

Charles Marville Streetlamps of Paris

28 October – 3 December 2005

Opening

Thursday, 27 October, 6-8 pm



New York - Charles Marville (1816-1879) is considered one of the masters of French 19th century photography and is in particular known for his exceptionally beautiful large-format albumen prints documenting Paris during the transformation of the city under Baron Georges-Eugene Haussmann. After working as the official photographer for the Louvre during the 1850s, Marville was commissioned in the 1860s to produce a series of 425 views of the city, the "Album of Old Paris". Beyond a simple record of the city this was considered a history of the Parisian streets before their destruction and consequent renovation and expansion under Haussmann. Marville's dynamic compositions filled with light and shadow preserved the small streets and corners of old Paris destined to be replaced.

Under the regime of Emperor Napoleon III, Haussmann's ambitious expansion included not only widening the boulevards but also increasing the number of sidewalks and encouraging pedestrian traffic throughout the city. An important part of this modernization was the addition of "street furniture" as it was called and this included thousands of lamp posts throughout the city. Sometime in the mid 1870s Marville was commissioned to record the street lamps producing a remarkable document of the newly illuminated "City of Lights". While these images serve to

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record they transcend their purpose and like his earlier depictions of the city's streets are skillfully constructed and masterfully printed. Marville's vignettes show a modernist vision that would later be seen in Eugène Atget's Parisian views. The World's Fair of 1878 in Paris presented 100 photographs by Marville depicting the "édicules" or "street furniture" of the city.

Marville's photographs are in numerous institutional collections including those of the Musée Carnavalet, Paris, the Canadian Centre for Architecture, the J. Paul Getty, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

For further information, or to request visuals for press,
contact Leila Buckjune at 212 334 0010, lbuckjune@howardgreenberg.com
Starting October 27th, the exhibition can be viewed at www.howardgreenberg.com