

Miroslav Tichý
Josef Sudek

BEHIND THE CURTAIN

18 June – 3 September, 2010



Miroslav Tichý, c. 1950's – 1980's



Josef Sudek, 1940-54

Howard Greenberg Gallery is pleased to present *Behind the Curtain*, an exhibition of work by Czech photographers, Miroslav Tichý and Josef Sudek. While the style of their photographs vastly differs, each photographer created a solitary world in which he produced powerful, inimitable images. For Tichý, the streets of Kyjov became his studio; for Sudek the city of Prague and the view through his studio window served as the foundation for his creativity. The work of both artists evokes a strong sense of secrecy and ambiguity—the many faceted mysteries that were sealed behind the Iron Curtain for years.

The 2004 documentary film, *Miroslav Tichý: Tarzan Retired* produced by Tichý's biographer Roman Buxbaum, will run continuously in one of the gallery's viewing room.

Eccentric and voyeuristic, Miroslav Tichý is known for his haunting, mysterious photographs of women produced between the 1950s and the 1980s. A non-conformist who battled mental illness, Tichý was largely unknown until his work was introduced at the 2004 Seville Biennial. Since then, the interest in Tichý has grown internationally in both the photography and contemporary art worlds. Most recently, he was the feature of a critically acclaimed show at the International Center of Photography. In 2008, Tichý's work was part of a major retrospective at the Centre Pompidou as well as in an exhibition at Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall. He was awarded the 2005 New Discovery Award at Arles and his work is included in the public collections of Centre Pompidou, Musée Nationale d'art Moderne, Paris; La Maison Rouge, Fondation Antoine de Galbert, Paris; and Victoria and Albert Museum, London, among others.

Although Tichý's classic art school training is evident in many of his photographs, to many, he is considered an outsider artist. Following the Communist takeover in 1948, he left the Art Academy in Prague, only to be repeatedly jailed or institutionalized for his rejection of the new political system. After eight years of confinement, Tichý became a social outcast, devoting all of his time to obsessively photographing. He produced countless images, using hand-crafted cameras that he made out of wooden boxes, spools, and other found objects, with lenses crafted from old eyeglasses and plexiglass. With a camera hidden under his clothes, he roamed the streets of Kyjov photographing the women he encountered, always from a distance, often from unusual angles. He captured their images in shops, bus stops, the town square, at the public swimming pool or sunbathing in their yards in the nude or in bikinis.

Each of Tichý's prints is unique. The flaws in his negatives: light leakage, blurring, wide exposure range, and dust, all contribute to the intensified sensuality of his images. His frames -- cutout cardboard with pencil drawings or colored strips of tape -- emphasize the contours of the compositions, blurring the border between drawing and photography.

In a celebrated career that spanned nearly seven decades, Josef Sudek, created a world of shadow and light. Working from the early part of the 20th century up until his death in 1976, he produced ethereal landscapes, modernist still lives, and sweeping panoramas of the city of Prague and beyond. Other Czech photographers, including Frantisek Drtikol, Jaromir Funke, and contemporary artist Jan Saudek have acknowledged Sudek's pioneering work and influence. His studio was the backdrop for the creation of two of his most important bodies of work: *The Window of My Studio* (1940-1954) and *Labyrinth* (1948-1973). His photographs from these series represent the symbiosis of his artistic concerns, his poetic sensibility, and his original aesthetic approach.

For further information, or to request visuals for press,
contact Ali Price at 212 334 0010 or ali@howardgreenberg.com
Starting June 18th, the exhibition can be viewed at www.howardgreenberg.com