

Leon Morrocco

Paintings & Drawings 1968 – 2022

21 July - 19 August

Exhibition: Spirit Studios, Benhall, Suffolk, IP17 1JJ

Open Friday & Saturday 11–4pm & by appointment

Paintings can be viewed in London on request

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John Martin Gallery

**SPIRIT
STUDIOS**

SUFFOLK

Since my 80th birthday last year, I have been extremely lucky to have had two large survey exhibitions featuring work from throughout my professional life, a period of roughly 60 years.

The first of these took place at the Royal Scottish Academy Edinburgh during the 2022 Edinburgh International Festival and brought together over 150 paintings and drawings. The exhibition progressed chronologically from the earliest awakening of my interest in drawing in the late 1950's up to my latest work from France completed in 2022.

My intention was to show the full spectrum of my paintings over the years and from the many parts of the world in which I have lived and worked. Held in the vast public galleries of the Academy, it also gave me an opportunity to show some of the large scale paintings which, because of space restrictions in most private galleries, had never been shown before. I have always loved the challenge of working on large canvases and the exhibition gave me the chance to highlight this aspect of my activity that may have been unfamiliar to people who knew my work. I was happy with the resulting balance of the exhibition and its ability to encompass the whole of my artistic language. I remember thinking it unlikely that I would again see my work in such sympathetic surroundings. Which brings me to this, my second survey show.

Last year John asked me to show some of the work that I had exhibited in the Royal Scottish Academy at a new exhibition space in Suffolk the following summer. When I first visited Spirit Studios in the spring I was delighted by what Kate and John had created there. The

two barns combine character and modernity, and offer a unique range of possibilities for accommodating more ambitious, large scale exhibitions.

As in Edinburgh, I have tried to select work that takes visitors across the visual stepping stones that have occupied me for the past six decades. One of the earliest works is the portrait of *Jean Resting* (1972), set in our first flat soon after our marriage, and decorated with objects collected from second-hand shops across Edinburgh. That early fascination with colour and pattern resurfaced in later works, especially those from India and Morocco. The other constant thread is drawing which really lies at the heart of everything and from where all the ideas stem. Perhaps the only notable absence are paintings from the years I spent in Australia, first as a teacher and then painting full time, but the general direction of travel is, I hope, readily apparent. For an artist there is something thrilling to have an opportunity to look back across the decades and to see the progression of ideas.

It is now 30 years since I joined the John Martin Gallery, about half of my working life; he has seen closeup the changes in direction and development over this period in my work and also in my life. This kind of relationship is not easy to find and I, like many artists had bad experiences before we met. The difference is that for John it is a calling not a career, and as this mirrors my own understanding as to what it means to be a painter I think this is why the relationship works.

Leon Morrocco
Nice, 2023





Kitchen Interior with dried flowers, 1968
oil on canvas, 48 x 33 ins, 130 x 84 cm



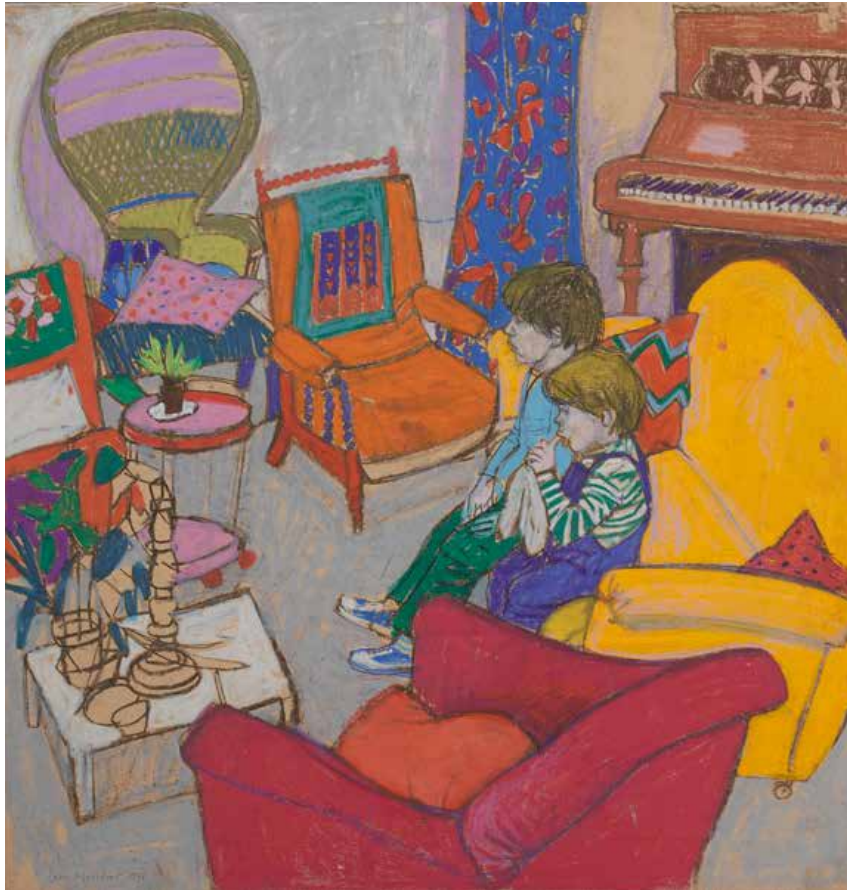
Sleeping Figure on a Beach, 1969
oil on board, 22 x 32 ins, 56 x 81 cm



Jean Resting, 1972
oil on canvas, 72 x 72 ins, 183 x 183 cms,



Playing With Hands, 1973
oil on paper, 7 x 9 ins, 18 x 23 cm



Boys Watching Television, 1978
oil pastel & pencil, 23 x 22 1/2 ins, 58 x 57 cm



Still Life with Golden Tassel, 2005
oil on canvas, 36 1/2 x 47 1/4 ins, 93 x 120 cm



Still life on Studio Table, 1998
oil on canvas, 36 x 34 ins, 91 x 86 cm



Motorini and City Wall, 2004
oil on canvas, 39 1/4 x 47 1/4 ins, 100 x 120 cm



Escape from the City (via Giolitti), 2003
oil on board, 61 x 168 ins, 155 x 427 cm



Oud Player, Morocco, 2007
oil on linen, 34 x 36 inches, 86 x 91 cm



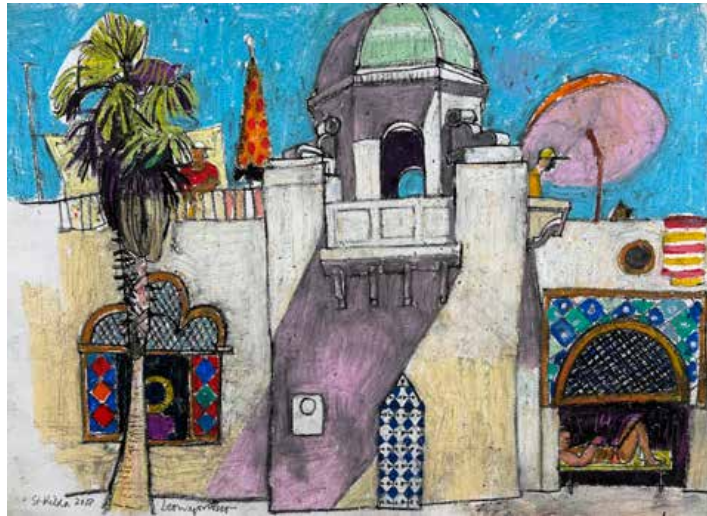
Leaving the Mosque, Midday, 2007
oil on canvas, 34 x 40 ins, 86 x 102 cm



Alleyway in Old Marrakesh, 2007
oil on canvas, 34 x 36 ins, 76 x 86 cm



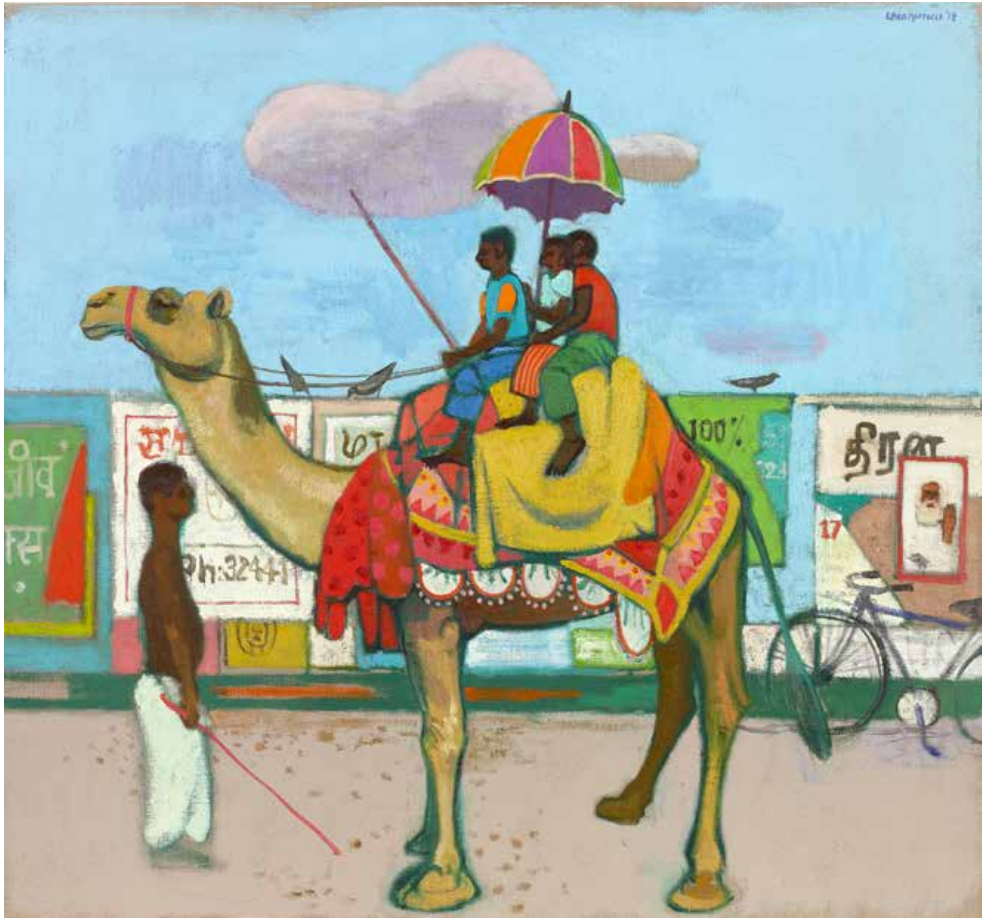
Battleship with Breaking Clouds, 2012
oil on panel, 50 x 72 ins, 127 x 183 cms







*Market Women & Rooster, Goa 2010 oil
on canvas, 24 x 30 ins, 61 x 76 cm*



A Father and His Sons, Jodhpur, 2012
oil on canvas, 33 ³/₄ x 36 ¹/₄ ins, 86 x 92 cm



Group of Narrowboats with Reflections, 2014
oil on linen, 32 x 36 ins, 81 x 91 cm



Night Barge, 2015
oil on canvas, 66 x 72 ins, 168 x 183 cm



Artist Drawing Basiluzzo, 2015
oil on panel, 15 x 15 1/4 ins, 38 x 39 cm

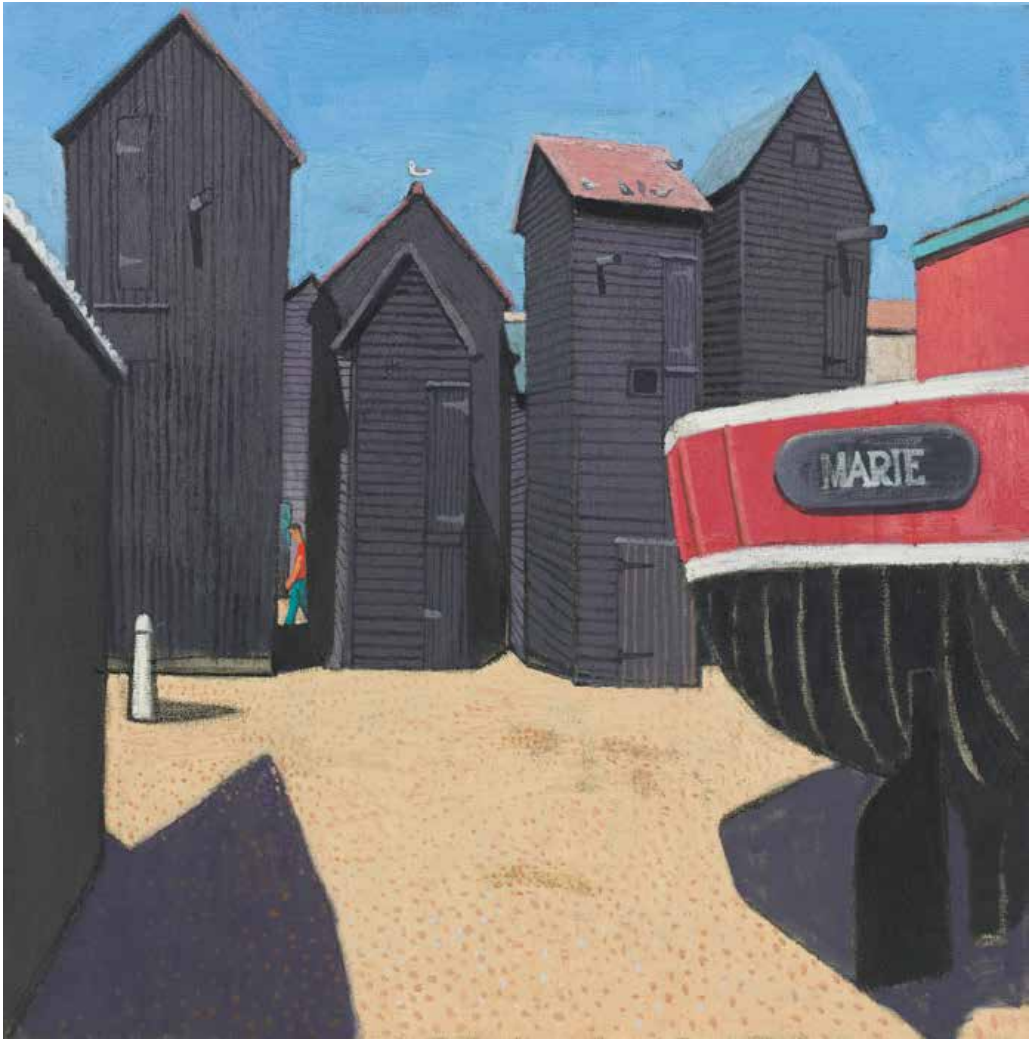


Terrace in Syros II, 2018
oil on canvas, 35 3/4 x 41 3/4 ins, 91 x 106 cm



Island Still Life with Melon, 2020
oil on canvas, 34 x 40 ins, 86 x 101 cm





Marie, Hastings, 2020
oil on canvas, 34 x 36 ins, 86 x 91 cm

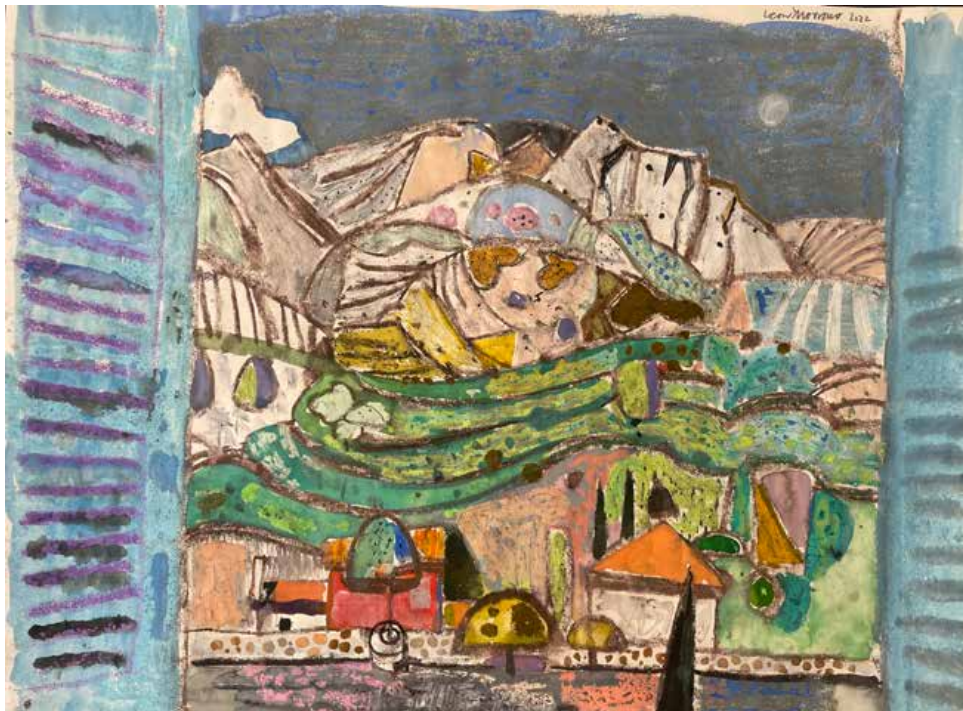


Barge and Sou'Wester, 2020
oil on canvas, 34 x 36 ins, 86 x 91 cm



Red boat, Hastings, 2020
oil on canvas, 48 x 50 ins, 122 x 127 cm





Alpine Village from an open window, Gourdon, 2022
charcoal pencil, gouache & oil pastel on paper, 16 1/2 x 23 1/2 ins, 42 x 59 cm