

MY NEW YORK: CHUCK CLOSE

By LARRY GETLEN

□

December 30, 2007

-- "When I came here ... I had this smorgasbord of incredible visual experiences available to me wherever I went."

Photorealist painter Chuck Close has deep New York roots - our galleries and museums nurtured his artistic soul in his younger days, while intellectual discussions in the city's bars did the same later on for his mind.

Get a closer look at Close's history and process in "Chuck Close," a documentary now screening at the Film Forum. This is his New York.



CHUCK CLOSE

1 Central Park

"A great piece of social engineering. People of all ethnic and racial groups, all financial conditions and every

class and culture come and sit elbow to elbow. A wonderful symbol for New York as a true melting pot."

2 Noho Star

330 Lafayette St. "A real good, serviceable restaurant close to my studio. They make great mojitos."

3 Max's Kansas City formerly at 213 Park Avenue South

For Close, the most important "watering hole" of his formative years. "[The owner] traded art for bar tabs. I remember watching Janis Joplin lean against the jukebox with a bottle of Southern Comfort in her hand, singing along with Lady Day with tears streaming down her cheeks."

4 Madison Avenue from 86th to 55th streets

What used to be gallery row. "There were 14 galleries that showed contemporary art. You could go in the morning or afternoon and see every work of art being shown in a couple of hours."

5 Jerry's Deli (Prince Street btw. Mercer and Greene streets (recently closed))

"I used to live in that building. It's hard to see him go. It was a great restaurant I used to order from almost every day for lunch."

6 The Bowery Poetry Club (308 Bowery)

"They have things going on 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Even the bartender has published poetry, and reads from one of his books from time to time. It's in the old model of the watering hole - a bar, little bit of food, and people who care about what they do."

7 The Frick Collection (1 E. 70th St.)

"One of the great islands of calm - you go there and you're transported. It's a private home full of Vermeers, Rembrandts ... [being there] is like being a friend of a wealthy family."

8 The Gramercy Tavern (42 E. 20th St.)

"Danny Meyer is really a great restaurateur. My favorite dessert is the tapioca pudding, which is unbelievable. I also like all the ethnic food."

9 The Hudson River Esplanade

"I love going out on the pier. It has real grass on it."

10 Greene Street and Grand Street

The location of Close's first New York loft: 2,500 square feet for which he paid \$125 a month. "Everyone laughed at me. They thought I was a rube, because they were paying \$50 or \$75 for their lofts."