

RODNEY SMITH

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Rodney Smith Estate PR Contacts

Alexandra Fanning alex@alexandrafanning.com

Juan Marco juan@alexandrafanning.com

Legendary Photographer Rodney Smith's Work Featured at Xposure 2026, the First Artist to be Presented Posthumously



Left: *Skyline, Hudson River, New York, 1995*, Right: *Erin in Green No.3, Snedens Landing, New York, 2014*

Sharjah, UAE – The Rodney Smith estate announced today that the work of the acclaimed photographer will be featured at Xposure 2026, taking place from **January 29 to February 4 in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates**. This marks a significant milestone as the festival celebrates its 10th edition, coinciding with the 10th anniversary of Smith's passing in 2016.

Smith becomes the first posthumous artist to be exhibited at Xposure, joining an exclusive roster of the world's most celebrated photographers, filmmakers, and visual artists invited to this invitation-only event in Sharjah.

Smith's photography shared the fundamental DNA of photojournalism while transcending traditional boundaries. Rooted in authentic moments, real places, and natural light, his work never relied on studio artifice or digital manipulation. Every image began with the photojournalist's core tools: finding the right location, utilizing natural light, and capturing genuine human moments. His career trajectory mirrored that of many photojournalists. Smith began with soulful portraits of migrants and farmers, subjects he chose to document on his own terms. These early works led to assignments photographing captains of industry and business leaders, which in turn opened doors to fashion and editorial commissions, following a path not unlike that of the legendary Gordon Parks. But Smith pushed further, entering a realm of visual storytelling where the camera became a tool for exploring the human psyche.

Smith's surreal narratives, often mistaken as fantasy, were psychological documentation, using the same rigorous location scouting and lighting mastery that defines great reportage, but applied to illuminate interior landscapes rather than external events. This unique approach makes his work especially relevant to today's photojournalists. In an era of deepfakes and digital manipulation, Smith's images challenge viewers to question what we consider 'real.' Using only traditional photographic techniques, he created images that seemed impossible yet were completely authentic, much like how the best photojournalism captures moments so extraordinary they seem surreal.

Smith's exhibition has been proposed for the **Saleh Al Ustad Legacy Award**, which celebrates creative expression across fine art, portraiture, and conceptual work. The award is part of the Xposure Legacy Awards, a new recognition programme based entirely on the exhibitions presented by guest photographers at the festival.

Xposure 2026 will provide attendees with a unique opportunity to experience Smith's masterful blend of documentary authenticity and imaginative vision, showcasing why his work remains a touchstone for photographers navigating the evolving landscape of truth and perception in contemporary imagery. Organized by the Sharjah Government Media Bureau (SGMB), Xposure has become one of the world's leading platforms for photography, film, and visual media.

“Rodney’s work brings something distinctive to Xposure—images with the DNA of photojournalism that lead the viewer somewhere unexpected. In an era increasingly defined by questions of authenticity, his photographs are completely real, made without manipulation, yet they appear almost impossible. In revealing an inner truth, they ultimately show us far more than what is visible on the surface.” **Leslie Smolan, Executive Director, The Rodney Smith Estate**

“We are honoured to present Rodney Smith’s work at Xposure. His distinctive vision, shaped by surreal elegance, disciplined composition, and quiet wit, continues to influence photographers across generations. In the context of this year’s theme, A Decade of Visual Storytelling, his images feel especially resonant: timeless, human, and meticulously made, yet always open to interpretation. By celebrating his legacy through this posthumous presentation, we reaffirm Xposure’s commitment to preserving the voices of artists whose influence continues long after their lifetime.” **Simon Newton, Creative Director and Exhibition Curator, Xposure**

ABOUT XPOSURE

What began in 2016 as a regional initiative is now a global meeting ground for the world's most celebrated visual storytellers — and the emerging voices who will shape the future. Xposure is a festival — and a movement. A space where still and moving images communicate across borders long before words do. Here, artistry reflects truth. Light carries meaning. Stories connect cultures.

-END-