

FotoNostrum

Magazine

Issue no.14 | English Version
April 5, 2021



Rodney Smith

Whimsical, Graceful,
and Iconic

Works by
Aude Osnowycz
Chih Han Yang
Chloe Meynier
DDiArte
Eduard Korniyenko
Elena Dudar
Enda Burke
Madeleine Waller
Mark Edward Harris
Michal Chelbin
and
Paul Cupido

FOTONOSTRUM

MAGAZINE

Julio Hirsch-Hardy
juliohardy@fotonostrum.com
Publisher

Laura Perera
laura@fotonostrum.com
Art Director

Maureen Mathiot
maureen@fotonostrum.com
Editor

Analy Werbin
analy@fotonostrum.com
Curator

Victoria Werbin
victoria@fotonostrum.com
Administrator

Issue #14 - April 5, 2021



Editorial Office

Carrer de la Diputació 48
Barcelona 08015, Spain
contact@fotonostrum.com

Unsolicited material is not accepted. All portfolios showcased are curated by the FotoNostrum staff, and by the magazine's contributors. FotoNostrum does not pay photographers, and photographers do not pay FotoNostrum to be featured in the magazine. The photographer at all times retains copyright and intellectual ownership of the images published.

FotoNostrum Magazine is distributed for free online in English and Spanish versions.

© 2021, FotoNostrum SL. None of the material appearing herein can be reproduced without the permission of FotoNostrum Magazine.

Cover image:

© Rodney Smith

Man Leaning Against Hay Bale, Alberta, Canada, 2004

LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

Dear Readers,

On April 15 of last year, we launched *FotoNostrum Magazine*. A year later, here we are releasing the 15th edition (issue no.14) of a publication that we believe has exceeded everyone's expectations, including our own.

As we are still in the midst of a pandemic and cultural institutions struggle to keep their agendas and attendance rates, *FotoNostrum Magazine* has given us a platform to keep in touch with you, our growing community of photographers and art enthusiasts.

We are grateful to see that you are still supporting us after the commodification of the magazine, that was a necessary step for us to continue this endeavour.

This edition will take you on a journey from Kinshasa to Russia, through Spain, Ukraine, and around the world to explore current issues that affect us all.

The themes of tradition and modernity are brilliantly acknowledged in the works of Aude Osnowycz and Michal Chelbin, while Eduard Korniyenko invites us to discover Russia, its traditions, culture, and challenges while talking about his experience as a photojournalist.

Gender equality and female identity are seen through Elena Dudar's honest portraits of women and Chloe Meynier's beautiful investigation on female stereotypes and societal norms.

You will discover a variety of genres of photography, techniques, and subjects: DDiArte's engaged take on Art History, Chih Han Yang's introspective selfies, Paul Cupido's abstract compositions, Enda Burke's nostalgic and humorous portraits, and Madeleine Waller's perfectly structured portraits of atmospheres.

We are also delighted to include the work of a multifaceted master of portrait, travel, and documentary photography, Mark Edward Harris, who shared with us his aspirations and concerns in an exclusive interview.

Last but not least, this issue includes a beautiful homage to Rodney Smith, with a text written by curator Paul Martineau, together with Rodney's iconic and whimsical images.

Summing up his career a few years before his death in 2016, Rodney Smith wrote, "I put my

life on the line for photography and it returned my effort in abundance."

In these difficult times, we know that making photography can be challenging and are positive that together, our community will get through this to keep this art alive.

Julio Hirsch-Hardy
Publisher

Maureen Mathiot
Editor

Laura Perera
Art Director



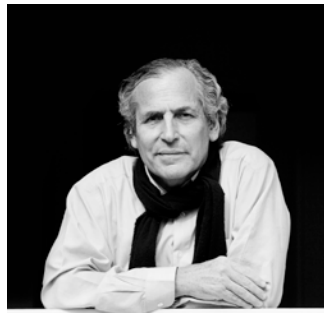
This edition is an homage to the iconic photographer Rodney Smith. We would like to thank The Rodney Smith Estate for providing us with the images and Paul Martineau for writing the text.

In these difficult times, we know that making photography can be challenging and are positive that together, our community will get through this to keep this art alive.

© Rodney Smith
A.J. Chasing Airplane, Orange
County Airport, NY, 1998

Rodney Smith

Whimsical, Graceful, and Iconic



© Rodney Smith by Chris Orwig

Best known for his exceptional fashion photographs, Rodney Smith's life in photography brought him full circle – away from everything that he knew, and then back to the place he so desperately tried to leave behind.

Over the course of a successful career that lasted more than 45 years, Smith developed a unique photographic vision, one that is beautiful, ordered, and inhabited by well-dressed ladies and gentlemen. In each of his carefully crafted compositions, Smith banishes the chaos of modern life for another that is grounded in a romantic view of the past. Like Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, he asks us to follow him down the rabbit hole to a fantastical place that is just beyond our reach, but one intended to inspire us to be better versions of ourselves. For Smith, like many gifted creatives who suffer from bouts of depression and anxiety, photography was a means of staying engaged with the world around him. It was also a tool for spiritual exploration and self-understanding.

All images © Rodney Smith





Smith was born to a Jewish-American family in New York City in 1947. His father, who ran several successful fashion businesses, was a stern perfectionist. His mother was preoccupied with appearances. Their critical parenting style and long absences left Smith struggling with low self-worth. He felt completely incapable of living up to their high expectations. The boy became close with Martin and Fritzie, the German couple who worked for his parents as caretakers. Martin was an amateur photographer and introduced Smith to the basic technical aspects of film processing and print development. A trip to the Museum of Modern Art while a sophomore at the University of Virginia was pivotal. In a softly lit gallery, Smith encountered original prints by Margaret Bourke-White, Henri Cartier-Bresson, André Kertész, and Dorothea Lange, among others, for the first time. “My life was never the same again,” Smith recalled, “I looked at these pictures over and over again, getting more and more excited, and saying and feeling to myself *I can do this. This is for me. This is my life.*”



Above: A.J. Seated With Golf Balls, St. Augustine, FL, 2002
 Right page: Man Leaning Against Hay Bale, Alberta, Canada, 2004

After receiving his BA, Smith attended Divinity School at Yale University where he studied Theology and Photography. The unexpected death of his father in 1972, and the loss of the family fortune, freed him to fully embrace his passion. Smith took a job teaching photography at the University of Bridgeport and spent his free time traveling throughout New England and the American South, shooting landscapes and making portraits of coal miners, farmers, and factory workers. He approached his human subjects with a sympathetic eye, coming in close to try to reveal their inner strength and beauty of spirit. “When I feel I am close I get closer.” Smith wrote, “I am so close that I cannot look the other way or hide behind anything. Then I am aware of an intensity of intimacy and understanding. I begin to sense who I am, and to perceive in others the small expressions that help to reveal a person’s unique and essential quality.” A master printmaker, Smith’s gorgeous gelatin silver prints, with their deep blacks, are reminiscent of the work of W. Eugene Smith (no relation). Recognition came in the form of a grant from the Jerusalem Foundation, which allowed Smith to spend three months photographing the diverse ethnic populations

of Israel. The experience was life-affirming – it boosted his confidence and resulted in his first monograph, *In the Land of Light: Israel, a Portrait of Its People* (1983).

In 1987, Smith was hired to travel the globe, creating environmental portraits of CEOs of the different divisions of the H.J. Heinz Company. The challenge for the artist, who was used to capturing his subjects at close range, was to step back, merging his skills as a portraitist with his skills as a landscape photographer.

Once an appropriate location was decided upon, the lighting and nature of the surroundings helped Smith to devise a pleasing composition – one that showed the subject engaging in some type of daily activity. Smith’s upbringing as the son of a businessman was an asset. He seemed to understand his subjects and their needs. Although the trappings of wealth and privilege were often represented in the pictures, Smith was intent on portraying the softer side of corporate power, thereby making his subjects more relatable to their shareholders. The photographs were featured in the company’s annual report and won many industry awards.



Right page: Reed Skiing, Lake Placid, New York, 2008
Following spread: Three Men with Shears No. 1, Reims, France, 1997





In the early 1990s, Smith began to accept fashion assignments for luxury retailers such as Bergdorf Goodman, Neiman Marcus, and Saks Fifth Avenue. The popularity of his pictures soon led to numerous assignments for fashion, beauty, and lifestyle magazines. Smith's knowledge of art and literature was considerable, and a wide range of influences can be seen in his work – from the surrealism and humor of the Belgian painter René Magritte to the lightheartedness and graceful movement of the French photographer Jacques Henri-Lartigue. Smith's penchant for the past, particularly his preference for retardataire styling, resulted in classic images that were miles away from “heroin chic,” the sickly mixture of glamour and grime that roiled the fashion world in the 1990's.



Above: Skyline, Hudson River, New York, 1995
 Right page: Reed Leaping Over Rooftop, New York, New York, 2007







“I put my life on the line for
photography and it returned
my effort in abundance.”

Previous spread: James in Innertube with Duck, Lake Placid, New York, 2006
Left page: Peter in Cornfield, Hancock, Massachusetts, 1993



For Smith, who disliked shooting in a studio, finding the right location was one of his greatest challenges. And, whether it was the hard geometry of New York City skyscrapers or the clipped greenery of Parc de Seaux in Paris, the evocative mood of the place was integral to the creation of a masterly composition. “It’s the location that drives all the pictures,” Smith explained, “One of the things that is interesting, and I think people are always intrigued by this, is that although my pictures seem so composed, they are extremely spontaneous. 95% of the pictures I take, I didn’t even know I was going to take them a few minutes before.” Smith preferred to visualize his compositions and never used a Polaroid to establish his shots. His primary camera was his tripod mounted Hasselblad loaded with film. He preferred natural light and all effects (fog, for example) were produced on location and never added in post-production. Smith was such a firm believer in the primacy of black-and-white photography that he did not begin using color materials until 2002.

Summing up his career a few years before his death in 2016, Smith wrote, “I put my life on the line for photography and it returned my effort in abundance.” Indeed, making pictures allowed him to express his deepest spiritual needs and, in the process, he finally found peace, admiration and success.

Previous spread: John Hinch in Cab, London, England, 1987
Right page: Pamela With Pearls, Snedens Landing, New York, 1991





About the Author

Paul Martineau is an associate curator of photographs at the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles. He received a B.A. in art from the University of Massachusetts at Boston and a M.A. from the Williams College Graduate Program in Art History. Before joining the J. Paul Getty Museum in 2003, he held positions at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston and at the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute. Mr. Martineau has organized more than a dozen exhibitions. He is the author/coauthor of ten books and has lectured internationally.

Author's Note

The team at The Rodney Smith Estate and I have embarked on a retrospective publication that will, for the first time, explore all aspects of the artist's life and career. Lavishly produced with more than 180 reproductions, it will include two essays, an illustrated chronology, a bibliography, and a list of institutional holdings.

About the Rodney Smith Archive

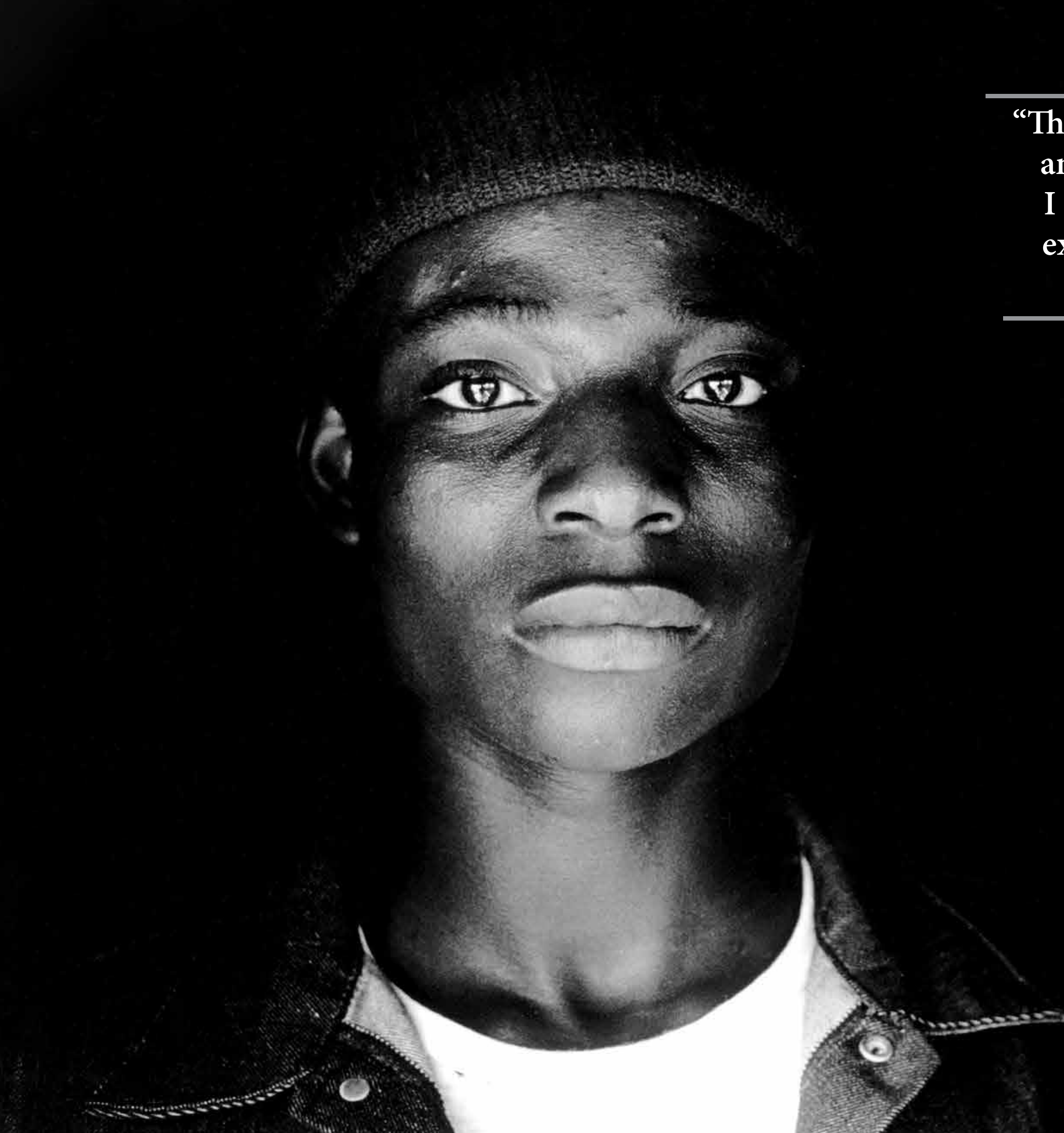
The Rodney Smith Estate provides access to and promotes further understanding of the artistic legacy of Rodney Smith. The Estate is the largest repository of Smith's work. Its holdings include Smith's photography collection and archive comprising final works, photographic and biographical materials, writings, studio equipment, and library. In addition to housing Smith's studio, collection, and archive, the house and gardens—designed by Smith and prominently featured in many of his photographs—provide an additional lens in which to contextualize his life and work. The Estate offers researchers, students, and scholars the opportunity to study primary and secondary sources related to Smith's photography practice.

Right page: Bernadette Twirling, Burden Mansion, New York City, 1997





Left page: Edythe and Andrew Kissing on Top of Taxis, New York, New York, 2008
 Above: Saori on Sea Plane Wing, Dominican Republic, 2010
 Following spread: Black Boy, Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina, 1977



“Then I am aware of an intensity of intimacy and understanding. I begin to sense who I am, and to perceive in others the small expressions that help to reveal a person’s unique and essential quality.”
