

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Bertien van Manen: *Let's sit down before we go*

January 5 – February 11, 2012
 Opening Reception and Book Signing:
 Thursday, January 5, 6-8pm



The Yancey Richardson Gallery is pleased to present *Let's sit down before we go*, an exhibition of works by Dutch photographer Bertien van Manen. Van Manen's work is a meditation on human existence, revealing the truth of particular lives. Selected from her travels through Uzbekistan, Siberia, Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, Moscow and Tartarstan since 1990, van Manen's photographs are characterized by the intimacy she achieves with her subjects, with whom she spent

countless hours sitting at their tables, lodging in their homes, immersed in their reality.

Van Manen provides a window into Russian lives following years of struggle under the Communist regime. As critic Ryszard Kapuściński notes in his introduction to van Manen's 1995 book, *A hundred summers, a hundred winters*, the artist's lens penetrates the "most inaccessible of places—the homes of ordinary people—in order to show us how millions of Russians live and sleep, what they eat, what they look like in their everyday life, in their flats, at their tables, in their beds." In the case of the former Soviet empire, people were conditioned to be fearful and suspicious, long forbidden to exhibit whom they really were to the rest of the world. By contrast, Van Manen celebrates the country's richness and humanity, especially that of its youth, capturing her subjects at leisure with family and friends, snow skiing in bathing suits, donning wedding dresses, swimming in Siberia and cutting hair in an emerald green meadow.

Kapuściński writes, "Through her excellent photographs and her inquiring and humanistic temperament, and with powerful artistic expression, Bertien van Manen shows what historians, writers, sociologists and political scientists argue, that there are at least two Russias. There is the official, imperial, external Russia, known to us from newspaper headlines, and the one within, the hidden, poor Russia of the anonymous, ordinary people of whose existence Bertien van Manen's moving and revealing [work] tells."

Born in 1942 in The Hague, The Netherlands, van Manen lives and works in Amsterdam. Her most recent monograph, *Let's sit down before we go*, was released in 2011. She has released three previous monographs: *A hundred summers, a hundred winters* (1994), *East Wind West Wind* (2004), and *Give Me Your Image* (2005), selections of which featured in *New Photography 2005* at the Museum of Modern Art. Van Manen's work is held in the permanent collections of several major museums, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Stedelijk Museum. Her work has been exhibited internationally at museums such as the Fotomuseum Winterthur, the Reina Sofia, and the Metropolitan Museum of Photography in Tokyo. The series *Let's sit down before we go* will be presented in its entirety at FOAM Photography Museum, Amsterdam in March 2012.

For visuals, please contact Walker Waugh at wwaugh@yanceyrichardson.com.