

Maira Kalman and Willy Ronis

January 9-February 6, 2009

Jackson Fine Art

Jackson Fine Art opens a window onto the cosmopolitan culture of two great urban centers-- New York and Paris-- with the current show of drawings and prints by New Yorker, Maira Kalman, and photographs of Paris by Willy Ronis. Both artists are commensurate story tellers of their respective cities, each working with an economy of means to capture the ephemeral details that characterize the humanity of each of these cultural meccas.

Ronis, a founder of Magnum photography agency along with Henri Cartier-Bresson, has been photographing his native Paris since the 1930s, following the fortunes of the city of light through the war years and after. Leaving his father's portrait studio in 1936, he turned his attention to the life of the streets and the burgeoning field of photojournalism. His earliest subjects were gatherings and strikes organized by the workers political parties in France. Following the war, he joined the Rapho agency, placing work in LIFE magazine, among others, in the every expanding market for news and street photography to illustrate stories. His images of workers, lovers, and children living modern lives among the architectural background of the city, reveal an intimacy that sets his work apart from his compatriots Robert Doisneau and Henri Cartier-Bresson. His Rolliflex camera was small and quick to capture isolated moments using available light. Best known for the lyrical style—a blend of chance and strong formal composition—Ronis had a large body of Paris work assembled by the 1950s.

Edward Steichen exhibited his work at the Museum of Modern Art in 1953 as one of Five French Photographers, and also included the work in the Bellwether Family of Man Show of 1955. Included in many of the great European art and photography shows of the 1950s and 60s, Ronis has also accrued significant cultural honors bestowed by the French government. With a long list of books and exhibitions behind him, Ronis, at age 98, lives and works in Paris.

Known for her whimsical and vibrant graphic style, Maira Kalman is a visual artist whose creativity touches many fields. She is director of the renowned graphic design firm M & Co, begun with her late husband Tibor Kalman. She has written and illustrated over a dozen children's books, is well known for her New Yorker magazine covers, and recently created illustrations and a dramatization of the grammar classic, Strunk and White's 1959 *The Elements of Style*. Lastly, Kalman created a monthly on-line column entitled *Principles of Uncertainty* for The New York Times that became a published book in 2007. An excerpt from *Principles of Uncertainty* "What is this book? What is anything? Who am I? Who are you? Stop it. Forget it. This is a year in my life profusely illustrated. Abounding with anguish, confusion, bits of wisdom. Musings, meanderings, buckets of Joie de Vivre and restful sojourns. And now..."

Her world view contains more than a dash of the absurd, a photographer's keen street smart sense of observation, and a very punchy palette. On view will be her gouaches, silk screen prints and photography that represent work from a variety of projects, from her renderings of sayings embroidered on pillowcases to an interior scene of Sir John Soane's

London house/museum. But her New York scenes, above all, convey the cacophonous joy of the urban landscape—akin to a less polite Florine Stettheimer, who also was a great observer of city mores in the 1930s. Museum patrons at the Guggenheim, strollers in a city park, share with Ronis a lyrical love of the city in motion, with an optimism that can carry the day.

Maira Kalman will be attending both the opening on January 9th and will be giving an informal talk about her work as well as a book signing on Saturday January 10th at 11:00. You are welcome to bring to the book signing any children's books you may have and Jackson Fine Art will be selling signed books of *The Elements of Style* and *Principles of Uncertainty*.