



Consulat général de France à New York

**Speech of Mr. Philippe Lalliot,**  
**Consulate General of France in New York**

**Conferences@934 : From Matisse to Louise Bourgeois:  
inside the intimate circles of 20th Century Masters**

Thursday, February 23, 2012

Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Dear Friends,

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you all to this new session of our conferences@934. Tonight's conference is rather unique, as its subject – arts and culture – is indeed one we rarely treat here at the Consulate, and I would like to begin by thanking our Cultural Services for their support in organizing this event.

Faithful, however, to the tradition we established more than two years ago, we are welcoming two exceptional figures this evening, who will shed some light on several of the greatest 20<sup>th</sup> century artists in a rather unusual manner: not so much through their works of art as through their more intimate circles, which our guests had the fortunate opportunity of sharing.

I would like, in fact, to invite you to a conversation held in the lines of the Paris literary salons, where the fashion was not to show off one's erudition but to let it express itself in the subtlest of ways, and mainly through telling personal recollections and anecdotes. Allow me to shortly present our guests, who will lead this discussion.

Dear Rosamond Bernier,

Born in Philadelphia of an American father and an English mother, you proved to have an independent spirit very early on. While living in Mexico for several years, you had met with Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo before being sent to Paris by *Vogue* magazine after the Second World War. It was a wonderful opportunity, with doors of studios and salons opened up before you. But the fashion world was not enough for you. In 1955 you created the art magazine *L'ŒIL* with the support of Picasso, Léger, Miro and many others. Back in the United States, you came up with the great idea of conveying this experience. At the *Metropolitan Museum* alone you shared your story in no less than 200 conferences, if we were not to mention the writings and pictures you published. Many of your admirers are here tonight for they cannot have enough of your stories.

As your companion for this evening, you chose the most talented photographer, Dominique Nabokov, who had worked with Patrick Demarchelier before she began her own career path. Dear Dominique, you draw your inspiration from a wide range of sources: France and the US, of course, but also portraiture and photojournalism, music and visual arts. Your works were published in the most renowned magazines and are on display today as part of the collections of the Musée Européen de la Photographie in Paris, and of the National Fund for Contemporary Art. Your books, *New York Living Rooms* and *Paris Living Rooms* depict a real historical and sociological picture of the New-York and Parisian cultural scene towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is this special angle of yours, as both a photographer and a confident, that we are borrowing from you tonight.

I now hand over the microphone to our two guests for a discussion of half an hour, which will be followed by another half-hour of Q&A. We will end this session at around 7:30/45 p.m. and continue our conversation over a drink. Finally, I would like to remind you that you may find the photos, video and audio recordings of the conference on our website as of tomorrow. I wish you all an excellent evening./.