary logs of dates are among the physical reminders of the lengthy time spent on each painting.

Lees focuses on the singular, monolithic image: a pond, a portrait, a mountain or a tub. His images, such as that of his father in *Man Sitting in an Arm Chair*, 2010, or of Lees' childhood home in *House in Denville*, 1976 – 2011, or of the Otis Art Institute where he studied in *Courtyard (Oval)*, 1989 – 2010, are all dense with memories and personal meaning.

A few paintings in this exhibition combine personal fantasy with historical styles. In *Nomads of Route 66*, 2011, Lees references his parents' move west in the post-World War II migration, as if quoted from an early "film noir". He quotes the art of Edward Hopper and the 1930's literature of Jean Rhys, in his 2010 painting *Jean Rhys. Fun Boy Blues (For Joseph Ferris)*, 2003-2010, casts the tenor sax, Lees' favored jazz instrument, against a complex historical landscape. In *Old Buckaroo*, 2011, Lees' love of old western films comes to the fore, but this painting in its study form is titled *Old Painter*, 2007-2010, indicating the deep, personal reasons for his choice of subject.

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Lees is the recipient of numerous awards and grants, including the American Academy of Arts and Letters' Hassam, Speicher, Betts, and Symons Purchase Fund Award; the Francis J. Greenburger Award; the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Grant; and the National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship Grant. His work can be found in a host of public institutions, most notably the Detroit Institute of Art, Detroit, MI; the Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, MA; The Kemper Collection, Kansas City, MO; the Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; and The New Museum, New York, NY.

John Lees was born in 1943 in Denville, NJ. He received his BFA and MFA from the Otis Art Institute in Los Angeles, CA. He has been exhibiting in New York since 1977 and has been an instructor at the New York Studio School since 1988. He lives and works in upstate New York.



OLD BUCKAROO
2011
Oil on canvas
34 x 30 inches

For further information, artist biographies, and/or images, please contact the gallery.

Listing Information: Betty Cuninghame Gallery is located at 541 West 25 Street, New York, NY 10001
T: 212.242.2772 F: 212.242.5959 E: info@bettycuninghamegallery.com W: www.bettycuninghamegallery.com

Public Transportation: C, E to 23rd Street

Gallery Hours: Tues – Sat, 10am – 6pm

Next exhibition: Beverly McIver, *New Paintings (and Raising Renee)*, May 19 – July 1, 2011

Additional news

“Rackstraw Downes: Onsite Paintings, 1972 – 2008”

Weatherspoon Art Museum, Greensboro, NC: May 28 – August 21, 2011

“Charles Garabedian: A Retrospective”

Santa Barbara Museum of Art: through April 17, 2011