

**Circular Breathing, Hart Leroy Bibbs, Paris**

1980

Vinyl wallpaper

Courtesy the artist

RIGHT TO LEFT, TOP TO BOTTOM:

**Oopdeedoo, Brooklyn, from the series**

**Coney Island** 1976

Pigment print

**Lift as We Climb [Eleanor Holmes Norton  
and Dorothy Height]** 1981

Pigment print

**New Orleans Brass with Mingus** 1987

Gelatin silver print

**Judith Jameson, Sophisticated Lady** 1981

Gelatin silver print

**Professor Edward Boatner, New York City,  
New York** 1979

Gelatin silver print

**Self Portrait Trio** 1978

Oil paint on gelatin silver print

**Amina and Amiri Baraka, "Lovers,"  
New York** 1980

Pigment print

Courtesy the artist

RIGHT TO LEFT, TOP TO BOTTOM:

**West Indian Parade, Brooklyn** 1972

Gelatin silver print

**Hakone, Japan** 1991

Pigment print

**“Luxembourg Gardens,” Paris** 1974

Pigment print

**Sunflowers Goghing with Darkness and Light (horizontal)** 1989

Gelatin silver print

**Skyscape Hakone (with spirit)** 1985

Gelatin silver print

**Womb** 1992

Gelatin silver print

Courtesy the artist

RIGHT TO LEFT, TOP TO BOTTOM:

**Castle on a Hill** 1991

Gelatin silver print

**Clean the Table, Pool Player** 1991

Pigment print

**Mother and Child Deciding, Pittsburgh** 1991

Gelatin silver print

**Pool Player Stance** 1991

Gelatin silver print

**Woman in Kitchen** 1991

Gelatin silver print

**Greyhound Bus, Pittsburgh** 1991

Pigment print

Courtesy the artist

LEFT TO RIGHT, TOP TO BOTTOM:

**James Baldwin in Setting Sun over Harlem,  
New York 1979**

Pigment print

**African Burial Ground, Sacred Space 1991**

Pigment print

**Little Brown Baby wif Spak'lin' Eyes,  
for Paul Laurence Dunbar 1991**

Pigment print

**Past Any Reason for Song 1991**

Gelatin silver print

**The Apollo 1991**

Pigment print

**Yes, Immigrants 1991**

Pigment print

**Pass the Plate, Harlem, New York 1990**

Pigment print

Courtesy the artist

LEFT TO RIGHT:

**August Blues, Harlem, New York 1991**

Pigment print

Courtesy the artist

**Invisible Man, Somewhere, Everywhere 1998**

Oil paint on gelatin silver print

The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of  
Kathleen Lingo in memory of Linda

McCartney, 1998

LEFT TO RIGHT, TOP TO BOTTOM:

**Farewell to Alvin Ailey** 1989

Pigment print

**Khalid Muhammad, Million Youth March,  
Harlem, New York** 1998

Gelatin silver print

**Million Youth March, Raised Fists, Harlem,  
New York** 1998

Gelatin silver print

**Duke Ellington** 1973

Pigment print

**Raise Your Window High** 1972

Gelatin silver print

**Jump, Harlem, New York** 1976

Pigment print

Courtesy the artist

“Living in Harlem was an authentic experience for me, and I was trying to capture that authenticity. I was living and my work came out of my life. I would go out with my camera to shoot events like the Million Youth March [1998] or meet musical figures like Dr. Edward Boatner or academics like Dr. John Henrik Clarke, and even watch Duke Ellington on TV—these people had so much history in them. Some people look at certain areas and only see the depravity and the struggle, but there’s so much love and genius there; there’s warmth. I think that was my motive in photographing Harlem, to communicate that warmth.”

—Ming Smith

“I evolved as a photographer with the series *Invisible Man* [1990–91], just like a jazz musician who plays the head [the known melody of a song] before they start improvising. Ralph Ellison’s book *Invisible Man* [1952] was an inspiration, especially the idea of what it means not to be seen, but I didn’t consciously set out to make work about it. I wanted to capture the feeling of painting and make photographs on an artistic scale. Living in a Black environment, the people I photographed didn’t have to put on any airs, they were just living their life. The series was about a feeling, an expression. Anyone could identify it. We were present but we weren’t there. We were visible but also invisible.”

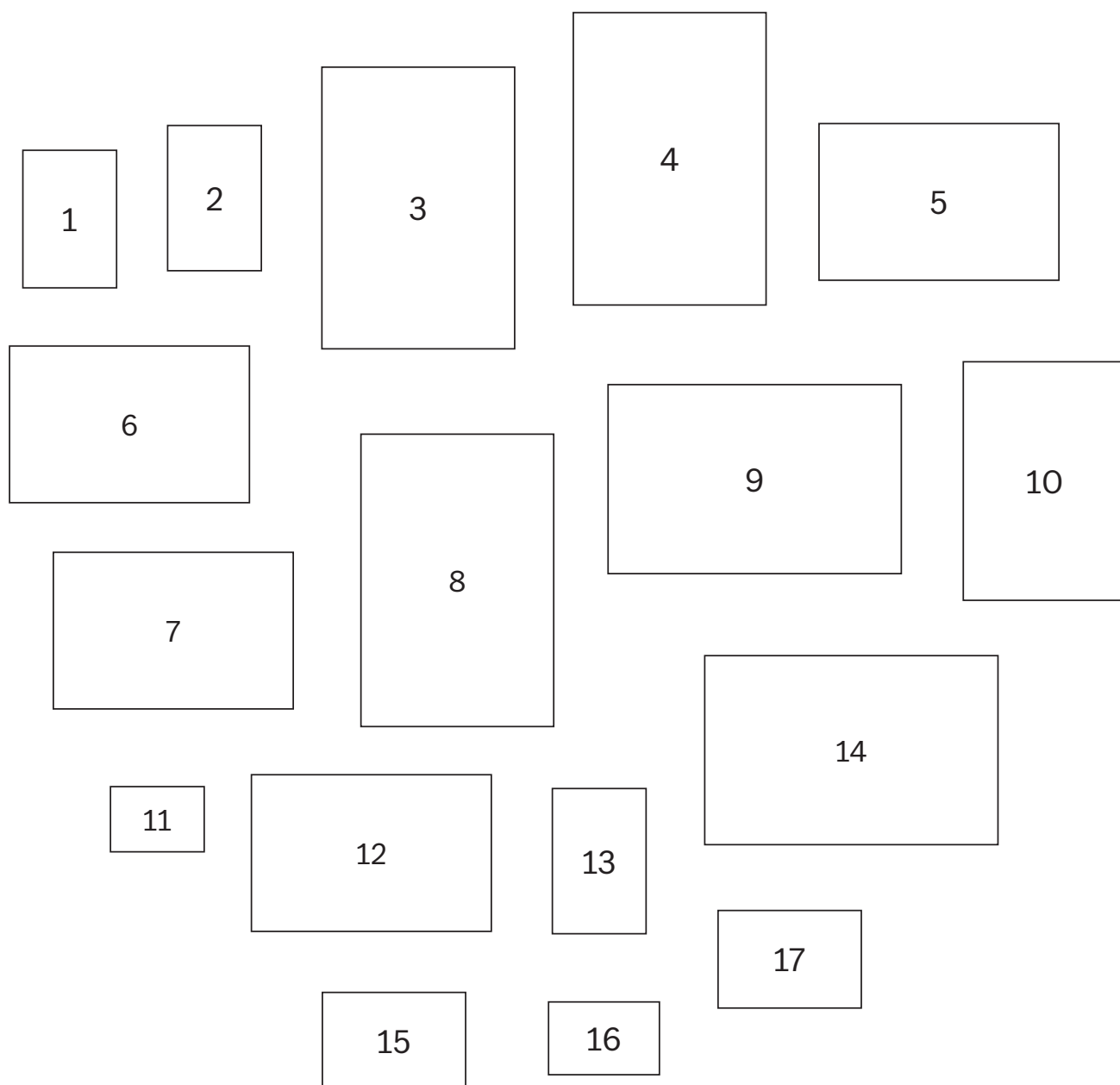
—Ming Smith

“When making the series *August Moon for August Wilson* [1991], I wanted to photograph Wilson’s characters, or the people that inspired his plays. Because those characters up on stage were people that I knew in my own way: working-class men and women, with their own stories and conflicts, their own humanity. I wanted to capture that because I knew people like that and loved people like that. There are many important figures in our communities, and just to have survived takes a certain genius. It reminded me of the way I grew up. It felt honorable to give them a tribute.”

—Ming Smith

“Whether I’m photographing a person on the street, someone I know, or on an assignment, I’m doing it because I admire them. I like the sense of exchange—they’re giving and I’m taking, but I’m also giving them something back. There were certain people who would understand what I was looking for and would try to give me a photograph by posing. Whatever I’m shooting, whether it’s a portrait or a place, my intention is to capture the feeling I have about that exchange and that energy.”

—Ming Smith



“In all of these photographs, every one of them, I was looking at the light. That’s what dictated the compositions: the way the light played out in them. That’s my practice. I follow the light—in the movement, in the flight, in the sun streaming, in the darkness pulsing. It’s how the birds are, how the dancers move, how the musicians breathe. The way I photograph is all dictated by the certain ways that life behaves. It’s a constant. It’s my constant.”

— Ming Smith

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|---|---|----|--|
| 1 | <b>Tokyo Moonlight Figuration II, Tokyo, Japan</b> 1985                         | 10 | <b>Randy Weston On Next, Saalfelden, Austria</b> 1980    |
| 2 | <b>Tokyo Moonlight Figuration I, Tokyo, Japan</b> 1985                          | 11 | <b>Roxbury Interior, Boston, MA</b> 1978                 |
| 3 | <b>Sun Breeze after the Bluing, Hoboken, NJ</b> 1972                            | 12 | <b>Ailey—Praise</b> 1981                                 |
| 4 | <b>James Van Der Zee, New York City, New York</b> 1972/1991                     | 13 | <b>Spiral, Romare Bearden</b> 1977                       |
| 5 | <b>Black Dance</b> 1981   | 14 | <b>Pharoah Sanders at the Bottom Line</b> 1977           |
| 6 | <b>The Window Overlooking Wheatland Street Was My First Dreaming Place</b> 1979 | 15 | <b>Arthur Blythe in Orbit, Berlin, West Germany</b> 1981 |
| 7 | <b>Jazz Shadows</b> 1981  | 16 | <b>Cascading Light</b> 1981                              |
| 8 | <b>Oolong’s Nightmare</b> 1991  | 17 | <b>Julius + Joanne</b> 1981                              |
| 9 | <b>Sun Ra Space II, New York, NY</b> 1978                                       |    |  |

UV prints on Dibond  
 Courtesy the artist