**WILLY RONIS**

(1910 – 2009, France)

Willy Ronis was born in Paris in 1910. Completes the Lycée, he attends the faculty of law for one year. In the same years he studies drawing, violin and harmony. In 1926 he obtains his first camera by which he can take photos of his holidays in Paris. In 1932 he works in his father’s studio. When his father died, in 1936, he starts working for newspapers and magazines. In 1937 he becomes reporter-illustrator. He buys his first Rolleiflex. Meets Capa and becomes his friend. Willy Ronis provides a photo feature for *Plaisir de France*. In 1938-39 he realised a reportage on a social cause: the Citroën strike. In the same years he can travel in Greece, Yugoslavia, Albania. He works for the French tourism agency. Between 1941 and 1944 he directs a troupe in German-occupied France and he is assistant in a portrait studio in Toulon, paints jewels with Marie-Anne (whom he marries in 1946); he also teaches several disciplines at a fabrics education centre. Goes back to Paris in October 1944 and he resumes work as a newspaper and magazine photographer. Willy Ronis provides photo features covering Air France, the reconstruction, etc. He joins the *Rapho* photography agency. At the same time he works for industry, advertising and fashion. He continues photographing Paris and he wins the Kodak award in 1947. In the 50s and 60s his works are published in international annuals. In 1957 he is awarded gold medal at the Venice Biennial. Between 1960 and 1970 he is illustrator for a number of different publications. At the same time he works for museums and the Vasarely foundation. He provides coverage in Algeria and Eastern Europe. Leaves Paris in 1972. Gives a number of seminars at the Fine Arts school in Avignon, at the faculty of arts in Aix en Provence, and at the faculty of sciences in Marseille. In 1979 Willy Ronis wins the *Grand prix national des Arts et Lettres pour la Photographie*. He is the honoured guest at *Recontres internationales de la photographie* in 1980. A year later Ronis wins the *Nadar* award for his publication *“Sur le fil du hasard”* and he directs a studio in Venice at Palazzo Fortuny documentation centre. In 1983 he goes back to Paris and donates his archives to the State after his death. His first retrospective is exhibited in Tokyo. Ronis is honored with nominations and merits: is appointed Chevalier of the Légion d’honneur. (1986 – 89) and appointed member of the Royal Photographic Society (1993)

In 1997 he moves to Paris. Here he dies in 2009