

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Helly Nahmad Gallery presents

SOUTINE/BACON

May 2, 2011 – June 18, 2011

Helly Nahmad Gallery New York is pleased to announce *SOUTINE/BACON*, the first comparative exhibition of Chaim Soutine and Francis Bacon, opening to the public on May 2, 2011. *SOUTINE/BACON* is organized by the Helly Nahmad Gallery and curated by Maurice Tuchman and Esti Dunow, co-authors of the *Chaim Soutine Catalogue Raisonné*.

Chaim Soutine's paintings have not only had a crucial impact on the development of modern art in the twentieth century, but also a sustained critical influence on contemporary practice. The artists most often associated and identified with his influence are the post-war Abstract Expressionists in the United States, best exemplified by Willem de Kooning, who referred to Soutine as his "favorite artist".

Francis Bacon, who went to live in Paris in 1927 as a young man, with a future not yet determined, became aware of Soutine's already legendary paintings of beef carcasses. The images and the legends about their making resonated with him, as he had always since his boyhood in Ireland been fascinated to the point of obsession with slaughtered beef carcasses in local abattoirs. Bacon "went everywhere and saw everything" in Paris, as he said, and the stories about Soutine as well as those about the actual making of these immense canvases gripped Bacon's imagination.

The present exhibition demonstrates that Soutine's paintings of carcasses were a trigger for Bacon's essential vision, possibly even the reason he was to become a painter. He intuited from Soutine's carcasses the basis for his art and art making. "If I go to the National Gallery and I look at one of the great paintings that excite me there," Bacon explained, "it's not so much the painting that excites me as that the painting unlocks all kinds of valves of sensation within me." It is no great leap to believe that Soutine's were among the works that had a decisive effect on him—that unlocked his valves of sensation

There are distinct links between the two painters: direct painting and general studio practice, the equation of oil pigment with flesh, and a certain aggressive re-invention of Old Master paintings. Indeed, the connections between Bacon's art and that of Soutine are immediately striking as well as less overt: both artists share a nuanced passion and energy toward paint, brushstroke, and the necessity of subject matter.

This groundbreaking *SOUTINE/BACON* exhibition is the very first to explicitly pair, compare, and historically situate these two magnificent painters. The exhibition will consist of selected works by both artists with loans from prestigious private collections as well as major museums. Museums and institutions such as the Metropolitan Museum and Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Tate Modern and Bacon Foundation in London, the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, the Albertina in Vienna, the Beyeler Foundation in Basel, the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art in Denmark, the Kunsthaus Zurich, and the Pearlman Foundation with the Art Museum of Princeton University have generously agreed to lend works.

A fully illustrated catalogue will accompany the exhibition. This publication features an introduction and

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an innovative illustrated and annotated chronology by the curators demonstrating the dramatic links between the artists, and an afterword by Martin Hammer, contextualizing Soutine's reception in post-war London.

The Helly Nahmad Gallery – located in the Carlyle Hotel – and founded in 2000 is internationally prominent with a rich history of museum-quality exhibitions of such Impressionist and twentieth century masters as Monet, Picasso, Modigliani, Kandinsky, Léger, Ernst, and Dubuffet.

Listing Info:

SOUTINE/BACON

Dates: Monday, May 2, 2011 – Saturday, June 18, 2011

Hours: Monday to Friday, 10 AM – 6 PM; Saturday, 11 AM – 6 PM

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