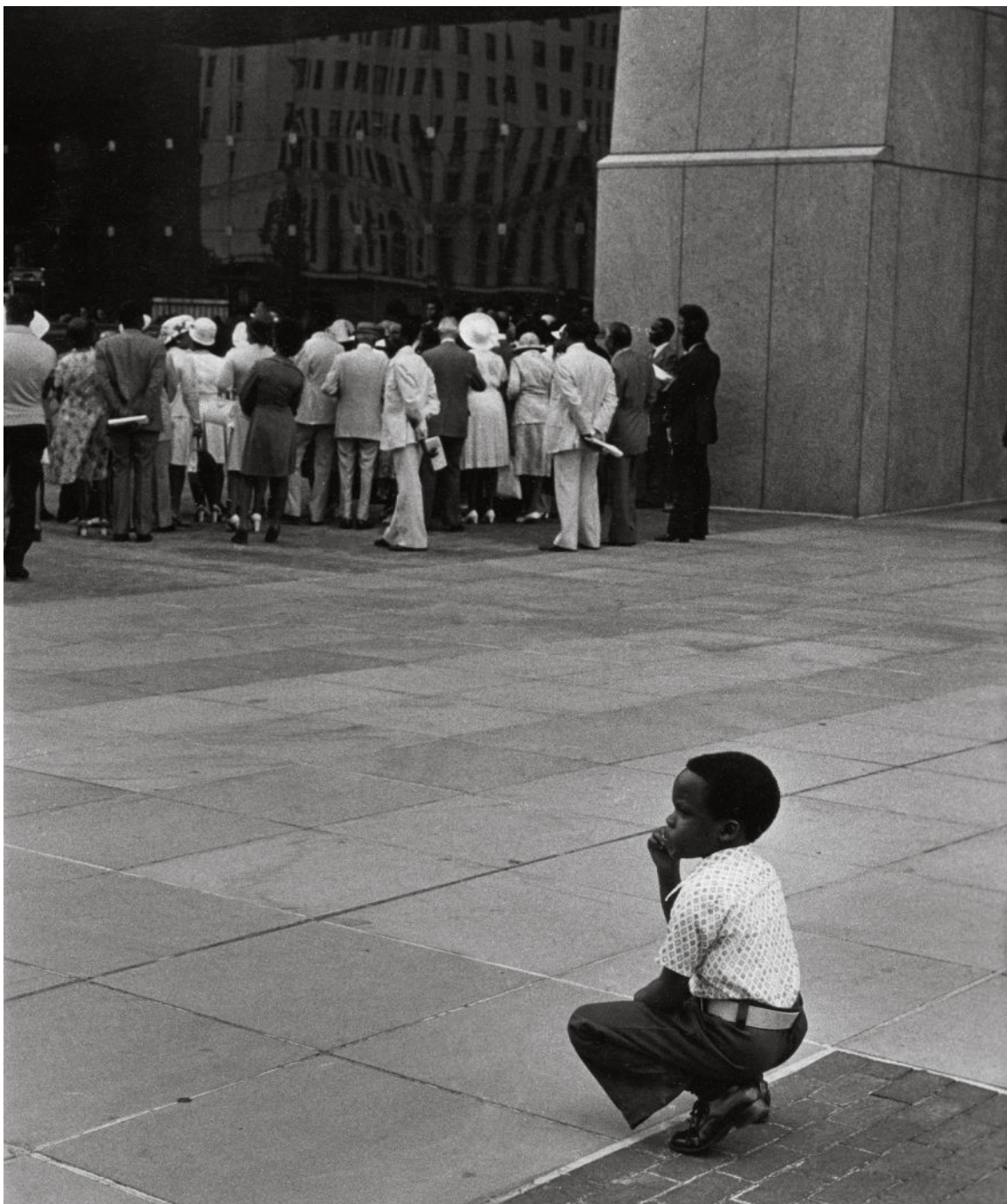


Teacher Guide

Ming Smith: Feeling the Future

On view May 26, 2023 – October 1, 2023



Ming Smith, *Whats It All About*, 1976, Archival pigment print, 24 x 35 inches, Courtesy of Ming Smith Studio

CAMH.ORG

@camhouston

#atCAMH

#TrustArtists

#FeelingtheFuture

Teacher Guide

Ming Smith: Feeling the Future

On view: May 26, 2023 – October 1, 2023

Exhibition Overview

- Grounded in portraiture, Ming Smith's work has amplified the heartbeat of Black life from the 1970s to the present.
- Through her photographic work, Smith captures cultural movements she witnessed and participated in, specifically exploring themes such as Afrofuturism, Black cultural expression, representation and social examination.
- This is Smith's first solo exhibition at a major institution to survey her unparalleled career and work from the early 1970s through the present.
- Smith's early images vibrate with the energy of her subjects—in carefully composed images, often developed or processed using techniques such as frame masking, hand-tinting, and superimposition.
- *Ming Smith: Feeling the Future* is a collection of over forty works spanning multiple



Ming Smith, *Red Hot Jazz II*, 1979, Archival Pigment Print, 20 x 24 inches, Courtesy of Ming Smith Studio

decades. Her work invites the viewer to experience flashes in time as links to both the past and future.

- Smith is Harlem-based and Detroit-born. She attended the famous Howard University in Washington, DC.
- Ming Smith became a photographer when she was given a camera, and was the first female member to join Kamoinge, a collective of Black photographers in New York in the 1960s.
- Smith was the first Black woman photographer to be included in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art.

Things to Note

- Three works in the exhibition include nudity: *Female Nude (New York)* (1977) and *Male Nude (New York)* (1977), and *Transcendence, Turiya and Ramakrishna for Alice Coltrane* (2006)
- There will be seating in the video room and the meditation room.

Key Questions

For a student and/or museum viewer:

- How does Ming Smith's portraiture capture the emotions and experiences of Black life?
- How does Smith's work challenge traditional uses of photography?
- What emotions do Smith's images evoke for you?
- How does Smith's work reflect the spirit of a moment, rather than simply documenting events?

For an artist and/or art professional:

- How does Smith's work inspire you to push the boundaries of your own practice?
- In what ways does Smith use her personal experiences to inform her artistic vision?
- How does this exhibition contribute to the larger canon of Black photography and portraiture?
- What curatorial choices were made to best showcase Smith's artistic vision?

Curriculum Connections

Ming Smith's work can be used as a tool to explore a variety of subjects, including art, music, science and history, and can be integrated into multiple disciplines in traditional school curriculum.

• **English, Arts, and Music:** Students can analyze and interpret the themes and messages conveyed in Smith's photographs, and then write about their own experiences and emotions. Smith's images often capture dynamic art forms such as music and dance, highlighting the importance of music and its role in Black culture. This can be used to connect to music history and the evolution of African American music.

• **Social Studies and History:** Smith's work can be used to explore issues of race, gender, and identity, as well as the historical and cultural context in which



Ming Smith, *David Murray in the Wings*, 1978, Archival Pigment Print, 49 x 70 inches, Courtesy of Ming Smith Studio

her work was created. Additionally, Smith's images can be used to spark discussions and analysis of current social issues and events. Smith's work depicts Black life and embodies the root emotions that create connections within communities. This can be used as a starting point to discuss and explore the history of Black people and their contributions to society.

• **Mathematics and Science:** Students can use Smith's work to explore geometry and spatial relationships, such as the angles and lines within her photographs. Smith's experimentation with unconventional photographic techniques and manipulation of the medium can be used to explore the scientific principles of light and optics, as well as the chemical and physical processes involved in photography.