

For Ming Smith, photography is a site where the senses and the spirit collide through the prism of light. “I’m dealing with all these elements, getting that precise moment,” Smith has said. “Getting the feeling, the way the light hits the person—to put it simply, these pieces are like the blues.”

*Projects: Ming Smith* offers a critical reintroduction to a photographer who has lived in New York since the 1970s, and whose work has served as a precedent for generations of artists engaging the politics and the poetics of the photographic image in relation to experiences of Blackness. Through her skillful deployment of long exposures—which involves slowing the shutter speed of the camera lens to render movement as blur—Smith dissolves the boundaries between her subjects and their surroundings. Her dreamlike, abstract compositions are led by intuition and perfected through repetition.

The result of a deep dive into Smith’s archive, this exhibition reckons with the crucial position of this artist in the history of photography, and in the institutional memories of both The Museum of Modern Art and The Studio Museum in Harlem. MoMA was the first institution to acquire Smith’s work (in 1979), and the Studio Museum has shown Smith’s work since the beginning of her career, when she was the first female member of the trailblazing Black photography collective the Kamoinge Workshop. Bridging the distance between the present and the past, *Projects: Ming Smith* creates a photographic portal through which to encounter Smith’s images anew. It highlights how her pictures collapse the senses, encouraging us to attend to the hue of sound, the rhythm of form, and the texture of vision.

Organized by Thelma Golden, Director and Chief Curator, The Studio Museum in Harlem, and Oluremi C. Onabanjo, Associate Curator, Department of Photography, The Museum of Modern Art.

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We invite you to explore the accompanying publication, *Ming Smith: Invisible Man, Somewhere, Everywhere*, which is available in the Museum Store.

Music, particularly jazz, plays an important role in Ming Smith’s life and photographic practice. Scan this QR code to access a playlist compiled by Smith on the occasion of this exhibition.

