

## RUTH ORKIN

### JINX ALLEN IN FLORENCE

16 September - 22 October, 2005

#### Opening

Thursday, 15 September, 6-8 pm

Exhibition catalog available



**New York** - Howard Greenberg Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition that reveals the making of Ruth Orkin's *American Girl in Italy*, one of the most widely known photographs ever taken. Co-curated by Orkin's daughter, Mary Engel, the exhibition will feature rarely seen photographs from Orkin's travelogue of images that encapsulate the tourist's experience in Italy. The show pays tribute to the efforts and talents of two women – photographer and model. The original model for *American Girl*, Jinx Allen, or Ninalee Craig as she is known today, will be in attendance at the gallery's opening reception on September 15.

On August 22, 1951, on the Piazza della Repubblica in Florence, photographer Ruth Orkin snapped the photograph that made her famous. The image, of a young woman walking through a thicket of men, was considered risqué in its time. Since then it has become one of the most famous and controversial pictures ever taken, reproduced in countless posters, books, magazines, calendars and postcards. The image is such a perfect and classical composition that it has brought some critics to question whether the scene was staged. Orkin never hid the fact that the shot was not entirely spontaneous, and spoke of having directed some minor elements of the scene. Whether "real" or not, the image remains an icon of street photography to this day. The photograph was captured by a 29-year-old Orkin, an aspiring photojournalist traveling alone in Italy. In Florence she met Ninalee "Jinx" Allen Craig, an art student and fellow American who became the model for a series Orkin originally titled *Don't Be Afraid to*

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*Travel Alone*. The series was based on their joint experience as women traveling alone in Europe in the 1950s. Within hours of meeting, the two women set out upon the busy lunch-hour streets of Florence. Orkin photographed Craig shopping in the markets, crossing traffic, riding a carriage and flirting at a cafe. By chance the two came upon the now famous pack of men. Orkin turned around and photographed Craig behind her. "I clutched my shawl to me because that sheaths the body," says Craig. "It was my protection, my shield...I was walking through a sea of men." Craig today admits, "I was enjoying every minute of it. They were Italian and I love Italians." Orkin asked Craig to walk through again, and with that she captured the famous image. It took only two exposures.

*American Girl in Italy* was first published in *Cosmopolitan* magazine in September 1952 with an article titled "When you travel alone...tips on money, men and morals." Later it was picked up by Kodak to encourage young photographers. Craig first saw the famous photograph when she arrived at Grand Central Station and looked up to see herself larger than life, spread across the wall in a huge Kodak display. Craig, a Sarah Lawrence graduate, later married an Italian count and lived in Italy for 13 years. Today she is a resident of Toronto.

Soon after her return to New York, Ruth Orkin married photographer/filmmaker Morris Engel. Together they directed *Little Fugitive*, an independent film that was nominated for an Oscar in 1953. Orkin continued her career working for national magazines including *Life*, *Look*, *Esquire*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Coronet*, *Ms.*, *Collier's* and *Ladies' Home Journal*. She became especially known for her portraits of actors, musicians and media personalities including Marlon Brando, Montgomery Clift, Humphrey Bogart and Leonard Bernstein. Orkin's color photographs taken from the window of her apartment on Central Park West were the subject of two highly acclaimed books, *A World Through My Window* (1978) and *More Pictures from My Window* (1983). Today Orkin's photographs are in many permanent collections including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art and the International Center of Photography in New York.

For further information, or to request visuals for press,  
contact Margit Erb at 212 334 0010, [margit@howardgreenberg.com](mailto:margit@howardgreenberg.com)  
Starting September 16<sup>th</sup>, the exhibition can be viewed at [www.howardgreenberg.com](http://www.howardgreenberg.com)