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# The New York Times

VOL. CLXI . . . No. 55,742 +

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NEW YORK, SUNDAY, APRIL 15, 2012

\$6 beyond the greater New York metropolitan area.

## Metropolitan



1982 "My Father in the Subway I," the first time Max Ferguson painted his father.

## 30 Years of Paintings Of a New York Everyman

"Moses is described in the Torah as the most modest man who ever lived. My father was the second most. He thought of himself, and wanted others to think of him, as simply ordinary. Perhaps that inspired me to often depict him as Everyman." — Max Ferguson

Born in 1912 and congenitally mild-mannered, Richard Ferguson enjoyed the simple pleasures of New York City: the Sunday paper, a pastrami on rye at Katz's Delicatessen, boardwalk games in Coney Island with his wife. He was a father of four, and his youngest, Max, became an artist.

The first time he painted his father, a lawyer, Max used him as a model for a 1982 painting of a businessman on a subway platform. The success of that piece led to more sittings and more paintings, in oil or watercolor on wood. Inspired by Edward Hopper and 17th-century Dutch genre painting, many of the resulting images were real-life scenes — Richard visiting the post office, waiting for an elevator — while others, like that of father and son playing a game of pool, were painted from the imagination. Richard Ferguson was a devoted father, his son said, but he wasn't demonstrative. "Perhaps," he said, "painting him was one way of trying to elicit more love and approbation."

In "Painting My Father," opening Monday at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion Museum in Greenwich Village, Max Ferguson offers 30 years of these realist snapshots. The show, Mr. Ferguson's 13th solo exhibition, captures his father as he was, and as he wished him to be — all against a backdrop of a fading midcentury New York.

Five weeks after losing his wife of 58 years in 2005, Richard Ferguson died at 92. An opening reception on May 8 will commemorate what would have been his 100th birthday, and honor New York City's everyman.

MARIA ELENA MARTINEZ



1986 "Me and My Father," part of Mr. Ferguson's "Painting My Father" exhibition.



2005 "My Father in Katz's," at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion Museum.



1990 "My Father at Coney Island."



1999 "Saturday Night/Sunday Times."



2011 "My Father at Mount Sinai." Mr. Ferguson's father, Richard, would have been 100 this year.