

The Museum of Modern Art

MoMA ANNOUNCES *PROJECTS: MING SMITH* OPENING IN FEBRUARY 2023

The Exhibition Will Provide a Critical Reintroduction to Ming Smith's Pictures and Distinctive Photographic Approach

NEW YORK, September 6, 2022 - The Museum of Modern Art announces *Projects: Ming Smith*, on view in the Museum's street-level galleries from February 4 through May 29, 2023. A photographer who has lived and worked in New York since the 1970s, Ming Smith has served as a precedent for a generation of artists engaging the politics and poetics of the photographic image. Through a deep exploration of the artist's archive, the exhibition will offer a critical reintroduction to Smith's work through her distinctive approach to movement, light, rhythm, and shadow, highlighting how she transforms the image from a document of photographic capture into a space of emotive expression. *Projects: Ming Smith* is 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, with the assistance of Kaitlin Booher, Beaumont and Nancy Newhall Curatorial Fellow, Department of Photography, The Museum of Modern Art, and Habiba Hopson, Curatorial Assistant, Permanent Collection, The Studio Museum in Harlem.

As Oluremi C. Onabanjo states, "For Ming Smith, the photographic medium is a site where the senses and the spirit collide. Calling attention to the synesthetic range of her photographic approach, this exhibition highlights how her images collapse the senses, encouraging us to attend to the hue of sound, the rhythm of form, and the texture of vision." Works featured in the exhibition showcase a wide array of subjects, ranging from finely attuned studies of Black avant-garde musicians and dancers to depictions of everyday life in Harlem and Pittsburgh's Hill District through photographic series made in response to Ralph Ellison's novel *Invisible Man* and August Wilson's Pittsburgh Cycle of plays.

Projects: Ming Smith is the fourth exhibition in MoMA's ongoing Projects collaboration with The Studio Museum in Harlem. It takes up the work of a photographer who is important to the history of both museums. 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.

Thelma Golden says, "Almost from the day she arrived in New York City, Ming Smith was at the center of an extraordinary cultural ferment, contributing to the Black Arts Movement while creating a space for herself within Harlem's legendary Kamoinge Workshop. Working for over five decades, her contribution to modern photography is deeply significant—she

continues to influence countless photographers through her singular documentation of, society's humanity and pageantry. I'm thrilled that audiences who know her work will have the opportunity to revisit and reappraise her many achievements, and that new audiences will have the excitement of discovering her graceful, stunning images through *Projects: Ming Smith*."

Projects: Ming Smith is accompanied by *Ming Smith: Invisible Man, Somewhere, Everywhere*, a new volume in MoMA's One on One series, written by Oluremi C. Onabanjo. The book provides a sustained meditation on Smith's photograph *Invisible Man, Somewhere, Everywhere* (1991) in MoMA's collection.

ARTIST BIO

Ming Smith lives and works in Harlem, New York City. Her work has been included in group exhibitions at Bergen Kunsthall (2022), the Cincinnati Art Museum (2022), the Getty Museum (2022), the Whitney Museum of American Art (2020–21), the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (2020), the Smart Museum of Art (2019), the Brooklyn Museum (2017), the Serpentine Gallery (2017), Tate Modern (2017), and The Museum of Modern Art (2010–11), among others. Smith is the recipient of the 2021 Award in Art from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Her work is represented in collections including the Brooklyn Museum, the Detroit Institute of Arts, the Getty Museum, the National Gallery of Art, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, the Studio Museum in Harlem, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. Her publications include *Ming Smith: Invisible Man, Somewhere, Everywhere* (2022), *Ming Smith: An Aperture Monograph* (2020), and *A Ming Breakfast: Grits and Scrambled Moments* (1991).

PARTNERSHIP: The Studio Museum, The Museum of Modern Art, and MoMA PS1

The Museum of Modern Art and MoMA PS1 have joined in a multiyear partnership with The Studio Museum in Harlem. Together, these museums have developed a series of programs and exhibitions building on existing affiliations and shared values. At the core of this partnership is a joint fellowship for rising professionals in the arts. Founded in 2015, this fellowship program for the development of museum staff is aimed at mentoring and diversifying the next generation of art professionals. The two-year fellowship provides participants with the opportunity to spend a year at each institution, gaining experience in the curatorial or public programming departments.

SPONSORSHIP:

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