

FREDERICK BROSEN





# FREDERICK BROSEN

## Recent Watercolors

*Exhibition curated by Shelley Farmer*

*Introduction by Arlene Katz Nichols, Ph.D.*

October 11 – November 10, 2007

HIRSCHL & ADLER MODERN

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Brosen is a New Yorker. Gotham is his muse and his primary subject as he celebrates the poetry of her streets. As with any true urban dweller, though, his eye soon adjusts to the particulars of any city. He has been at home in Paris, in London, in the cities and towns of Italy, painting them with the same understanding and affection that inform his views of his own neighborhood, the Upper West Side of Manhattan. Brosen's interest lies in the street scene. Unlike a genre painter, who focuses on the urban dweller in "slice of life" vignettes, Brosen's figures are engaged in a complex relationship with their environment. Sometimes they are simply scale markers. More often, they offer glimpses of how we live now—expensive cars parked on cobblestone streets in front of a trendy restaurant in Manhattan's lower West Side vie for parking space with the trucks that testify to the area's historical but diminishing function as a wholesale meat market. Over the course of years the artist has revisited favorite locations, marking changes. Brosen paints the subway kiosk at West 72nd Street and Broadway not as it has been recently altered, but as it pleases him to see it. He is not a photographer. He is a portraitist. The meaningful presence of people in a Brosen landscape is not so much to be seen, as it is the tacit understanding that we are the agents of change, the ones who determine the forms and their uses.

While Brosen's streets and buildings are the places where New Yorkers spend their days, his city is curiously unpopulated. This is not the desolation and isolation (not to say misanthropy) of an Edward Hopper. Brosen clears out the sidewalk so that we can walk it as we experience it for ourselves. The city is at one and the same time impersonal and deeply personal. We navigate through crowded sidewalks as if in a cocoon. In the midst of an urban crowd, these familiar spaces belong to us. By extension, New Yorkers demonstrate a proprietary interest in the landmarks of our everyday life. How is it that groups of New York citizens band together to exert political pressure to preserve buildings that they did not build, do not own, and may never have entered? Brosen's pictures convey the peculiar sense of communal pride and affection that we feel toward brick and mortar, steel and glass, inert elements that define our public space as surely as prized possessions and family heirlooms provide comfort inside our homes.

In the end, Frederick Brosen paints the city we know and love. His pictures speak for themselves, requiring neither explanation nor explication. They invite us in, to walk familiar streets with the artist and to appreciate the richness that we oftentimes miss as we rush from one destination to the next. Brosen's take on New York is instantly appealing. With his brush he brings to life a myriad of urban detail to frame the stuff of our lives and return it to us as art. Here is old New York and new New York, seen with fresh eyes.

ARLENE KATZ NICHOLS, PH.D.

For more on the artist, see Burns, Ric, Alan Feuer, and Frederick Brosen. *Still New York*, New York: The Vendome Press, 2005.

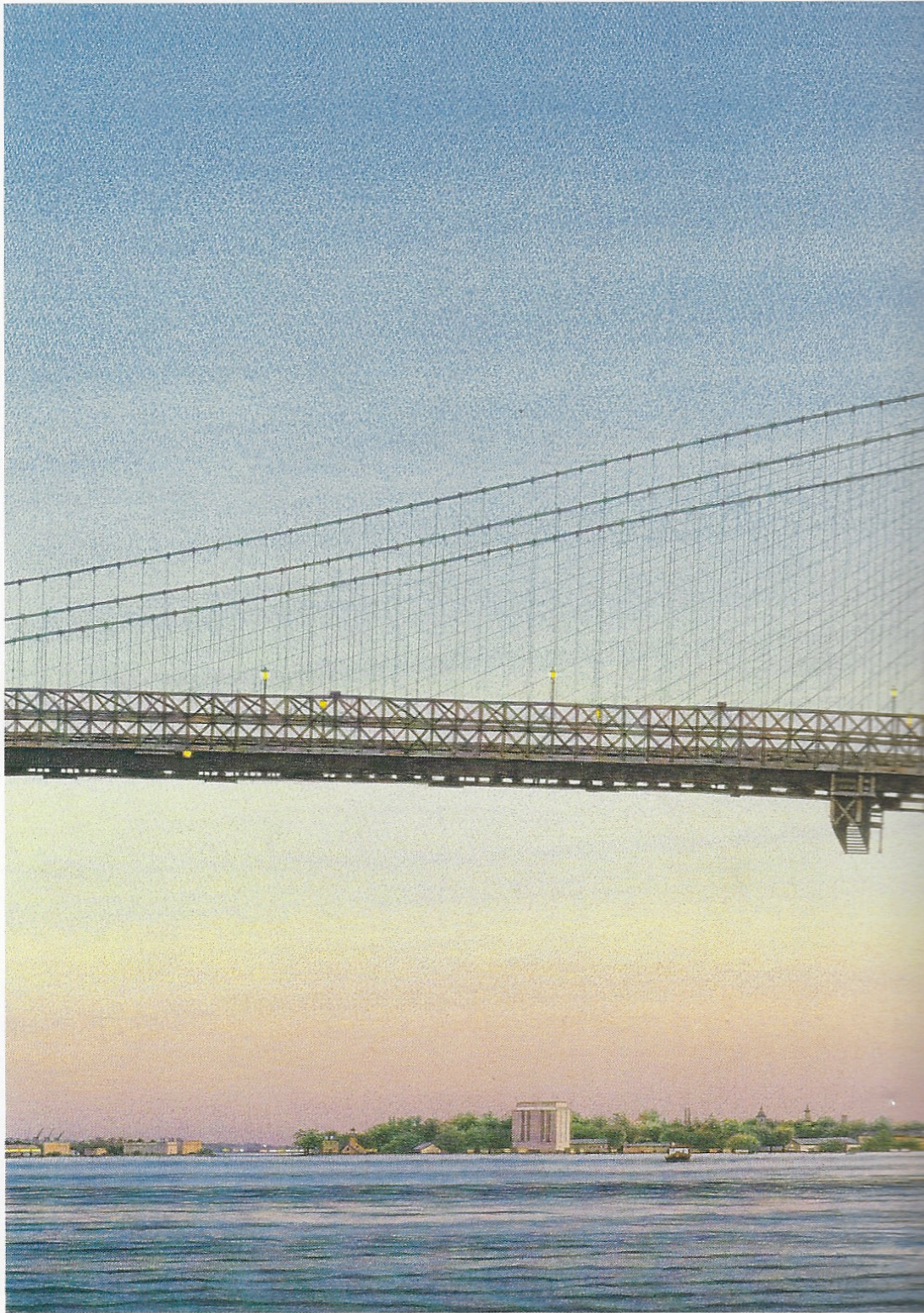


Astor Apartments, Broadway between 75th and 76th Streets

2004

Watercolor over graphite on paper

32 x 34 in.



Brooklyn Bridge

2006

Watercolor over graphite on paper

28<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 51<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in.

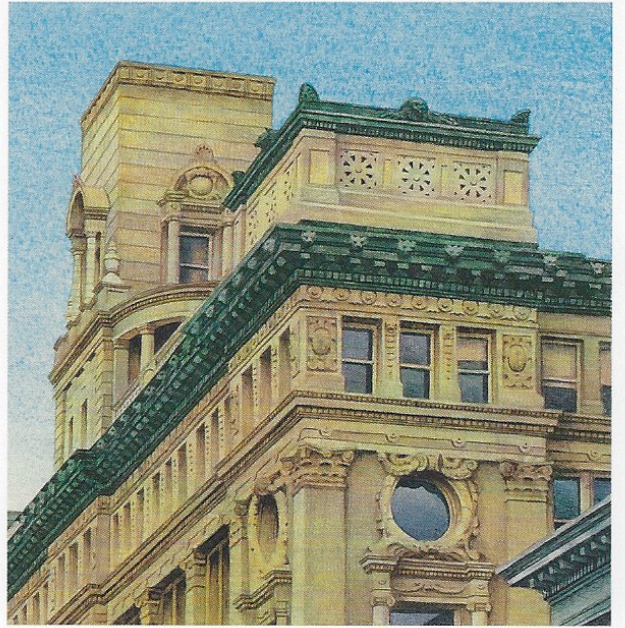


Siegel-Cooper Building

2006

Watercolor over graphite on paper

8 x 7<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in.



The Falconer

2007

Watercolor over graphite on paper

16<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> x 11 in.

11th Street and Fourth Avenue

2006

Watercolor over graphite on paper

34 x 24 in.









Rue des Barres

2006

Watercolor over graphite on paper

7<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 7<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in.



Rue du Marche des Blancs Manteaux

2006

Watercolor over graphite on paper

9 x 7<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in.



Gansevoort Street

2007

Watercolor over graphite on paper

28 x 52<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in.

