

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Bertien van Manen
A Hundred Summers, A Hundred Winters
January 4 - February 16, 2008

The Yancey Richardson Gallery is proud to present *A Hundred Summers, A Hundred Winters*, an exhibition of photographs by Dutch photographer Bertien van Manen. Photographing in the former Soviet Union between 1990 to 1994, Van Manen provides windows into Russian lives after years of struggle under the regime. Leading Polish journalist Ryszard Kapuściński, who died last year, noted in his introduction to van Manen's work that her lens stands apart from the typical journalistic report on Russia, capturing the "most inaccessible of places—the homes of ordinary people—in order to show us how millions of Russians live and sleep, what they eat, what they look like in their everyday life, in their flats, at their tables, in their beds."

A Hundred Summers, A Hundred Winters refers to the span of time, space, and emotional distance van Manen captured from 1990 to 1994, traveling across Russia by train and bus, documenting people in Moscow, Uzbekistan, Siberia, Moldavia, the Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Georgia. Her camera searches out a sense of meaning from their homes' kitsch floral wallpaper, pullout beds, oilcloth covered tables, and gaudily-framed paintings. Her work is characterized by the intimacy she achieves with her subjects, with whom she spent time, sitting at their tables, lodging in their homes, immersed in their reality.

Van Manen's work is a meditation on human existence, revealing the truth of particular lives. In the case of the former Soviet empire, her subjects are a people who were conditioned to be fearful and suspicious, long forbidden to exhibit who they really were to the rest of the world. Van Manen shows the emergence of trust, gently penetrating their resistance to letting the world in, celebrating the country's richness and humanity. In one photograph, a baby is tossed into the air. It is a frightening, yet possibly redemptive moment, speaking to the country's rebirth and uncertain future.

Kapuściński wrote, "Through her excellent photographs and her inquiring and humanistic temperament, and with powerful artistic expression, Bertien van Manen shows what historians, writers, sociologists and political scientists argue, that there are at least two Russias. There is the official, imperial, external Russia, known to us from newspaper headlines, and the one within, the hidden, poor Russian of the anonymous, ordinary people of whose existence Bertien van Manen's moving and revealing album tells."

Born in 1942 in The Hague, The Netherlands, van Manen currently lives and works in Amsterdam. *A Hundred Summers, A Hundred Winters* (1994) comprised a book, as did other extensive projects: One in China, *East Wind West Wind* (2004), for which she was a finalist for the prestigious Citibank Photography prize; and another across Europe, *Give Me Your Image* (2005), an exhibition of which was featured in the Museum of Modern Art's *New Photography '05*. Van Manen's prize-winning photographs are held in the collections of major institutions, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and the Stedelijk Museum. Her work has also been exhibited internationally in museums such as the Fotomuseum Winterthur, the Reina Sofia, and the Metropolitan Museum of Photography in Tokyo.

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