

Ronald Feldman Fine Arts

For immediate release: September 25, 2008

LEON GOLUB: Did It!

October 16 – November 15

The Feldman Gallery will exhibit paintings and drawings by Leon Golub, one of America's leading postwar painters. The paintings, from the late 80's and early 90's, include night scenes of urban violence and portraits that relate to racial imbalance. This body of work, which falls between Golub's politically-charged paintings of mercenaries and riots from the early 80's and his late paintings from 1996 to 2004, centering on themes of aging and death, has not been seen recently in New York.

In several of these paintings, Golub uses wall rubbings, scraping, and other techniques of abstraction to obscure scenes of illicit activity and state-sanctioned brutalities that societies prefer to keep out of sight. It is difficult to see the image. The *Night Scene* series from 1988-89 is essentially blue paintings with patches of white that suggest the glare of artificial light that both illuminates and conceals. In *Head IV*, the image of a supine black man is barely discernable under the painting's texture that evokes the energy and light of nighttime traffic.

Portraits of blacks encompass several moods. In the painting *3 Black Men*, cadaver-like heads are deprived of their humanity; with *Two Heads II*, Golub incorporates delicate patterns created from wall rubbings; *Head II* combines the physicality of a black youth's face with an expressive sadness, rendered in red, white, and blue paint. Even in repose, the contrast between the body language of the South African women and the macho male in *Two Black Women and a White Man* conveys the psychological conflict inherent in injustice.

Golub developed a unique figural style and experimented with paint surfaces that matched the ferocity of his subject matter. With a play on the title of a drawing portraying a goon, the exhibition title, *Did It!*, incorporates Golub's voice in the show.

An activist, author, and teacher, Leon Golub was a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and a 1996 recipient of the Hiroshima Art Prize (jointly with Nancy Spero). Museum collections include the Whitney Museum of American Art; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; the Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth; The Art Institute of Chicago; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Malmö Konsthall, Sweden; and the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Germany.

Two books about Golub's work were published in 2004: *Dog* (onestar press, Paris) with layout and design by Golub; and *Don't Tread on Me: Drawings from 1947-2004* (Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, Griffin Contemporary, and Anthony Reynolds Gallery). A second edition of *Leon Golub: Echoes of the Real* by Jon Bird (Reaktion Books) was published in 2006.

There will be a reception on Thursday, October 16 from 6:00 – 8:00. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 10:00 – 6:00. Monday by appointment. Contact Sarah Paulson for more information at (212) 226-3232 or sarah@feldmangallery.com.

31 Mercer Street, New York, New York 10013
212 226-3232 fax 212 941-1536 www.feldmangallery.com