

Maxeen Smart

1949-2004



Untitled. (from "Villas, Vistas and Voices" series)

Beautiful of soul, countenance and spirit, Maxeen Smart lost a long, valiant and quiet fight against breast cancer in August 2004.

Smart had a special affinity for Italy, spoke fluent Italian, and returned year after year to photograph. "Carnevale in Venice" fascinated Maxeen as "it is the world's unconscious," she said. "Even though a mask is supposed to be a disguise, I find it's very revealing. It's like an alter-ego—not who you are but who you want to be. When only the eyes are showing you can still tell a lot about someone by the way they stand or gesture or even where they choose to sit in a room. The mask takes on a certain emotion that is very telling." She was often in costume while photographing to better blend in with the crowd. The photographs are gelatin silver, split-toned selenium and sepia.

"Villas, Vistas and Voices," photographed in the Lake Como area, transports the viewer to another time. Smart

mostly worked invoking the past—the Italy of the Grand Tour, described by Byron, Shelley and Wordsworth. She said, "In memory, we often don't recall every single detail. We sometimes remember things as a blur. And we sometimes over-romanticize things, so that we recall them as they never were. We remember things through our own filters." Many of her dreamy and mysterious color images were taken at dawn or during rainstorms when the streets were devoid of 20th century life.

Maxeen Smart's last exhibit was at the Palazzo Luna Baglioni, in Venice in 2002. Previous exhibits included The Gallery at Irvington-on-Hudson, NY, the Soho Photo Gallery, Lyndhurst Museum, Tarrytown, NY, and Here is New York: Images from Ground Zero group exhibit, among others. She was the winner of the Large Works Award in 2000 at Soho Photo, judged by John Wessel, Director of Wessel & O'Connor Gallery, and the winner of the Conceptual Award in the 1999 Soho competition



Top: *Blur*. Right: *Harlequin*. (both from "Villas, Vistas and Voices" series)

judged by Karen Marks of Bonnie Benrubi Gallery and Tom Baril, photographer. She was a founding member of the original Upstream Gallery in Hastings-on-Hudson (now in Dobbs Ferry) and a long time member of the Soho Photo Gallery.

Smart was an Art Director and Creative Director for CBS Records, Wells, Rich and Greene and BBDO, and ran her own ad agency, Brainstorm Advertising, before becoming a freelance photographer. She graduated from the Tyler School of Art at Temple University, and was a resident of Hastings-on-Hudson with her husband, Tom, and two children.

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The Soho Photo Gallery, 15 White Street, New York, NY is proud to present the "Maxeen Smart Retrospective (1949-2004)" in the upstairs gallery during the month of October to coincide with Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Proceeds of the sale of Maxeen Smart photographs will benefit The Breast Cancer Research Foundation. The exhibit was curated by Tom Smart, Diane Ciminie, and Lorraine Engelhardt and consists of highlights of her Italian series: "Carnivale in Venice," "Villas, Vistas and Voices," "What the Mask Reveals," and "Secret Garden." The opening reception is scheduled for Thursday, October 6, 6-8PM. The exhibit will run from October 6 to October 30.

