

September 1, 2014

MARCEL STORR Reimagining Paris

September 13 – October 25, 2014

Opening reception: Saturday, September 13th, 5 – 7 pm

Andrew Edlin Gallery is excited to announce *Marcel Storr: Reimagining Paris*, the first ever U.S. exhibition of works by the self-taught French artist whose unusual, painstakingly rendered drawings of churches and futuristic fantasy worlds have been shown only a few times in Europe since their discovery in the 1970s. The exhibition of approximately fifteen artworks will run from September 13 – October 25, 2014. A 78-page catalog with an essay by Anne Doran will be published in conjunction with the exhibition.

Born in Paris, Marcel Storr (1911-1976) was abandoned at the age of three and endured a difficult childhood. He was sent to work on farms and eventually packed off to Alsace to be cared for by nuns. By 1932, he had begun creating his first drawings of churches, but his art-making was a deeply personal, secretive activity. He supported himself with odd jobs and in the mid-1940s worked at the Les Halles food market in Paris. Almost two decades later, he married and became a street sweeper in the Bois de Boulogne, the large public park in the western part of the French capital.

Meanwhile, Storr's artwork was developing through several distinct phases. Until the early 1960s, the pictures he had made of churches were marked by extreme attention to detail and an effort to portray his subject matter with a certain realism. During the late 1960s, his drawings grew larger; in these, Storr began depicting fantasy structures of imposing scale and character, including palatial cathedrals whose forms brought to mind such icons of religious architecture as the Basilique du Sacré Coeur in Paris or the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul. Storr first worked in pencil, and then filled in his drawings with ink.

Storr produced his last related group of pictures during the final decade of his life. Now known as "The Megalopolises," these works depict delirious agglomerations of towering, ziggurat-like structures connected by buttress-bridges, as well as otherworldly urban vistas, often set against dramatically colored skies. Storr believed that Paris would one day be destroyed in a nuclear attack and that the President of the United States would need his drawings to rebuild the French capital. Rich affinities between Storr's creations and other architectural forms abound, including their unwitting allusions to the temples of Angkor Wat, Cambodia; images of future cities in sci-fi films and cartoons; and the elaborate, richly textured "Ideal Palace," a large, outdoor sculpture the postman Ferdinand Cheval (1836-1924) constructed of found stones in southeastern France.

In 1971, the Parisian couple, Bertrand and Liliane Kempf, discovered Storr's work through the artist's wife. In his lifetime, Storr produced a total of 63 known pictures, all of which the Kempfs acquired after his death. Some of the works were publicly displayed for the first time in 2001 in an exhibition at Halle Saint-Pierre in Paris. Later, the French art historian Laurent Danchin organized a solo exhibition which opened at the Pavillon Carré de Baudouin in Paris in 2011. Last summer, a major selection of Storr's drawings was prominently featured in the Hayward Gallery's *The Alternative Guide to the Universe* in London.