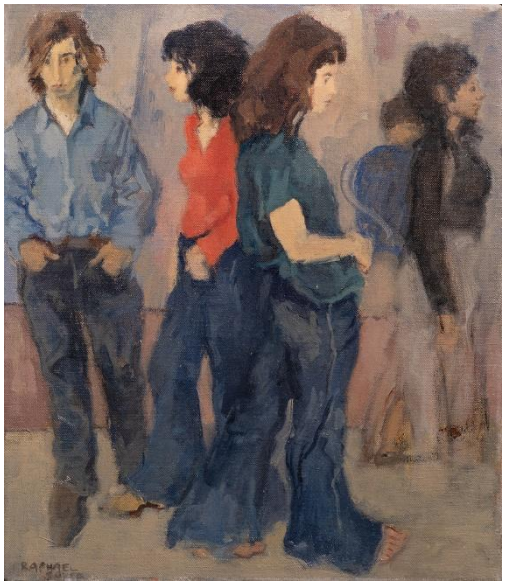
FORUM GALLERY

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Robert Fishko, *Director*

RAPHAEL SOYER
(1899-1987)



Study for Barefoot Girl, 1969
oil on canvas
14 x 12 inches
signed lower left "*RAPHAEL / SOYER*"

Provenance

The Artist and His Estate

Note

> "My art is representational by choice. In my opinion, if the art of painting is to survive, it must describe and express people, their lives and times. It must communicate…I consider myself a modern artist or rather an artist of today…because I am influenced by the thoughts, the life and the aesthetics of our time. I am also an inheritor of many great painters who proceeded me and made tradition living, on-going and ever renewable like nature itself, by finding dynamic, contemporary and personal ways to depict and interpret *their* life and *their* time."
> _Raphael Soyer

In the 1950s and in his middle age, Soyer took a studio on Second Avenue in the East Village of Manhattan where he met an inspiring cast of characters - the Beat poets and writers, artists, musicians, single mothers holding biracial babies, working women, and the youth and hippies of a new decade of social change who he came to know as he frequented the streets outside his studio. They became the subjects of his paintings with street scenes featuring the youth of the times emerging from his palette, including *Study for Barefoot Girl* painted in 1969. Soyer completed a larger version of the composition (50 x 50 inches) that same year, which was purchased by Mr. & Mrs. Henry Fonda for their personal collection.

McGill's obituary notes "Mr. Soyer was known to his friends as a quiet and gentle man of firm resolve. His long devotion to realism in no way lessened his lifelong interest in the art and issues of his time. He was a friend of vanguard artists and writers ranging from

Arshile Gorky to Red Grooms and Allen Ginsberg, and it was a hallmark of his career that Mr. Soyer was frequently found at the center of New York's artistic and cultural ferment."

Writing for the *Long Island Press* about Soyer's retrospective at The Whitney Museum of American Art two years earlier, Jeanne Paris observed: "The dynamism of his work is such that even those who choose to withdraw from society, whether they be the derelicts caught up in the depression or the Hippies of today, all are swept into the maelstrom of the living…Because he cherishes life in all its forms, he frequently beautifies that which is most sorrowful…The inhabitants of the East Village, become bohemian intelligentsia and a simple girl of the East Side, a madonna. The true greatness of Raphael Soyer lies in his overwhelming sensitivity. When he paints, one sees the paint on the canvas, but behind the canvas there is something greater, his feeling and responsiveness.