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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THÉODORE BRAUNER  
"Solarfixes:" Photographic Paintings, 1946–1952

September 14 – November 3, 2001

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Reception: Thursday, September 13th, 6:00 – 9:00 PM

**Ubu Gallery** and **Janos Gat Gallery** are pleased to present in collaboration exhibitions of two exceptional bodies of works by **Théodore Brauner**. "Photographic paintings" are being exhibited for the first time since they were last seen in 1952 in Jerusalem ("Solarfixes" at Ubu Gallery) and a series of "photographic anthropomorphisms" are being exhibited for the first time ever ("The Masks" at Janos Gat Gallery).

Brauner was born in Vienna in 1914 and his family moved to Romania in that same year. His father was a Theosophist and poet and his older brother, Victor, was a noted Surrealist painter. Brauner's life and work can be seen as a process of reconciling the two. As the youngest member of the Romanian Surrealist group, Alge, Brauner made his first camera-less photographs realized in sunlight –which he dubbed "Solarfixes"– in Bucharest in 1934. Brauner escaped Romania by sailboat in 1942 and, following a period of internment in Cyprus, lived and worked in Palestine (1944–1948) and in Israel (1948–1956). He moved to Paris in 1956 and started on his series "The Masks" in that same year. Over the next six years he continued to work on this series of anthropomorphic photographs, including during two extended stays in New York.

"**Solarfixes**" are abstract photographs of painterly beauty made without camera or darkroom, with color added through unknown chemical recipes and processes. Brauner worked toward his radical method gradually: "First a very personal preparation of negatives over sheets of paper of different transparencies, then interference through the intermediary materials causing mutations among them." Finally, Brauner broke away completely: "I expose light sensitive paper directly to sunlight, fully contradicting all existing and accepted methods." Sometimes the methods or the objects employed by Brauner can be guessed at, but the details of their making seem unimportant. Brauner viewed them as pure painting with light and, because he refused to exhibit them in galleries devoted exclusively to photography, they were shown only once in the Beth Haomanim in Jerusalem in 1952.

"**The Masks**" is a series of photographs of found anthropomorphisms. Brauner's playful sensibility and curiosity enhanced a natural "framing" instinct that sought out the humanity in things and helped him encounter echoes of the human visage in the everyday landscape. A genie appears in the gears of a giant industrial machine; an authoritarian idol in the face of a short-wave radio; and an imp in a corkscrew. Sometimes the resemblance of an inanimate object or correlation of objects to a face is inherent, but more than often, it results from subtle framing. The more ingenious the framing, the more Brauner's quest for the anthropomorphic takes on a spiritual quality –proving that man's creations bear his likeness in endless variation.

Ubu Gallery and Janos Gat Gallery will hold simultaneous receptions on Thursday, September 13th from 6:00–9:00 PM.

Ubu Gallery is located at 16 East 78th Street. Janos Gat Gallery is located at 1100 Madison Avenue at 82nd Street. Both galleries are open from 11:00 AM to 6:00 PM, Tuesday through Saturday.