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Photographer Paolo Ventura Discusses Book “Winter Stories”

Internationally renowned artist and photographer Paolo Ventura is a creator of sophisticated sets that he then photographs in ways that are haunting. In his new book, "Winter Stories" (Aperture Foundation, 2009), Ventura invents an imaginative series of these set photographs depicting scenes from the memory banks of an old circus performer as he looks back on his life. What the performer revisits are not moments of great drama, but rather fleetingly recalled glimpses of an everyday life, "images that he had thought to have never seen, quick moments he unknowingly observed as he raised his eyes to the clock hung at the corner of the block."

Ventura will discuss and sign his book on Tuesday, Oct. 12, at 3 p.m. in the Mary Pickford Theater on the third floor of the James Madison Building, 101 Independence Ave S.E., Washington, D.C. The Center for the Book is sponsoring this event as part of its Books & Beyond series. The co-sponsors are the Library's Prints and Photographs Division and the Embassy of Italy. The program is free and open to the public; no tickets are required.

The program will consist of a conversation among Ventura, who is a master storyteller; Denise Wolff, editor of the Book Program at the Aperture Foundation; and Renato Miracco, cultural attaché at the Embassy of Italy. Following the program, Ventura will sign the limited-edition book.

Skillfully crafted and evocative, Ventura's photographic creations are filled with the sweet melancholy of an era but remain timeless in their ability to resonate with contemporary audiences. This monograph contains an engaging sequence of images, ephemera from Ventura's working process and a selection of the artful drawings he creates as guides to his elaborate sets.

Two handmade artist albums that Ventura has donated to the Library will be on display after the program.

Born in Milan, Italy, in 1968, Ventura now spends his time in New York and his native country. He studied at the Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera in Milan in the early 1990s. His work has been exhibited internationally, including at Forma International Center for Photography in Milan, the Rencontres de la Photographie in Arles, France, and Maison Européenne de la Photographie in Paris.

Ventura's book is also the subject of a discussion on Facebook. The new Books & Beyond Book Club is available at www.facebook.com/booksandbeyond/. Here readers can discuss books, the authors of which have appeared or will appear in this series. The site also offers links to webcasts of these events and asks readers to talk about what they have seen and heard.

The Center for the Book (www.loc.gov/cfbook/) was established by Congress in 1977 "to use the resources and prestige of the Library of Congress to promote books, reading, literacy and libraries." With its many educational programs that reach readers of all ages, through its support of the National Book Festival and through its dynamic state centers in the 50 states, the District of Columbia and the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Center for the Book has developed a nationwide network of organizational partners dedicated to promoting the wonders and benefits of reading. The center also oversees the Read.gov website, with its exclusive "Exquisite Corpse Adventure" serialized story.

