

Artist Statement: Rodney Smith

My creative process is intricately connected to how I examine my own life, how I got to know myself, how I drew clarity from my emotions and translated them into pictures. Taking photographs was my way of reconciling the mundane with the ideal, of reconciling my fears and shifting from anxious loner to participant. It was with my camera that I began to find intimacy.

Today, a great deal of the Western culture seems rooted in remoteness, anger, alienation, and squalor. I want people to see the beauty and whimsy in life, not its ugliness. I feel the need to reach out for its soul, its depth and its underlying beauty. I represent a world that is possible if people act their best. It's a world that's slightly beyond reach, beyond everyday experience, but it's definitely not impossible.

I trust my instincts to get to the heart of the matter. First, I find the location, then everything else follows. If you watched me work you would see me move around and suddenly stop when I've found the right spot to take a picture. It's an intuition about proportion and scale and how I am relating to the subject. It's not an intellectual concept; it is an emotional concept. Composition is like rhythm in music, it's where everything is in sync. It's where the whole picture comes together succinctly and carefully.

I am meticulous in my craft. I expose and process the film by hand slowly, and work to produce an exquisite artifact, the print. It is labored to produce a thing of beauty. For me, the print is the creation, the purpose...the result of my endeavor.