

KEVIN CONNOR

Paintings

27 July – 22 August 2013



Liverpool Street Gallery is pleased to announce Kevin Connor's upcoming solo exhibition, *Paintings*, on view from 27 July – 22 August 2013, to be opened on Thursday 1 August, 6-8 pm.

Kevin Connor is one of Australia's finest urban expressionist painters known for his ability to capture the vibrancy and dynamism of unassuming scenes of the inner city and its various inhabitants – café goers, faceless vagabonds, prostitutes and anonymous passers-by. As a distinguished painter and draughtsman, Connor's forthcoming exhibition is a reflection of Sydney, Paris and Los Angeles' Hollywood Boulevard's daily grind; memories of places ventured and of people drifting through life.

Connor's figure compositions and city scenes have long been a strong subject matter in his work since the early 1980's. As a great observer, Connor can often be found sketching from life in his notebook in the streets of Sydney, Paris, New York and London. Representing his own narrative of a place whether in paint, charcoal, ink or gouache, Connor's view of the city is often a lonely place of flux. Although drawn from life, the paintings are occasionally memory-based or imaginary scenarios of a location's history where the characters are captured in a moment in time.

Connor continues to explore the animated, pedestrian filled streetscapes, as seen in *The Boulevard of the Stars and veterans, Los Angeles* (2012) (above left). His paint application in *The Boulevard of the Stars and veterans, Los Angeles* is applied thinly and loosely, leaving the canvas open, yet activated. The use of space is ambiguous, as the figures walk side-by-side, creature-like, awkward and monumental, over-scaling the background. Here Connor conveys the desolate underbelly of an often-perceived "glamorous" society. The influence of drawing is evident in the linear forms, fluid brushstrokes and dynamic pace of the painting.

Evening Light (Liverpool Street west) with courthouse and cat (2013) (above right) evokes a sense of nostalgia as a result of his use of soft and lyrical brushwork. The powdery blue of the sky creates a haze over the cityscape, evoking a dream-like quality. The viewer is swept through a ghostly journey of the city; the heightened perspective and translucency of the tonal palette captures a melancholy spirit.

QUOTE SELECTION

“Monumentality, painterly vigor and bold contrast of colour characterises his work as well as his pungent often impetuous imagery... I believe he is making his best work now, in his senior years.” (**Hendrik Kolenberg, ‘Paintings and Drawings’, Liverpool Street Gallery, 2009**)

“People are front and centre in Connor’s art. He is interested in community, not as an abstraction, but a fluid, constantly surprising entity of individuals.” (**Sebastian Smee, ‘Drawing Conclusions’, The Weekend Australian, May 20-21 2006, p19**)

“I work on the basis of drawing from life in sketchbooks... then out of that comes painting.” (**Kevin Connor talking to Connell Nisbet, ‘Drawing from Experience’, LOOK, AGNSW, 2004**)

“For artist, Kevin Connor, honestly ‘seeing’ a subject and being able to recreate its essence on paper is a paramount enjoyment of drawing.” (**Connell Nisbet, ‘Last Word: Drawing from Experience’, LOOK, AGNSW, August 2004**)

“I could live without painting and making sculptures but I just could not live without drawing. Drawing is the very basis of everything. I could happily take my sketchbook and draw for the rest of my life and show nobody.” (**Kevin Connor talking to Connell Nisbet, ‘Last Word: Drawing from Experience’, LOOK, AGNSW, August 2004, p54**)

“Everyone can draw, until they can’t... Drawing is teaching yourself to see... Drawing is better than any other way of seeing, of being where you are... Throw away cameras, they are a way of saying I’ll look at it later.” (**Kevin Connor, Kevin Connor – Paintings and Drawings 1947-88, AGNSW, 1990**)

BIOGRAPHY

Kevin Connor has lived and worked in Sydney for most his life, apart from periods of painting and study in London, Paris, New York, Spain and Egypt with extensive travels in Europe, the USA and the Middle East. Connor’s first solo exhibition was in 1962, and he has since held regular solo exhibitions. He has exhibited in the *Archibald Prize* 26 times, winning the *Archibald Prize* twice in 1975 and 1977. He has also won the *Sulman Prize* twice in 1991 and 1997 and is the only artist to have won the *Dobell Prize for Drawing* twice in 1992 and 2005. Recently, in 2012 and 2010 Connor was a finalist in the *Wynne Prize*, exhibiting in the *Wynne Prize* a total of 9 times. He was the Harkness Fellow from 1966-1968 and a respected trustee of the Art Gallery of New South Wales from 1981-1987. Connor’s work is represented in the National Gallery of Australia, state, regional and university galleries, as well as public collections including Parliament House, Canberra and in private collections throughout Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. In 2006, Connor also held a major drawing, sculpture and painting retrospective at the Art Gallery of New South Wales. Publications include: Kolenberg, H, *Kevin Connor – The Haymarket Drawings*, Centaur Press, Berrima, 1990; Pearce, B, *Kevin Connor*, Craftsman House, Sydney, 1989 and Kolenberg, H, *Sketchbook, drawings by Kevin Connor in Sydney, Paris and London*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 2006.

Images: *The Boulevard of the Stars and veterans, Los Angeles*, 2012, oil on canvas, 198 x 244 cm

Evening Light (Liverpool Street west) with courthouse and cat, 2013, oil on canvas, 203 x 193 cm

Photography: Michel Brouet. Images courtesy of Liverpool Street Gallery, Sydney.

For further information about the artist and exhibition, please contact Liverpool Street Gallery on 02 8353 7799 or info@liverpoolstgallery.com.au