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Abstract Beauty of Architecture and Light in the Paintings of Peter Ruta, on view May 26 through October 11 at Museum of the City of New York

Some 40 paintings of New York City—never before exhibited here yet created by an artist who has worked in Manhattan for 60 years—will be on view at the Museum of the City of New York from May 26 through October 11, 2004. ***Picturing New York: The Paintings of Peter Ruta*** will feature views of the downtown skyline and the West Village waterfront, among other city vistas. Exhibitions of these and other works by Peter Ruta (b. Dresden, 1918)—mostly plein-air landscape paintings made throughout Europe and around Santa Fe—have occurred internationally, but this will be the first New York exhibition of his city paintings.

Susan Henshaw Jones, Director, commented: “Peter Ruta’s paintings of architecture and lower Manhattan have aesthetic as well as documentary meaning. I am delighted that they will be exhibited for the first time at the Museum of the City of New York.”

Picturing New York: The Paintings of Peter Ruta is made possible by The Kaplen Foundation.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a 48-page, full-color catalog.

Ranging in date from 1974 to 2004, and varying in size from a 22- x 30-inch gouache on paper to a 66- x 108-inch oil-on-canvas diptych, some 40 works will be on view. Most were

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painted from Westbeth, where the artist lives and works; three were made in 2001 from the World Trade Center, where Ruta, then 83, had participated in the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council's Studioscape program.

Now 86 years of age, the artist—the recipient of a Fulbright fellowship and three Pollock-Krasner grants—has been painting New York cityscapes since the 1940s. His urban landscapes are painted on-site, with the city laid out before him. He does not work from drawings or photographs, but paints the view directly onto the canvas, in all seasons, primarily in the afternoon. In the paintings, color-infused planes suggest form and dimension. Light is the overriding subject.

Andrea Fahnestock Henderson, curator of paintings and sculpture at the Museum, has said: “Through Peter Ruta’s paintings we come to know something more of our own experience of New York.”

Peter Ruta’s father was a leftist writer; his mother, a Jew of German-American origin. After moving from Dresden to Leipzig following Peter’s birth, and foreseeing the threat of Hitler, the family moved to Italy in 1923, first to Milan and later to Ruta, a small town above Portofino whose name the family adopted. Responding to rising Fascism, Ruta immigrated to New York City in 1936 at the age of 18 and soon began studying at the Art Students League. There, Jean Charlot (1898-1979) encouraged him to go to Mexico, which began his lifetime sojourn of landscape-seeking and painting. New York City, however, remained at least a part-time home. Ruta became a naturalized citizen in 1942 in order to join the U.S. army, where he ultimately earned a Purple Heart. After World War II he continued traveling and spent time in Italy, Greece, England, and Asia. He re-settled in New York City in the late 1950s.

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Visitor Information

Hours: Wednesday through Sunday, 10:00 a.m. – 5 p.m.

The Museum is open on all Monday holidays including Martin Luther King, Jr., Day, President's Day, Memorial Day, Labor Day, and Columbus Day.

The Museum is closed on New Year's Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.

The Museum Shop is open Monday noon to 5:00 p.m.;
Tuesday through Sunday, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

For more information, please call 212-534-1672.

For guided and self-guided tours, please call 212-534-1672.

Location: Fifth Avenue between 103rd and 104th Streets

By bus: M1, M3, M4, M106, or M102

By subway: #2, #3, or #6 trains

The Museum of the City of New York is accessible and welcomes visitors with special needs. For more information, please call 212-534-1672.

www.mcny.org