

Artlyst

Soutine And Kossoff Hastings Contemporary Explores Two Major Artists



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Soutine / Kossoff is the first-ever museum exhibition to explore the artistic relationship between British artist Leon Kossoff (1926-2019) and Belarus-born painter Chaim Soutine (1893-1943).

Undertaken with the full support of the Kossoff estate, it brings together around 40 important loans from public and private collections in the UK, USA and beyond. Aside from Soutine Portraits (Courtauld, 2017) at about 20 works, this is the largest group of Soutines shown together in the UK since 1982 and the first since then to show both portraits and landscapes, providing a fascinating follow-up to The Barnes Foundation's 2021 show Soutine / De Kooning.



The Little Pastry Cook Courtesy Bridgeman Images Christie's

The discovery of Soutine's paintings in the early 1950s was a significant moment for Kossoff, who was already finding his way towards the direct and expressive use of paint he saw in his predecessor's work.

Soutine grew up in Belarus before migrating to Paris as a young man, while Kossoff was born and raised in London, his parents having arrived there from Ukraine as children. Although their life experiences were very different, the two artists shared an Eastern European Jewish heritage, perhaps bringing a particular cultural sensibility to their work. To create transcendent works from the stuff of everyday life became Kossoff's mission, as it had been Soutine's.

The main focus of Soutine / Kossoff is on the areas of interest shared by both artists: landscape and portraiture. The exhibition features seminal landscapes painted by Soutine in southern France in the early 1920s, with highlights including *Paysage aux cyprès* (c.1922) and *Cagnes Landscape with Tree* (c.1925-26, Tate). From Kossoff come important railway paintings junctions, building sites and other scenes of unexpected beauty found in north and north-west London, among them *Willesden Junction, Summer, No.2*, (1966, Alfred East Art Gallery) and *Demolition of the Old House, Dalston Junction, Summer* (1974, Tate).

Visitors will have a rare opportunity to view Kossoff's stunning *Nude on a Red Bed*, November – December 1972, alongside works such as his powerful *Seated Woman* (1957) and the striking *Double Self-Portrait* (1969, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art). A major group of Soutine portraits includes *Le Petit Pâtissier* (c.1927), *Young Woman in a White Blouse* (c.1923, Courtauld Institute) and *Le Valet de Chambre* (c.1927).

A publication will accompany the exhibition.

Soutine / Kossoff is curated by Hastings Contemporary's guest curator James Russell, whose recent show *Seafaring* opened to a 4-star review from *The Daily Telegraph*. James's previous exhibitions have enjoyed critical and commercial success. They include *Seaside Modern* (Hastings Contemporary, 2021), *Reflection: British Art in an Age of Change* (Ferens Art Gallery, 2019) and *Ravillious* (Dulwich Picture Gallery, 2015).

Hastings Contemporary champions modern and contemporary art. An ambitious programme of temporary exhibitions showcases work by influential Modern British artists, internationally celebrated artists and emerging practitioners, often in Kunsthalle-style displays throughout the building. The gallery has developed a reputation for its focus on painting. Innovative programming, partnerships and collaborations support a commitment to outreach, learning and participation. The award-winning building is located on the town's historic fishing beach among the fishing fleet's net huts and working structures.

Chaïm Soutine Born in Lithuania, arrived in Paris in 1912, at the beginning of World War I. He became acquainted with the painter Amedeo Modigliani, who took him under his wing despite Modigliani's own destitute poverty. Like many artists working in Paris during the period between the wars, Soutine never strayed far from figural or representational painting, despite certain awareness of the abstraction and non-objectivity with which his colleagues were experimenting. Soutine gradually shifted toward abstraction in his later years and famously turned to animal carcasses and rotting meat to investigate life, decay, and death.

Leon Kossoff British, 1926-2019

One of Britain's most acclaimed painters of modern times, Kossoff is recognised for his highly worked and gestural impasto paintings and his striking and expressive drawings in charcoal, pastel, and graphite. Alongside his friend and contemporary Frank Auerbach, Kossoff was a key figure in the group of artists who became known as the 'School of London' in the mid 1950s. Kossoff grew up in London's East End and the post-war destruction of the City and neighbourhoods so familiar to him became a focus for his work. His sombre palette of greys and browns and heavy mark making depicting the desolation and devastation of the local community and industrial landscape. Peopled scenes of everyday life in and around where he lived and worked in Kilburn and Willesden pre-occupied his paintings throughout his life. He returned time and time again to observe and capture particular places and buildings including the high street, public buildings, swimming pool, railway bridges, sidings and stations. Towards the end of his career he painted gentler subjects such as the leaning cherry tree in his garden and also returned to favourite locations including King's Cross St. Pancras station and Hawksmoor's Christ Church, marking the passing of the years with more colourful hues and lighter handling.

SOUTINE / Kossoff

1 April – 24 September 2023 Opening at Hastings Contemporary in April 2023, Soutine Kossoff pairs two significant figures of 20th-century painting: one a master of the School of Paris, the other a master of the School of London.