

# GALERIE MARIAN GOODMAN

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## **JEFF WALL**

*New Work*

16 November, 2002 – 4 January, 2003

The Marian Goodman Gallery announces an exhibition of new works by the Canadian artist Jeff Wall which will open to the public on November 16th and will be on view through January 4th. The exhibition, which will include a series of related works, is engaged in representing the marginal, the enigmatic moments and stories within the everyday, continuing a direction that has been at the core of Jeff Wall's oeuvre. This selection of back-lit color transparencies and large scale black and white photographs continues his interest in what he calls the 'near documentary.'

In his words: "These new pictures weren't planned as a group, but there are similarities between them. They are all examples of my interest in what I call 'near documentary' photography. That means that they are pictures whose subjects were suggested by my direct experience, and ones in which I tried to recollect that experience as precisely as I could, and to reconstruct and represent it precisely and accurately. Although the pictures with figures are done with the collaboration of the people who appear in them, I want them to feel as if they easily could be documentary photographs. In some way they claim to be a plausible account of, or a report on, what the events depicted are like, or were like, when they passed without being photographed. All seven pictures depict moments or events from obscure, unswept corners of everyday life, covert ways of occupying the city, gestures of concealment and refuge, shards of hope and rationality, traces of failure and guilt..." (Jeff Wall)

In contrast with these seven works, the exhibition will also introduce in the United States one of the artist's most ambitious and intricately staged tableaux, *After the Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison, the Preface (2001), a work of great pictorial complexity, which was shot on a set he created in his studio in Vancouver to replicate a basement in Harlem. A powerful work which had its premiere at Documenta 11 this past summer, *After the Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison, the Preface, draws on a scene in Ralph Ellison's 1952 novel, and is the second in a series of pictures the artist has made based on literary subjects. "Th(is) picture describes the character's retreat to a cellar in Harlem. There, he covers the ceiling with lights because he is obsessed with brightness... The room has been furnished and even cluttered with his possessions...the ceiling is covered with 1,369 lightbulbs, which the invisible man has scavenged, hung and wired, connecting them illegally. He says, '...I have been boomeranged across my head so much that I now can see the darkness of lightness. And I love light. Perhaps you'd think its strange that an invisible man should need light, desire light, love light. ...I myself, after existing some twenty years, did not become alive until I discovered my invisibility.'" (Jeff Wall, Phaidon, 2002).

Jeff Wall is best known for his revisionist approach to photography, one which offers an alternative path to painting and filmmaking and seeks to link the history of the pictorial tradition to social structures and contemporary life and art. He most recently was invited to participate in Documenta XI in Kassel, Germany this summer. Last Fall, a major retrospective exhibition of his work, *Jeff Wall: Figures & Places, Selected Works from 1978-2000*, was shown at Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt/Main. The recipient of numerous awards, Jeff Wall was honored this year with the Erna and Victor Hasselblad Foundation International Award in Photography, 2002, and last year with the Paul de Hueck and Norman Walford Career Achievement Award for Art Photography, 2001. He will have an exhibition at the Erna and Victor Hasselblad Foundation in Gothenberg, Sweden in November 2002 and is preparing a solo show which will open at the MUMOK (Museum of Modern Art Ludwig Foundation), Vienna in February 2003.

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Jeff Wall was born in Vancouver, British Columbia in 1946. He has had one-man exhibitions at the Museum für Moderne Kunst Frankfurt am Main, Frankfurt; the Mies Van der Rohe Foundation, Barcelona; the Musée d'art contemporain, Montreal; the Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Basel, MoCA, Los Angeles, the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C., the Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki; the Whitechapel Art Gallery; MCA, Chicago; the Jeu de Paume, Paris; the Reina Sofia, Madrid; the Deichtorhallen, Hamburg; the Kunstmuseum, Lucerne; the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin; the Louisiana Museum, Humlebaek, Denmark; the Palais de Beaux Arts, Brussels; the Art Gallery of Ontario and the Ydessa Hendeles Art Foundation, Toronto. His work has been included in many group exhibitions, such as Documenta XI (2002) and X (1997), the Inaugural Exhibition, Tate Modern (2000); the Carnegie International 1999, Pittsburgh; The Museum as Muse, Museum of Modern Art, New York; Hall of Mirrors: Art & Film Since 1945, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; and the Whitney Biennial (1995).

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