

Marlborough

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AVIGDOR ARIKHA: TWENTY-FIVE PASTELS MARLBOROUGH GALLERY

November 1 – December 10, 2007

New York, NY (October 2, 2007) - The Directors of Marlborough Gallery are pleased to announce the opening of an exhibition of pastels by the preeminent Paris-based artist, Avigdor Arikha.

Arikha's last show in New York was in 2002 when he showed a superb collection of oils, pastels, and drawings. The show this November will be devoted entirely to works in pastel medium and will include twenty-five works dating from 1983 to 2007. These works have been in the artist's collection and have never before been exhibited. The depictions, quintessentially Arikha, are composed from his personal canon of favored subjects: still lifes, self-portraits, both dressed and nude, portraits of his wife, the poet Anne Atik, objects of interest and interior views in their apartment, buildings observed from the apartment's windows and studies of female nudes. Arikha's work manifests intense observation and an inherent sense of quiet. In fact, one could say that observation, or seeing, is the real subject of Arikha's work regardless of what is depicted. These pastels are consummate works that bespeak the truth of art made by one of the most astute minds working today.

Arikha has been called a "classicist with a modern sensibility" (Alan Ross). His erudition is known to be formidable. He writes on art (*On Depiction*) and curates exhibitions for which he writes the catalogs such as the one he did of Poussin shown at the Louvre; the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; and Princeton University Art Museum and of Ingres shown at the Israel Museum, Jerusalem; the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Dijon; the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston and the Frick Collection, New York. His most recent curatorial exhibition and catalog was for the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza in Madrid of eighteen paintings from the collection. He has given numerous lectures at the Prado Museum, the Louvre, the British Museum, The Warburg Institute, and the Frick Collection. He also makes films for London's BBC television. Samuel Beckett, a close friend, admired "his acuity of vision and sureness of execution and incomparable grasp of the past and of the problems that beset continuance." Patrick Kinmonth writing about the essence of Arikha's pictures said, "we read, once we have learned his language, the traces of a dedicated search for meaning in life and art which can rise... to the status of poetry." Robert Hughes in *Time* magazine said of Arikha, "He has a surer sense of tone – the equivalent of natural pitch – than anyone painting today." One could add that possibly no other artist working today has such avid dedication to precise tone and to the exclusive use of natural light.

Arikha's recent museum exhibitions include the following: in 1998-1999 there were simultaneous retrospectives (the first time this was done) at the Tel Aviv Museum and the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, which was visited by more than one hundred thousand people, and traveled in part to the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art in Edinburgh. In 1999 he had a major drawing exhibition entitled *Paris sur le vif, encres et dessins* at the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Lille, France, and in 2006 - 2007 a show entitled *From Life, Drawings and Prints 1965-2005* at The British Museum in London. The catalog for that show was written by Stephen Coppel and Duncan Thomson and included among others three texts by Samuel Beckett and two essays by Robert Hughes.

Since 1952 Arikha has had twenty-five museum shows and approximately forty gallery exhibitions, including participation in the Venice Biennale in both 1982 and 1995. Among the many public institutions where his work can be found are The British Museum, Le Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; The Israel Museum, Jerusalem; the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh; the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.; The Tate Gallery, London; and the Louvre, Paris.

Arikha was born in 1929 in Bucovina, a province of the ex-Austro-Hungarian Empire now split between Rumania and the Ukraine, to a German speaking Jewish family. From 1941 to early 1944 he endured life in Nazi labor concentration camps from which he was saved thanks to his drawings. He was brought to a kibbutz in Palestine in 1944. He received a Bauhaus type art education at the Bezalel School of Art in Jerusalem, fought in the war for Israeli independence in 1948, and was severely wounded. In 1949 he went to Paris with a scholarship to the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. Arikha has received several awards and honors such as Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et Lettres (1977), Chevalier de l'Ordre National de la Légion d'Honneur (2005), Honorary Professor, National Academy of Fine Arts of China, Hanchow (1995) and Doctor Philosophie, Honoris Causa, The Hebrew University, Jerusalem (1977).

Arikha lives mostly in Paris with a second home in Jerusalem.

A color catalog of the Arikha exhibition will be available from the gallery at the time of the exhibition.

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