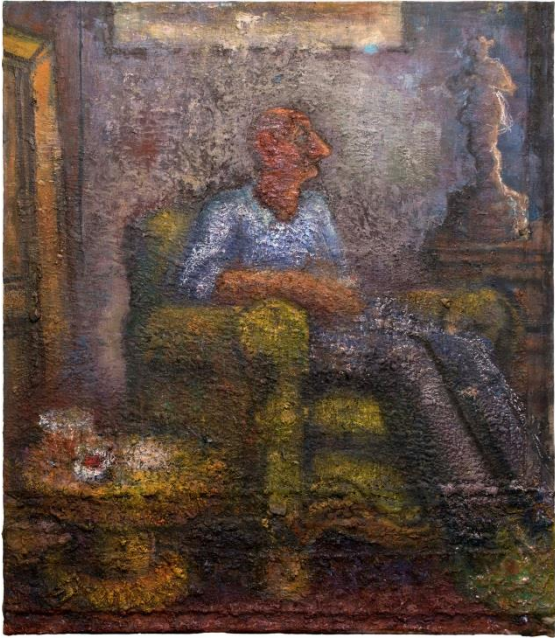


John Lees

October 23- November 28, 2015



Man in Armchair, Oil on canvas, 42 x 36 in.

Betty Cuningham Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition of new paintings and drawings by **John Lees**, opening on Friday, October 23rd. This will be the artist's fourth solo show at the Gallery, located at 15 Rivington Street. The artist will be present for an opening reception on **Friday, October 23rd, 6 – 8PM.**

The exhibition is comprised of 16 paintings and 10 drawings all of which are recently completed, although many were in fact 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 written diary logs of dates are among the physical reminders of the lengthy time spent on each work. In this exhibition, not only are we aware of time spent making a work but also of time, itself, as a subject of the work.

The artist's father is the subject of six paintings and several profile drawings. The largest painting in this series and, in the show, is *Man Sitting in an Armchair* (42 x 36 inches, dated 2008–2015). Deep in media as it is in memory, this work features the older man with his Lucky Strikes and drink close at hand. Lees' interest in film and music, from the 1920's through the 1940's, is apparent in both the works on

paper and painting. In the series titled *42nd Street* (both on paper and canvas) the title '42nd Street' is the main figure behind which, and barely legible, are the lines of the older Dorothy Brock (actress Bebe Daniels) giving over her role to the younger Peggy Sawyer (actress Ruby Keeler) in the 1933 film *42nd Street*. In *Polka Dots and Moonbeams*, Lester Young plays the sax, the musical tone matching blue tones of the painting. In the work on paper titled *The Ghost of Dilly Dally*, Dilly Dally, an early TV character with whom Lees identified as a child, fades away.

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.

The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue and will remain on view through Saturday, November 28th.

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

Listing Information: Betty Cuningham Gallery is located at 15 Rivington Street, b/t Bowery and Chrystie Street, New York, NY 10002

T: 212-242-2772 **E:** info@bettycuninghamgallery.com **W:** www.bettycuninghamgallery.com

Public Transportation: F train to Second Ave, 6 Train to Spring Street

Gallery Hours: Tues – Sat, 10am – 6pm

Next exhibition: Philip Pearlstein, December 4 - February 13, 2013