

PRESS RELEASE

Marc Riboud's First New York Exhibition in over 25 Years
Chronicles the Artist's Expeditions across Asia

Photography Exhibition at Rubin Museum of Art Offers Rare
Glimpse into Life at Critical Time in Trans-Regional Asian
History



New York, NY (June 10, 2014)—This October, the Rubin Museum of Art will open *Witness at a Crossroads: Photographer Marc Riboud in Asia*, a photography exhibition that chronicles the French artist's journeys across Asia, with particular focus on his travels from 1955 through 1958. The first New York museum exhibition of Riboud's work in over 25 years, *Witness at a Crossroads* will illustrate the artist's perspective on the confluence of tradition and modern culture in mid-century Asia. On view from October 16, 2014 through March 23, 2015, *Witness at a Crossroads* will feature approximately 100 black-and-white photographs from the mid-to-late 1950s, as well as images from Riboud's pioneering visit to China in the 1960s. The exhibition will also present ephemeral objects including press cards, contact sheets, and international magazines where photographs of Riboud's travels were published.

Organized in thematic clusters — regionally and chronologically — the exhibition will examine Riboud's travels across Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Nepal, China, and Japan. Riboud's photographs provide an honest and accessible window into the daily lives of the diverse people of the region and illuminate the tension created by cultural shifts during this period. These early images provide important context for Riboud's later works and

illuminate the influence of his experience in Asia on his career.

“Marc Riboud captured a period of significant cultural transformation and postwar modernization through the lives of everyday individuals, creating an important living document. The exhibition provides a broad lens through which to look at trans-regional Asian dynamics and history in these critical years,” said Beth Citron, Assistant Curator at the Rubin Museum of Art. “*Witness at a Crossroads* is the latest exhibition at the Rubin Museum of Art to illuminate the profound impact of cultures across Asia on the work of modern and contemporary artists from across the globe. Our latest exhibition affirms the institution’s commitment to providing a comprehensive view of artistic activity coming out of – and impacted by – these diverse cultures.”

Riboud left for Asia shortly after beginning his career at the photo agency Magnum. The photographer’s explorations were shaped in part by his correspondence with his mentor Henri Cartier-Bresson, the father of photojournalism, who provided insight to his protégé on engaging with new cultures. The exhibition highlights common themes in Riboud’s work and underscores the artist’s use of photography to investigate culture and his ability to capture intimate glimpses of everyday life. One of the first foreign photographers allowed into China after the country’s Cultural Revolution of 1949, Riboud was a pioneer in documenting the region, as demonstrated in images such as ***Forbidden City*** (1957), where a silhouette of a figure is framed by the angular rooftops, fences, and walls. A strong sense of composition is also apparent in images like ***On the Backs of Ganges*** (1956), where bathers relaxing after a swim are divided by a draping sheet in the center of the photograph. Works like ***Darjeeling*** (1956), a look at the Indian city on a rainy day, demonstrate Riboud’s ability to create poetic and atmospheric images of the countries he explored.

About Marc Riboud

Before beginning his career as a photographer, Marc Riboud worked as a factory engineer until 1951. After a week on holiday, during which he covered the cultural festival of Lyon, Riboud dropped his engineering job for photography and moved to Paris in 1952. He was invited by Henri Cartier-Bresson and Robert Capa to join Magnum as an associate that same year.

In 1957, Riboud made his first trip to China. He returned multiple times, including a 1965 trio with writer K.S. Karol. In 1968, 1972, and 1976, Riboud made several reportages on North

Vietnam in addition to continuing his travels all over the world, mostly in Asia, Africa, the U.S., and Japan. He is best known for his extensive reports on the East: “The Three Banners of China” (1966), “Face of North Vietnam” (1970), “Visions of China” (1981) and “In China” (1966). He has received many awards including two by the Overseas Press Clun, the Time-Life Achievement, the Lucie Award and the ICP Infinity Award.

Riboud’s photographs have appeared in numerous magazines, including *Life*, *Geo*, *National Geographic*, *Paris-Match*, and *Stern*. He has had major retrospective exhibitions at the Musée d’Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (1985) and the International Center of Photography, New York (1988 and 1997).

Image credits (left to right):

Marc Riboud, *Road to Khyber Pass*, Afghanistan, 1956, photograph, 60 x 94 cm.; Marc Riboud, *Photography fair 150 Kilometers from Tokyo*, Japan, 1958, photograph, 40 x 50 cm.

About Beth Citron

Beth Citron is an Assistant Curator at the Rubin Museum of Art, where she has organized *Modernist Art from India*, a three-part exhibition series that explores the development of Indian art since the country’s independence in 1947. She also organized *Candid - The Lens and Life of Homai Vyarawalla*, an exhibition celebrating India's first female photojournalist; *Living Shrines of Uyghur China: Photographs by Lisa Ross*; and *Allegory and Illusion: Early Portrait Photography from South Asia.*; and *Francesco Clemente: Inspired by India*, an upcoming exhibition exploring India’s influence on the Clemente’s work.

Citron is an Adjunct Assistant Professor in the Art History Department at New York University, where she teaches a course on contemporary South Asian art. She completed her Ph.D. in the history of art from the University of Pennsylvania in 2009, with a focus on contemporary art in Bombay. She has contributed to numerous publications including *ARTFORUM* and *ArtIndia*, and she published a major scholarly article entitled “Bhupen Khakhar's 'Pop' in India, 1970 – 72” in the summer 2012 issue of *Art Journal*.

About the Rubin Museum of Art

The Rubin Museum of Art’s immersive environment stimulates learning, promotes understanding, and inspires personal connections to the ideas, cultures, and art of the Himalayas, India, and neighboring regions. Since its founding in 2004, the Rubin has welcomed more than 1.4 million visitors. Its outstanding collections of Tibetan, Chinese,

Indian, Afghan, Bhutanese, Mongolian, Nepalese, and Pakistani art, which include photography, are complemented by a diverse array on stage conversations, concerts, and special events. The Museum's education, community, and access programming is dedicated to providing audiences of all ages and backgrounds with multidimensional experiences that foster dialogue and active engagement with the traditions and cultures of the Himalayas. The Rubin Museum's Café Serai and shop are also inspired by the region and serve as a natural extension of the gallery and programming experience.

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