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DIALOGUE OF DIFFERENCES: HENRY HOLMES SMITH
PHOTOGRAPHER, CRITIC, AND EDUCATOR

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By
Howard Samuel Bossen, B.F.A., M.A.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University
1979

Reading Committee:  
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Approved By
Ross A. Norris  
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To my father, Morris, who did not live to see this project to fruition.

Without his nurturing, his encouragement, and his simple wisdom this project would not have been possible.

He was a most generous, kind, and giving person.

And, to my loving wife Kathy, and my son Colin.
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I thank the Graduate School of The Ohio State University for the Graduate Student Alumni Research Award I received. It enabled me to travel to Henry Smith's home to conduct my interviews. And I thank Dr. Kenneth Marantz, Chairman of the Art Education Department, who nominated me for the Dissertation Fellowship I received from the Graduate School of The Ohio State University.

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My wife Kathy and Rebecca Lockridge helped to drymount all the figures. Kathy typed the rough draft. She deserves incalculable credit for persevering the past two years while I worked on this dissertation. Murlene Marttala, Secretary of the Art Department at Denison University typed much of the correspondence generated by this project. And Eleanor Sapp typed the final draft of the dissertation.

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To Dr. Robert Arnold I extend my thanks for serving on my reading committee. To Dr. Alfred Clarke I extend my thanks and appreciation for his helpful organizational and structural suggestions. And to my adviser, Dr. Ross Norris, I extend my thanks and my appreciation for his helpful structural suggestions, editorial comments, and especially for seeing this project to completion.

To all these people and institutions, and to the people interviewed during the course of this project I extend my thanks and appreciation.
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEDICATION</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VITA</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chapter

I. INTRODUCTION                                                           | 1    |

II. FROM BLOOMINGTON TO BLOOMINGTON: A BRIEF BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF HENRY HOLMES SMITH | 17   |

III. TOWARD A MORE COMPLETE HISTORY OF PHOTOGRAPHY: ANTECEDENTS TO THE IMAGERY OF HENRY HOLMES SMITH | 47   |

IV. "LIQUID-AND-LIGHT": THE IMAGERY OF HENRY HOLMES SMITH | 80   |

  Preface                                                                | 80   |
  Early art and photography                                              | 81   |
  The influence of Moholy-Nagy                                           | 102  |
  Light study photographs                                                | 109  |
  "Liquid-and-Light"                                                     | 123  |

V. DIALOGUE OF DIFFERENCES: THE WRITING OF HENRY HOLMES SMITH           | 210  |

VI. A GUIDING LIGHT: HENRY HOLMES SMITH AS EDUCATOR                      | 244  |

VII. CONCLUSION                                                          | 287  |

APPENDIX                                                                | 296  |

BIBLIOGRAPHY                                                            | 309  |
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Henry Holmes Smith Photographer</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Gloucester, Massachusetts 1945</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Mother and Son, HB #2</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Memphis</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Ezra Pound</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Untitled</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Rayogram</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Photogram</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Jealousy</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Nude Falling Down a Staircase</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. &quot;My God, Thick Ankles!&quot;</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. [Watercolor Landscape]</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. The Hermit</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Illustration for Tampico</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Come Back Eyes</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. [Emma Onstadt]</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. [View from Top of Pump Station Chimney]</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. [Smokestacks]</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. [Building Detail]</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Light abstraction based on question mark</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. &quot;Do Sparrows Migrate?&quot;</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. [Fashioned with Shears]</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Nude on Hands</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Tricolor Collage on Black</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. [Light Study C-1-b]</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. [Light Study C-2-a]</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. [Light Study C-7-C]</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Tricolor Collage on Black</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Untitled</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Untitled</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Giant</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Mother and Son</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Pair II</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. Growing Up II</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. Man and Wife</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. Grotesque</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. Meeting</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. Untitled</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. Untitled</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. Untitled</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41. Untitled</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42. Battles and Games</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43. Diver and Fish</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure</td>
<td>Title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44.</td>
<td><strong>Excuse Me While I Call the Cops</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45.</td>
<td><strong>Mother and Son, HB #AA</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46.</td>
<td><strong>Chicago, 1948</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47.</td>
<td><strong>Chicago, 1948</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48.</td>
<td><strong>Hoboken, New Jersey 1948</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49.</td>
<td><strong>Chicago, 1960</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50.</td>
<td><strong>Chicago, 1952</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51.</td>
<td><strong>Lima 101, 1975</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52.</td>
<td><strong>Kentucky, 1951</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53.</td>
<td><strong>Untitled</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54.</td>
<td><strong>Untitled</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55.</td>
<td><strong>Untitled</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56.</td>
<td><strong>The Alchemist</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57.</td>
<td><strong>Untitled</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58.</td>
<td><strong>Untitled</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59.</td>
<td><strong>Untitled</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60.</td>
<td><strong>Death of Punch</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61.</td>
<td><strong>Growing Up II</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62.</td>
<td><strong>Phoenix</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63.</td>
<td><strong>Man and Wife</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64.</td>
<td><strong>Giant</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65.</td>
<td><strong>Grotesque</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66.</td>
<td><strong>Royal Pair</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67. Royal Pair</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68. Mother and Son, HB #W</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69. Mother and Son, HB #U</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70. Mother and Son, HB #FF</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71. Mother and Son, HB #T</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72. Mother and Son, HB #CC</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73. Mother and Son, HB #DD</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74. Mother and Son, HB #X</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75. Mother and Son, HB #V</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Henry Holmes Smith has been involved in photography as a visual educator, as a critic, and as an imagemaker engaged in the exploration of synthetic color and cameraless generated photographic statements since the 1930s. He was asked by Laszlo Moholy-Nagy to teach the first course in photography at the New Bauhaus in Chicago in 1937. From 1947 until his retirement in 1977 he taught photography at Indiana University.

He was one of the founders of the Society for Photographic Education. His ideas on photographic education first enunciated in the 1940s and 1950s have become accepted in the teaching of photography in the 1960s and 1970s. Henry Holmes Smith helped to shift the focus of photographic education largely from science departments where the emphasis was on optical and chemical experimentation without aesthetic concerns to fine arts departments where the aesthetic issues of photographic expression could be more freely explored.

Henry Holmes Smith's critical writings about the medium of photography and about viewer response to
photography are seminal statements in the field. He wrote about the need for the development of critics and critical tools in the early 1950s. Not until the mid-1960s did serious photographic criticism, concerned primarily with aesthetics rather than craft, appear with regularity. And it was the mid-1970s before a significant body of photographic criticism emerged. Yet it was Smith's ideas about reading photographs largely published in *Aperture*, and beginning in 1953, which laid the theoretical ground work for much of the development of contemporary photographic criticism.

Henry Holmes Smith's images indicate that his concerns were vastly different than most of his contemporaries. He began to explore color seriously in the 1930s, a period that is characterized by its devotion to black and white. He rejected the camera-originated, object oriented, realistic image in favor of explorations of light and light-sensitive material. While the most visible photographers of the 1930s were concerned with documenting the social conditions of depression America, Smith was concerned with a more internal exploration of the soul. His imagery expresses humanistic values even though it is concerned with neither social documentation nor literal representation.

Henry Holmes Smith makes images with "liquid-and-light" rather than with "objects and cameras." His aesthetic position celebrates the recording of light, his work
runs counter to the dominant photographic aesthetic which posits that the camera should generate images that reveal recognizable objects. His work asserts that there is another photographic aesthetic of equal validity, an aesthetic liberated from the shackles of object identification and camera origination.

Although nationally prominent as an educator and writer Smith has been much less known as an imagemaker. It is the photographic offspring of Henry Holmes Smith, people such as Jerry Uelsmann and Betty Hahn, who have been credited with profoundly changing the acceptability of various modes of photographic work. Yet, their source and much of their initial support emanates from Smith.

"Dialogue of Differences: Henry Holmes Smith Photographer, Critic, and Educator" came about because of a conviction that: first, it was time to examine and appraise Smith's writings on photography and his contributions as a photographic educator—the two areas he has achieved national prominence in; second, it was time for an in-depth look at the imagery of Smith; and third, it was time to try to understand why his imagery was not better known. And fourth, it was recognized that the examination of his imagery would necessitate examining the posture of the critics and the historians of photography to understand why they have considered not just Smith's imagery, but all
nonobjective, noncamera originated photographic imagery as at best peripheral to the medium of photography.

This dissertation begins with a biographical sketch of Smith, which it is hoped, gives a feeling of what the man represents in truly human terms. It is hoped that this essay penetrates beneath the dry, lifeless facts of a pure chronological list and provides insight into the thoughts and feelings of Smith the man.

This dissertation addresses the question of why Smith's visual work has not had much public visibility; it looks at the historical positions which blocked the acceptance of Smith's imagery; it looks at the influence of Moholy-Nagy, Smith's mentor, upon Smith's approaches to photography.

Smith's imagery is examined, using an historical approach. The work is looked at chronologically and thematically. Concepts and concerns which emerge early in his life are traced all the way through his development. Beginning bridges are built from his imagery to myth, both in literature and anthropology, yet the full exploration and implications of these bridges will have to wait for another study. Links are made between his work, and that of Aaron Siskind and Joseph Albers. These links, too, are not as strong as could ultimately be made, but they are a beginning.
Rather than attempting a complete examination of all of Smith's writings three avenues are explored. The first provides a framework for those wishing to examine the larger context of his writings. It briefly describes Smith's concerns as they evolved; and whether the material was presented as a public presentation or was published. Some attempt also is made to discuss the outlets Smith used for publication, major journals in the field, small publications and self publishing. The second avenue examines Smith's writings which directly dealt with his own photographic imagery. This examination is based upon unpublished typescripts of lecture notes, notes provided for exhibitions and portfolios, theoretical articles as well as published memoirs. This avenue is explored in the chapter on Smith's imagery rather than in the one on his writings.

The third avenue of exploration looks at that body of material which laid out an approach to the medium that is consonant with Smith's own imagery but which does not directly mention any of his own photographs. These articles provide one counter aesthetic position to the dominant accepted positions of the twentieth century. Chapter III, "Toward a More Complete History of Photography," lays out positions which Smith's writings, imagery and teaching ran counter to as well as historical antecedents to Smith's own position.
Finally, Smith the educator is examined. This examination is placed last partly because it is the area of endeavor in which he is best known, but mostly because it is in his role as educator that the ideas as writer and image-maker most readily merge. It is through his teaching activities that he has helped to build the audience he lacked for his imagery.

It is tempting to try to make the complex simple. Certainly it is both easier and quicker to understand a simple declarative statement than a complex convoluted sentence. For clarity sake it was tempting to separate threads of thought, action, and influence; to trace completely separate paths for Henry Smith's photographs, writings, and contributions to photographic education. However, to separate threads which at times crossed, ran parallel to each other, and occasionally converged would have resulted in losing the associative richness cross fertilization provides. When it was possible to untangle the threads without losing associative richness this was done. When the separation led more to obfuscation rather than clarification the interwoven nature of events and ideas has been left intact.

This project grew out of the research I did for my masters thesis: "A Metacritical Examination of the Photographic Criticism of A. D. Coleman, Max Kozloff, and John Szarkowski," begun in 1975 and completed in December 1976.
In doing the background research for the M.A. thesis I selected a group of people who had written critically on photography. Henry Holmes Smith was one of the people on that list. As I began to more narrowly define my project I decided to concentrate on three writers whose views had greater public visibility through more readily accessible publications than Smith's views had had. I decided to eliminate Smith from that study also because most of his easily accessible writing had appeared in the 1950s and early 1960s, and the writing of the three chosen was more current.

Doing the research for the masters degree project resulted in the realization that the viewpoint Smith possesses is greatly different from those held by Coleman, Kozloff, and Szarkowski. I sensed that what he was saying represented an important alternative point of view. I sensed that if I devoted time to studying the writings of Smith I would be examining an important counterpoint to the dominant philosophical positions in the field. An examination of Smith's writings would allow me to address issues not being attended to by the main stream critics and historians of photography.

I began my research in October 1977 with the assumption that Smith was an extremely important writer about photography, that he was an important teacher, and that his
imagery, what little I was familiar with, was interesting but not terribly important. As my research progressed my attitudes towards Smith's imagery began to shift. I realized that his imagery represented from an historical viewpoint both pioneering work in terms of process and truly seminal work in terms of conceptual breakthroughs concerning the meaning of color and the meaning of representation in photography.2

My research initially focused on the published writings of Smith, and upon the limited number of published writings about Smith. I found that although Smith was very prominent within the field there was very little material available beyond primary sources. And what was available primarily had been written since 1970.

In 1970 John Ward published his The Criticism of Photography as Art: The Photographs of Jerry Uelsmann.3 As a prelude to the development of a systematic approach to Uelsmann's imagery Ward discusses among other things Smith's and Minor White's concepts of "reading photographs." In 1974 Terry Barrett wrote an M.A. thesis: "Toward Critical Discourse about Photographs." In December 1977 he published "Reading as a Method of Photographic Criticism." This later piece is based upon his M.A. thesis. These two pieces represent the only substantative examination of Smith's ideas until this present study.4 Betty Hahn wrote "Henry Holmes Smith: Speaking with a Genuine Voice."5 Her
December 1973 article and an unpublished essay by Cary Wasserman "Henry Holmes Smith: Prints and Photographs 40 Years in Retrospect," represent the only substantive examination of Smith's imagery until this present study.6

There exists short reviews of his shows. For example, Joan Murray's 1972 piece, "Photography: Henry Holmes Smith," which appeared in Artweek7 and Cary Wasserman's 1971 Boston Globe piece "Smith Embraces the Grand Themes."8 There exists several short articles about Smith which appeared in his hometown newspaper, The Daily Pantagraph from Bloomington, Illinois. These articles began in the mid-1930s and ceased in 1968. They provide documentation for his military service, his distinguished teaching award, his research grants, promotions and so on.

There are articles which address some of Smith's ideas while examining larger issues. Patricia Leighten's piece from 1978, "Critical Attitudes toward Overtly Manipulated Photography in the 20th Century"9 and Jonathan Green's March 1979 "Aperture in the 50's: The Word and the Way"10 are examples.

There is Henry Holmes Smith: Selected Critical Articles, edited by Terence Pitts in 1977 which collects for the first time a group of Smith's essays.11 There is Portfolio II from 1973 which, in an edition of 130, represents the only collection of Smith's imagery in print form.12 There are a few photographs published in scattered
books such as in Kelly Wise's 1975 *The Photographer's Choice*, but generally his imagery is only accessible in original prints.

The best source for information on Smith is *Henry Holmes Smith's Art: Fifty Years in Retrospect*, edited in 1973 by his wife Wanda Lee Smith. It contains a collection of short essays written in appreciation of Smith, a chronology of his life, a partial listing of his writings, exhibitions, and lectures, and a complete listing of the works in his retrospective show—the show for which this catalog was produced.

These sources still do not represent a great deal of information. Some of them, for example Jonathan Green's essay, were not even written until at least a year after I had begun my study. Consequently, in order to do a study of the complexity and density I hope this study in fact is, I needed to develop resources of information about Smith and his work. Since part of my study would be an examination of Smith as educator I was confronted, too, with the problem of how to deal with the ephemeral aspects of teachers' effects in the classroom.

Since Henry Smith is a living figure and since most of his key associates and students are also living, it was decided to pursue an oral history interview approach in order to develop much of the needed research material. James McQuaid, Director of the Oral History Project in
Photography at the International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House, was consulted about specific methodological problems. He suggested a collaborative effort, since the museum was just in the beginning stages of developing an oral history of Smith. Two lengthy interviews were done with Smith in 1978. The first in March 1978 was conducted by James McQuaid and Steven Lewis with input by me in the form of questions and through the development of background interviews. In June 1978, I conducted a three day series of interviews with Mr. Smith. There were several background interviews done by me, by James McQuaid and by others associated with the project.15 I am most grateful to the Oral History Project for allowing me to be a part of it, for partially supporting my research, and for giving me access to all the interview material.

The research for this project has relied, too, largely on original source material made available to me by Henry Holmes Smith. Through his generosity I have had access to his correspondence, to unpublished essays, lectures and notes, to essays which appeared in small and long defunct journals, and to his original photographs, paintings, drawings and cartoons.16

This project has attempted to examine Henry Holmes Smith the man and the work from both an historical and critical perspective. Gaining access to the necessary research materials required both travel and the generous
help of others. The History of Photography, unlike more developed disciplines such as English Literature, does not have a vast body of accumulated research available in archives, libraries and museums to which the scholar may turn to for guidance, both procedural and spiritual, in conducting extensive research.

It is recognized that this study is somewhat diffuse, that each chapter could have and perhaps should have been the subject for a separate thesis. As a field, History of Photography is so wide open, so new that one must begin by trying to develop an overview of the issues raised in a person's life and work before one can elaborate on the complexities of those issues. For Henry Holmes Smith this overview did not exist. With this study, one has now been done.

It is hoped that this study is only a beginning exploration of Smith, his oeuvre and impact; one, however, that accurately portrays Smith's contributions; one which begins the process of his assessment as a figure of historical importance; and one which scholars can turn to for guidance in a field which, like the medium it is linked to, is just emerging from infancy.
NOTES

1 Howard Bossen, "A Metacritical Examination of the Photographic Criticism of A. D. Coleman, Max Kozloff, and John Szarkowski," thesis, Ohio State University, 1976.

2 With this realization in mind I wrote "Henry Holmes Smith: More Than an Educator," Field of Vision, February 1979. This article, written for the "Symposium on Overlooked Twentieth Century Photography," sponsored by the Pittsburgh Film-makers, Inc., began the process of re-evaluating Smith's position within the history of photography.


Although these two pieces devote substantial space to Smith's ideas they are primarily based upon only three of Smith's articles related to reading photographs ("Image, Obscurity and Interpretation"; "The Workshop Idea in Photography" and "The Experience of Photographs: 5 Photographs by Aaron Siskind, 5 Readings by Kurt Safranski, Henry Holmes Smith, Myron Martin, Walter Chappell and Sam Tung Wu." See bibliography for full citation of these articles, all of which appeared in 1957 in Aperture.

In these two pieces Barrett described Minor White's and Henry Smith's methods, discusses limitations to their methods, makes assertions about the usefulness of the systems, and makes assertions about the influences upon each man.

Perhaps because Barrett evidently did not examine the full run of articles related to reading photographs in Aperture, did not examine Smith's writings on this subject published in other more obscure journals and did not have access to the Smith/White correspondence, one finds some problems with his conclusions. For example, Barrett asserts that "Both Smith and White were strongly influenced by I. A. Richard's writing on the criticism of poetry" (p. 4, Exposure article). The correspondence shows that Smith introduced White to I. A. Richard's ideas, and explained those ideas to White. Yet the statement by Barrett could lead a reader to assume that both men came to Richards independently and/or were equally influenced. Also Barrett cites some problems which Smith raises about models for criticism and attempts to solve those problems which he
asserts were not solved by Smith, but much of what Barrett is solving Smith already had solved for himself. Smith's "Models for Critics," first published in 1963, is an example.


11Henry Holmes Smith, Henry Holmes Smith: Selected Critical Articles. Tucson, Arizona: Center for Creative Photography, No. 5 (October 1977). This was edited by Terence Pitts who also wrote the introduction.

12Henry Holmes Smith, Portfolio II. Louisville, Ky.: Center for Photographic Studies, 1973.


15The following people in addition to Henry Holmes Smith were interviewed during the course of this research: David Curl, Robert Fichter, Betty Hahn, David Haberstitch, Nathan Lerner, Rebecca Lockridge, Conrad Pressma, Roy Sieber, Paul and Clare Smith, Robert Snider, Jerry Uelsmann, Paul Vanderbilt, Jack Welpott and Rosemary Wright.
Most of the materials are now housed with the Henry Holmes Smith Papers, Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona or with the Henry Holmes Smith Archive, Indiana University Art Museum, Bloomington, Indiana.
Fig. 1. Henry Holmes Smith, *Henry Holmes Smith Photographer*. Ink drawing colored in watercolor, 1925. Henry Holmes Smith Archive, Indiana University Art Museum, Bloomington, Indiana 47401. (Hereafter cited as the Henry Holmes Smith Archive, I.U. Art Museum.)

(All photographs and art by Henry Holmes Smith are used by permission of the artist and are copyrighted by him. All other publication rights are reserved to the artist. Whenever possible, works are keyed to the Accession Numbers of the Henry Holmes Smith Archive. For the *Mother and Son* variations I have adopted a cataloging system of my own to distinguish the various works (HB #__). All other unnumbered photographs or other artworks are identified by title, portfolio, or Smith's own descriptive catalog as noted on the image or in separate commentary.)
CHAPTER II

FROM BLOOMINGTON TO BLOOMINGTON: A BRIEF BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF HENRY HOLMES SMITH

Well, it happened, as I remember it, this way: in that little town a kid could wander without feeling threatened, and somebody would have seen me, and know that I lived down the street—maybe a block, I think, something like this—and [said], "Would you like to come up and see this ..." whatever it was. He probably said, "Would you like to see me make a photograph?" or something. Anyway, he went through the process under the red light, and I saw this thing develop. That's all. That is maybe an anecdote, but maybe not. It's certainly a fragment of experience. And it was the first one that I know I saw actually develop, that I can remember.\(^1\)

Henry Holmes Smith's first involvement with photography was as a young boy growing up in pre-World War I Washington, Illinois. His informal introduction to the medium belies the intensity he was later to give it; the initial spark of interest grew into an absorbing fascination. For Smith, watching the image gradually take shape, and emerge on the surface of the paper became a very important occurrence in his life. As a young man he first worked in a dimly lit darkroom illuminated by a "candle safelight with a four-sided red cloth shade, plus a metal cap for the top," and his prints were made in "cardboard trays covered with wax."\(^2\)
Henry Holmes Smith is a mid-westerner. He was born in Bloomington, Illinois on October 23, 1909. He spent most of his adult life in Bloomington, Indiana. As befits a descendent of pioneer stock, whose ancestors helped to settle the middlewest, he is fiercely independent.

From the time he was a child he has been involved with both writing and visual art. There are periods during his life when one was dominant over the other. There are periods when he was engaged with both. Seldom was there a time when he was engaged in neither.

Smith's parents were Paul and Edna Van Schoick Smith. His mother's sister, Emily Van Schoick, was an early pivotal person in his life. She encouraged his youthful curiosity in literature and the arts. She frequently read to him on her visits. And during the 1930s he would live with her and work with her in Columbus, Ohio. Paul Smith taught school in Litchfield, Illinois when his son, Henry, was born. In 1913 the family moved to Washington, Illinois after Henry's father became the local superintendent of schools. Partly because of the pay and partly because of a dispute with the board over how discipline should be handled Henry's father left the school system in 1918 and became a salesman for Henry Holt and Co. In 1918 the family moved back to Henry's place of birth, into a two story brick house, in Bloomington, Illinois. Henry went to
high school from 1923 to 1927 in Bloomington, and resided at home when he attended Illinois State Normal University from 1927 through 1929 and again in 1930 to 1932. Although one might assume small town mid-America in the early part of the twentieth century to have been a cultural waste land, Henry remembers his hometown as being very cultured, at least for the time.

Bloomington was the center, really of cultural activities in that part of Illinois. Peoria was a rough town, Springfield was a political town, and Bloomington had a ... lovely park ... people came there. They had a beautiful pavilion there.... It had the influence of the Germanic people of some wealth and culture who lived there and dominated the town....

In particular he remembers the Withers Library, where he had his introduction to literature in photography and where he had his introduction to photography as art. In 1930 the Withers Library brought in an exhibit of original prints which included Margaret Bourke-White's and some of the European modernists. He said the "Withers Library was the center of my life once I got out of grade school." It was a town, however, not without its class structure, racial problems, and human prejudices. There were sections of great wealth and:

two blocks in another direction was a tiny place with very ramshackle homes ... where the blacks lived, some blacks.... It was a terrible time for them.... I remember one very touching thing which I had to grow up to realize the real emotion of. In the grade school playground there was this very stern looking, tall, extremely
dark skinned, Black young man. I don't remember what grade in school he was, but apparently he was doing time there until he got old enough to leave.... And he walked around there, quite silent, with this stern look on his face, and these children whispered to me, "He's got a razor." I was terrified of him, but I never realized until I was a grown man ... that he was probably more terrified than anybody else on that playground.

This memory from a childhood long past is an indicator of a life long concern with humanism, a humanism which is reflected in Smith's writings and in his imagery. One first clearly sees this concern for his fellow man in the 1930s when he attempted to ascertain the affect of the Nazi policies in relation to the arts. One sees it again in two letters written to Moholy-Nagy in 1935 and in 1938. And one sees it repeatedly in his writings published and unpublished beginning in the 1950s. The kinds of issues he wrote about and the tone of the pieces reveal his dedication to understanding—understanding his fellow man and understanding intellectual concepts. His writings are about openness to new ideas, about ways in which people can begin to analyze photographs and in so doing get in touch with their own emotions and thought processes, about the ethics involved in being a photojournalist and an editor, about the need to develop an articulate audience of image consumers. These issues are not esoteric. They are fundamental to an understanding of the medium of photography in a cultural rather than a technological context. They represent attempts to develop a literature in
photography which concerns itself with basic issues about man. In this respect they predate by many a year Susan Sontag's On Photography which tries to develop cultural implications from the use of the photograph.

Many of these same issues related to meaning and growth are also embedded in the mature photographic work of Smith.\(^\text{11}\) The refraction "drawings," particularly the ones which have been converted into color suites represent explorations into the emotive aspects of color intertwined with notions of myth and the life cycle of man.

His years of isolation, first in Bloomington, Illinois and later in Bloomington, Indiana may help to explain his photographs. His photographs are images of a man whose vision comes from within and who explores the inner sanctums. His reluctance to show his photographs is related to his sense of isolation, and to his frustration with people who neither understand nor wish to understand his work.

I think exhibitions are folly. They're subsidized by the artist, and do very little for the art, and tend to create condescension on the part of the people to whom you send [your work] because they don't understand what you're trying to do, and then many of them don't, [you end up just] talking to the wind.\(^\text{12}\)

It was during his high school years that he became involved with cartooning, photography and writing. The cartoons represented the first "sustained effort outside the classroom."\(^\text{13}\) These cartoons initially were made for
a bulletin board presentation related to events in the school. By 1927 he was submitting cartoons to The New Yorker, Colliers, The Chicagoan and other publications. By 1931 he had ceased to work on cartoons.¹⁴

As a photographer he was largely self-taught relying in the early years upon his own investigations of photographic literature, and his association with the photographers in a Bloomington, Illinois commercial studio for most of his information. The Withers Library in Bloomington, Illinois had a photography show in 1930 which, probably, had some of the work from the book Foto-Auge (Photo Eye). The show, according to Smith, represents the first time he would have come into contact with original photographic work based largely upon modernist principles of art.¹⁵

Over the years he read, and he experimented with photography on his own. He tried his hand at commercial ventures. While an adolescent, in Bloomington, Illinois, he photographed workmen engaged in their tasks and then tried to sell to them the photographs. He made around twelve dollars for the summer. While living in Columbus, Ohio from 1932 through 1936 he dabbled in advertising photography, obtaining one commission to do an advertisement for F. and R. Lazarus Company, the large department store chain. After returning to Bloomington, Illinois in 1937
he set up in his parents' home a very small photo-finishing business.

In photography and in his other art activities he was never a commercial success. (However, he reads the Wall Street Journal with almost a religious fervor and has held several positions in the Indiana University Credit Union, including the position of President.) The problems involved with the kinds of demands placed upon one in commercial art were not satisfying to him. Rather than the commercial marketplace, Smith displayed an interest in ideas; he was anxious to learn simply because he wanted to know. One of his first students at Indiana University, Clyde "Red" Hare, has said that Smith never was able to lower himself from the ivory tower of the academic researcher to the nuts and bolt world of the commercial marketplace.¹⁶

Although Smith's photographic education, like his introduction to the medium was informal, his art training, on the other hand, was formal. He took classes in art in high school and majored in it in college. He went to Illinois State Normal University because: "It was the only local place that had any art courses, and I had seen some examples of the man in charge of the school--an example of his watercolors--which was quite fresh and free."¹⁷ "... it was just beautifully free. And I wanted to study with
him. Now, this was before I began to do my own water colors ... in the 1930s." 

Fate sometimes is rather perverse. When he arrived at school in the fall of 1927 he found that the man he came to study with had left. 

In addition to his art courses Smith also studied journalism and got involved with the school newspaper, The Vidette, as a cartoonist and columnist. He felt, however, that the training available was not energizing enough and in 1929 he left for the Art Institute of Chicago where he was once again disappointed.

I knew that ... I needed to go to an art school to get more of this disciplined training. But it turned out that that wasn't the proper disciplined training again. And it's these experiences that made me so suspicious of organized curricula—when I was involved in it—that I turned out to be a pretty good counselor for freshman because I'd go out of my way to see if I could match a teacher with a student. But I needed, as Moholy said years later, ... a master. But I didn't know how to find one, or there weren't any that I was in touch with ... these people [at the Art Institute] were teaching by rote, and they were teaching from my point of view, semi-essentials. 

He returned for a short period of time to Illinois State Normal University. Although he had enough credit to graduate he did not have the proper credit distribution. He left Normal again, going to Columbus, Ohio, where his Aunt, Emily Van Schoick, lived. He came to Columbus largely because of a misunderstanding with his aunt. She
thought she had invited him to spend the fourth of July weekend. He thought she had invited him to move in, which he did in July 1932.

He decided to matriculate at The Ohio State University where he finally received, at the end of 1933, his Bachelor of Science degree in Education with an emphasis in art. Finished with school, he obtained a junior editorial position with the American Ceramic Society where his aunt had been working as an editor since the mid-1920s. He continued to work for the American Ceramic Society until 1936 when he was fired ostensibly because he returned a few days late from a vacation and did not notify his employer. This job Smith viewed largely as work necessary to survival but not interesting in its own right. It would seem plausible though, that his experience in editing the technical material the American Ceramic Society published was somewhat helpful in his later editorial job for *Minicam* and in his editorial work for *Aperture* and his own small mimeo press publications.

During his time in Columbus he discovered the paintings of John Marin at the Columbus Gallery of Fine Arts. He describes this experience as moving and influential in the development of his watercolors. He came across the writings of Moholy-Nagy for the first time. And he met Felix Payant, an acquaintance of his Aunt Emily. Payant was a professor of design in the Fine Arts Department at
The Ohio State University, and editor of Design Magazine. Smith cites Payant as being one of the first people to openly encourage his explorations into modernist photographic forms and to encourage his endeavors as an author. Smith commented in an interview that Payant never had a job for him, rather he acted as a contact for getting things published.  

Smith published, in 1933, two articles and a photographic collage in Payant's Design Magazine. The collage and one article, "How Shall We Use Montage?", were both concerned with manipulation of the photographic medium. All three pieces were presented as possible areas of exploration for artists and art teachers. 

During his years in Columbus Smith first became involved with color photography. His exploration of color using Agfacolor plates began in 1933. In 1936 he made prints using the Chromotone process and began his work with the Wash-Off Relief Imbibition process. He founded a small organization— it consisted primarily of Smith and three part-time assistants—called Design Research Laboratory. This tiny organization, which existed from 1932 until 1936, and was totally financed by Smith, was dedicated to an investigation of design as a humanistic tool. It was an attempt to put into practice some of the concerns outlined in Moholy-Nagy's The New Vision, as well as
a means for Smith to do art educational and cultural historical research.23

After being fired from his job with the American Ceramic Society he returned to his parents' home in Bloomington, Illinois, before he obtained a job in Chicago. While in Bloomington, he continued his investigation into color. However, this investigation was interrupted by his move to Chicago in 1937. Between 1937 and 1946 Smith did not make color photographs. Nevertheless, he did spend much time thinking about concepts of color photography. In 1937 he wrote to Moholy-Nagy concerning the possibilities of using monochrome images as the basis for color photographs.24 This letter caused Moholy-Nagy to visit Smith in the portrait studio of the Marshall Field Store, where Smith was working as a laboratory technician. Moholy invited Smith to set up the photographic laboratory at the soon to be opened New Bauhaus.

At the New Bauhaus Smith taught the photography courses.25 In these classes he presented light modulation studies as exercises for the students during 1937-1938. The idea of the exercise originated with Smith and was developed in collaboration with Moholy-Nagy. But the origin of the idea goes back to Francis Bruguiere's photographs of illuminated cut paper. The light modulation studies began with the making of an object, usually cut, bent or rolled paper which would modulate light that struck
its surface. The object or the light patterns or both were then photographed. The result was a nonrepresentational photographic image based upon constructivist notions of art.

When Smith learned that the New Bauhaus would not reopen in the fall of 1938 he decided to stay in Bloomington, Illinois and to turn his attention from photography back to writing. He thought about the possibility of a career as an author and in October 1938 set some thoughts down describing his intent and his hopes for his writing. The statement refers to writing about fantasies and to "'trading dreams' with the children of America."26 The only articles of fiction or fantasy Smith published preceded this period. One can find articles of whimsy and satire in his high school and college yearbooks, but one does not find these after the early 1930s. Smith's writings both in published and in unpublished form are about issues and ideas in photography. He tackles criticism, history, and education. He writes articles of appreciation for individual photographs. He writes about ethics and the photojournalist and he has proposed a systematic approach for "reading photographs." Nowhere in his writings does one find the fantasy as described in this 1938 statement, although one does find a good deal of humor.

Curiously, though, if one were to substitute the word "photograph" for the word "write" one would have a document describing Smith's visual work beginning with the
first fantasy drawings of the 1930s and particularly related to the Karo syrup photographic images begun in 1949.

Henry Holmes Smith's photographs from the 1930s to the present emerged out of long periods of inactivity as an imagemaker, punctuated by highly creative, emotionally and psychologically charged periods of imagemaking of short duration. Dedication to teaching, family, and writing and periodic severe eye problems have frequently disrupted his imagemaking for extended periods of time.

Dating his images reveals that the periods of greatest visual output were from 1946 through 1952 and post 1970. Between 1946 and 1952 no articles were written. 1952 is one watershed in Smith's life. This was the year after his first child was born and the year before his second child was born. It was a period when he felt the obligations of parenting intensely. It was a period when the intensity of teaching and devotion to family made it difficult to maintain a high level of visual output. It was the year he met Minor White, Ansel Adams, Pirkle Jones, Edward Weston and Weston's sons. It was a time when his energies shifted from the visual statement to the verbal statement. It was a very fertile time for Smith the writer, and the beginning of a very frustrating two decades as an imagemaker. For it was not until the early 1970s, not until the time Smith's children were grown, not until he felt completely drained
as a teacher, and not until he had a sabbatical that he began to be once again prolific as a photographer.

Frequently his greatest photographic activity has occurred during periods of time when he was not engaged in writing. Periods of time when his visually creative production was low tend to correspond with periods of greater involvement with writing or experiments in pedagogy. For example, the summers of 1948 and 1949 were occupied with research for Smith's History of Photography course, the first aesthetically oriented one ever to be offered in a fine art department in an American university and probably the first one ever offered at any university. Much of the 1950s was devoted to teaching, raising a family, and to writing. It is during this period that the bulk of Smith's most visible writing was produced. His articles on "reading photographs" began to appear in Aperture beginning with the article "Photographs and Public" in 1953.

During 1939 Smith published his article "Solarization Process" in Minicam Monthly. Smith received the assignment to do the article because Moholy-Nagy suggested his name in 1938 to the editors. In 1940 Smith accepted a position as associate editor with Minicam and relocated from Bloomington, Illinois to Cincinnati, Ohio. He worked for Minicam until he was inducted into the army in 1942. What he did for Minicam was essentially production oriented
editorial work. He said this about the job:

I felt so happy to have this chance in publishing, and was so annoyed by the way it was dealing with photography.\(^{31}\)

His annoyance stemmed from the fact that Minicam Monthly, dependent upon the photographic industry for advertising support, dealt largely with issues of equipment and technique rather than with issues of ideas and concepts. Smith's writings have seldom dealt with technical issues except in a theoretical context.

The war years were spent in the Pacific. Smith wrote the official unit history for the Second Air Service Support Squadron on Butaritor Island, Makin Atoll, Gilbert Islands. And he was in charge of a photographic laboratory which primarily printed film from air reconnaissance flights and which made maps for pilots to use. He related one story, delighting in the workings of the military mind, where he had to make maps under a top secret classification. The maps were to serve as the basis for pilots to find their bombing targets but he took them directly from *Time* magazine.\(^{32}\)

Released from the army in October 1945 he went back to Bloomington, Illinois where he worked in a printing office for a time. By early 1946 he had set up a darkroom and began color experimentation and his light study photographs. He corresponded with Nathan Lerner, a former student of his at the New Bauhaus. Smith invited Lerner, who
at that time was teaching at the Institute of Design (the name for the reconstituted New Bauhaus), to collaborate on the light study project. From Smith's discussions with Lerner came:

... the concept of some of the basic questions of light study, how you demonstrate there is a volume of light when you can't see it until you interfere with it. . . .

This collaboration consisted of personal discussions and the exchange of letters over a period of several months. It grew out of a warm relationship the two had developed when Smith was Lerner's teacher. In a note of appreciation in honor of Smith's 1973 retrospective show at Indiana University Art Museum, Lerner wrote:

There was a short break in our relationship when the New Bauhaus closed and you went back to Bloomington, Illinois, but, in memory, your trips to Chicago during which I would unleash all the stored-up questions seemed to make up for it. Do you remember, Henry, the heady talks, drinking Zinfandel, eating ribs, and looking down the long length of Pearson Street toward the Lake? And you singing, "My Sugar is So Refined." During this period we started the light research project, with Moholy's enthusiastic blessing, but because of my dalliance as a correspondent our collaboration was short-lived. However, it was a most exciting period for me and crystallized many concepts.

1946 was the year Smith met Wanda Lee Phares, state editor of *The Daily Pantagraph*, whom he would marry in October of 1947. And 1946 was the year he showed his experimental color work to faculty members of the art department of the University of Iowa while visiting with Kenneth
Loomis, head of the art department at Illinois Wesleyan University. Mention of Smith's work reached the attention of Maxil Ballinger, a faculty member of the art department at Indiana University, through a former colleague at the University of Iowa. Smith was invited to Indiana University in September 1947 for an interview. Two weeks later he began teaching photography in the art department. Thirty years later, after having established himself as a pioneering writer and educator, he would retire from teaching at Indiana University.

During 1947, before going to Indiana University, he worked on the editorial staff of The Daily Pantagraph. As part of his duties, he occasionally was expected to make photographs as well as to write and to edit. He disliked the kind of picture he was expected to make. He thought most photographs of accidents, politicians, and barkless pups were ill-conceived. Several years later he would address in his writings important issues of photojournalism. In these writings he was primarily concerned with the complexity involved with ethics and with the nuances of meaning. The subject would reappear from the early 1950s through his 1979 keynote speech at the National Conference of the Society for Photographic Education.

When Smith arrived at Indiana University in the fall of 1947, he was just nearing his thirty-eighth birthday. Until that time he had had several jobs, mostly of short
duration, but he had not settled into a career. He has commented that he did not have clear career goals and that his ending up at Indiana University was achieved through happenstance, rather than through premeditation.\textsuperscript{36}

His initial appointment was split between duties in the art department and a job in the audio-visual department where he was to make visual support materials for classroom use. He disliked the latter part of his duties so much that he set out to find a way to eliminate this kind of task from his job. One of the ways in which he did this was to use his scheduled time to make slide materials, with the help of his wife, for his pioneering course in the history of photography.

This course came about because Smith realized that there was a scholarly area that was totally missing from the curriculum and which belonged there just as the traditional history of painting and history of sculpture courses belonged and because it "was a way of getting out of the asinine misuse of [his] talent by having to do work for the AV department."\textsuperscript{37}

Smith was the one photography instructor from the time of his arrival in 1947 until the hiring of Reginald Heron in 1970. From 1947 until 1952 Smith developed his courses on the undergraduate level. During 1952 a small graduate program was begun. Smith's program, perhaps because it was one of the first in the country, but largely because of
Smith's vision became a program of national importance. Some of his more prominent students include: Jack Welpott, Jerry Uelsmann, Betty Hahn, Robert Fichter, and Robert Forth.

In addition to developing courses, Smith began to write, initially out of an urge to develop pedagogical tools, later on assignment from publications, and finally out of a need simply to express ideas he felt important. As a one person program the teaching load became very heavy, particularly since his style required much one to one contact with students. As a new parent, and a dedicated parent, his commitment to family occupied much of his time. Extra-departmental and extra-professional duties made demands on his time, too. From 1955 until 1964 he was the typographer and assistant editor of the *College Art Journal*, a publication of the College Art Association, of which Henry Hope, Smith's department chairman, was editor. He tended to view departmental duties, beyond teaching which he loved, as burdensome. He also viewed Henry Hope as somewhat of a tyrant and felt obliged to meet his demands.

Photography, his academic area in the Art Department, was one of the last to get a second instructor. Many of Smith's former colleagues attribute this to his personality. Smith had ideas and principles which he would not compromise for the sake of expediency. In a large institution an approach of this sort is likely to create
difficulties in working one's way through the bureaucratic structure to achieve ultimate goals. Smith feels that many of his colleagues, and especially his chairman Henry Hope, did not hold photography in very high esteem, causing problems in terms of program development and in terms of an atmosphere which was conducive to his own visual research.

He has commented that his slack periods in imagemaking were primarily due to three things: commitment to family; a dedication to his teaching, which when combined with the teaching load became extremely demanding and draining; and the fact that he "did not have even a beginning of a community of response" which eventually allowed his own self-doubts and lack of confidence to undermine his courage to carry on. At times he simply did not trust his instincts enough.39

The fact that Smith's visual output was relatively small during the 1950s and the 1960s does not mean that he went into intellectual hibernation for two decades. During this period he wrote many important articles for *Aperture*, made several attempts at small mimeo publications—these articles are frequently of no less significance than the ones in *Aperture,* although they have had a much smaller distribution. And he organized two pioneering workshops. His 1956 workshop dealt with the issue of interpreting the photograph. It brought together such people as Minor White, Van Deren Coke, Aaron Siskind, and Ralph Hattersley
and provided an intensive forum for an exchange of ideas. It continued the dialogue on interpreting photographs begun by Smith's 1953 *Aperture* article "Photographs and Public." And in 1962 Smith organized a conference on the problems of photographic instruction. This was one of the first conferences of its kind ever to be held. Out of this conference came an agreement to hold another at George Eastman House in Rochester, New York later in the year. Smith, too, participated in that conference. From this later conference a committee was created which included Smith, Nathan Lyons, Art Sinsabaugh, Sol Mednick and Clarence White, Jr. This group proposed the form to be taken by the Society for Photographic Education which has grown from a handful of members in 1963 to a group of over 1,500 photographic educators in 1979. From its inception until 1973 Smith was a member of the board of directors and a vice chairman.  

In addition to his teaching load and family commitments, factors which contributed to slow periods in image-making, were severe eye problems. Probably the worst nightmare a visual artist can have is one in which his eyesight fails. During the 1960s Smith was plagued by cataracts. How painful it must have been for a man whose whole life was devoted to the visual realm to slowly have his own vision dimmed. He had successful surgery in 1964 and his sight was restored, although he still wears extremely thick
glasses. In 1973 he developed a detached retina. Once again his sight was threatened. Once again he was fortunate to have successful surgery.

It is curious that in Smith's early fantasy drawings, figures which have large eyes are prominent (e.g., see Figures 13 and 14). It is curious that so much of Smith's photography deals with the properties of light. It is understandable that the stress he felt as a result of the detached retina in 1973 was expressed through a return to fantasy drawings which involved light and sight. The theme presented in "Come Back Eyes" (Figure 15) from 1974 is typical of drawings done during this period of his life.

The demands of teaching, the change in the kind of students he had, the growth in his own program and his frustrations with his perception of dealing with an administration which neither cared about nor understood his concerns took its toll. He began to be embittered and began to desire to get out of teaching. But teaching is not something he easily could set aside.

In a question and answer session after Smith delivered the keynote address to the National Conference of the Society for Photographic Education in April 1979, a member of the audience asked Smith why he spent his life as a teacher if teaching was not enjoyable. Smith replied that teaching for him was a necessity, like breathing.
In addition to the loyalty of his former students, and the general awareness of his peers, he received during 1968, the Herman Frederick Lieber Distinguished Teaching Award from Indiana University. And in that year he also received recognition for his "pioneer work in color photography" in the form of an Honorary Doctor of Fine Arts degree from the Maryland Institute College of Art.\textsuperscript{41}

Even though he was receiving some recognition for his accomplishments he felt he had devoted a large part of his life to others, and largely to others who did not care about the things he cared about. His sabbatical in 1970, which allowed him to produce an enormous body of new work, reinforced a growing desire to devote his remaining years to his imagery and to his writing.

The 1970s marks a period when he began to retreat from his professorial duties into his own work. His image creation and writings have dramatically increased as he began the process of ending his career as a University professor. Finally, in 1977 he retired from the faculty. As he mentioned in that question and answer session in Texas, for him teaching is a necessity. It goes on still, but on an individual basis, wherever he is, with whomever he is with.

His teaching and his writing in their wide ranging scope point, like his pictures, to a system of thought that allows for an ever expanding notion of the possibilities of the medium. Smith argues for freedom, for
exploration, for growth. In doing this he recognized that sooner or later other people, most likely younger than he, would push the limits of the medium further than he either would care to or could understand. In a very moving essay, "Future Fare Well," written in 1978 Smith observed that this had happened. Unlike many other photographic educators and writers on photography, Smith sees this kind of development as inevitable and positive, rather than negative. It is not a threat. It should not be fought against.

We are all fathers and mothers of the future, parents of a child we may never see.

Yes, experience is a fine teacher; it finally taught me that I was no longer eligible to teach the oncoming young. As this feeling grew more intense, I tried to discover why I felt that way.

... the new photographers... proceed in concert toward a destination unspecified and far away from me. I feel mildly melancholy that I shall never know where they will arrive. Yet I want to... I do not know if they hear me calling "Au Revoir, bon voyage," and as Ben Bernie used to say "a fond farewell and pleasant dreams."
NOTES

1This quotation and much of the biographical material comes from interviews with Henry Holmes Smith. These were conducted in March 1978 by James McQuaid and Steven Lewis, and in June 1978 by Howard Bossen for The Oral History Project in Photography at The International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House (IMP/GEH) in Rochester, New York. The interview tapes along with their transcriptions are housed in the archives of the IMP/GEH. This quotation comes from reel 1, track 1, of the March 1978 interview.

Other sources for biographical information include background materials—a chronology and supplementary interviews with people who have known Smith—developed for The Oral History Project, Henry Holmes Smith's Art: Fifty Years in Retrospect, Indiana University Art Museum, 1973, and numerous conversations between Howard Bossen and Mr. Smith.

2Oral History interview, March 1978, reel 1, track 2.

3Even during World War II he was involved with writing and photography, although neither activity dealt with topics of his interest.

4Oral History interview, March 1978, reel 1, track 1.

5Ibid., reel 1, track 1.

6Ibid., reel 1, track 1.

7Ibid., reel 1, track 1.

8In an unpublished typescript titled "My Year with Moholy-Nagy: A Brief Memoir" Smith wrote about having sent a letter to Moholy-Nagy in Germany. It came back "address unknown" and I was shattered. For I knew, clearly, what the Nazi's were doing to their opponents. Nearly a year afterward I wrote to a short-lived publication of the Luce Empire to see if some information on Nazi policies on education and art in Germany could be issued. The thrust of the reply was that "the subject is one clouded with hazy emotions on both sides, and a factual analysis is practically impossible at the present time..." meaning, I suppose, that it's too early to tell which way the wind is blowing and Time
didn't want to offend our German-oriented influential friends. (p. 4)

Both a copy of this typescript and a copy of the letter Smith quoted from dated February 20, 1936 and signed by J. Pequignot, Editorial Secretary for Letters, a Time, Inc. publication are with the Henry Holmes Smith Papers at the Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona. (Hereafter cited as HHS Papers)

The reader is referred to the following letters, copies of which are with the HHS Papers.

A. Letter to Moholy-Nagy addressed to him in Germany dated May 6, 1935. This letter is the one which never arrived that is referred to in the previous footnote.

B. Letter to Moholy-Nagy dated December 10, 1938 which discusses from an idealistic point of view the contributions Moholy-Nagy could make if he accepted a professorship at a major university.

See Chapter 5 for a discussion of Smith's writings.

See Chapter 4 for a discussion of Smith's imagery.


Ibid., p. 14. The aspect of cartooning which is transitional in terms of his photographic work is discussed in Chapter 4.

In the Oral History interview, March 1978, reel 1, track 1, Smith said that it was in the little gallery of the Withers Library where he saw his "first beautiful photographs by people like Margaret Bourke-White ... in the early 1930's." He said as he recollects although he is not certain this show "had some of the pictures from Photo-Eye in it."

W. Rotzler in his Photography as Artistic Experiment: From Fox Talbot to Moholy-Nagy, (Garden City, N.Y.: Amphoto, 1976, p. 86) cites the book Foto-Auge published in Stuttgart in 1929 and the exhibition "Photo and Film" held in Stuttgart in the same year as major events in the history of photography. He wrote that the show "'Photo and Film' ... provided a magnificent international panorama of all progressive achievements and the whole range of photography,
from the then new 'objective photography' founded by the Swiss photographer Hans Finsler to the abstract experiments by the constructivists." Rotzler said that in Foto-Auge "the art critic Franz Roh and the typographer Jan Tschichold presented a concentrated and highly interesting account of the important achievements of the century."

16 Personal conversation with Clyde "Red" Hare at the "Symposium on Overlooked Twentieth Century Photography," held at the Pittsburgh Film-makers Inc., Pittsburgh, Pa., 17 February 1979.

17 Oral History interview, March 1978, reel 1, track 1.

18 Ibid., reel 2, track 1.

19 Ibid., reel 2, track 1.

20 Ibid., reel 3, track 1.

21 Ibid., reel 3, track 1.


23 In a letter to Beaumont Newhall in November of 1938 discussing his defunct Design Research Laboratory Smith wrote:

In the laboratory ... several investigations were started and carried to a point where some interesting developments were uncovered. In connection with Godman Guild, in Columbus, Ohio, a settlement house under the direction of Mrs. Wheeler, I started one experiment which I shall carry ahead some day, if others do not finish it first.

It was an investigation of the effect of formalized classroom activities on the creative outlook of underprivileged children. Two other projects started but left unfinished for the time, are: A History of the Comic Strip in the United States, and Genuinely Popular American Graphics as an approach to the Problem of Stimulating Personal Creative Activity....
Three part-time assistants and I carried out the experimental work in photography, stencil, inlaid oil-cloth and free-association-drawing, photo montage, typography, and teaching.

A copy of this letter dated November 22, 1938 is on deposit with the HHS Papers.

In an unpublished typescript by Henry Holmes Smith titled "My Year with Moholy-Nagy: A Brief Memoir" he wrote:

The course of the late summer culminated in my writing a letter to Moholy, responding to his writing on the future of color photography and describing some theories about it which he had not mentioned in his Penrose Annual Article. It is indicative of how ... I offered to collaborate with him on experiments in this direction, promising to finance the work and consult with him when he would permit. It is indicative of how slight I thought prospects were that I did not bother to keep a carbon copy of the letter....

His answer was a personal visit to me at the darkroom where I was employed, asking me to help him plan the photography installation [at the New Bauhaus] and also teach the elementary course, p. 5.

Since Smith has kept an astonishing number of letters and makes carbon copies of almost all of his letters it seems that he must have thought there was almost no chance of Moholy-Nagy actually responding to his letter. A copy of this typescript is with the HHS Papers.

For some reason there seems to be a misconception about Smith's role at the New Bauhaus. This will be discussed at greater length in Chapter 6. At this point, however, I refer the reader to the correspondence between Smith, Moholy-Nagy and his staff dating from October 6, 1937 through December 24, 1941. These letters clearly show that Smith played a significant role in the photography program at the New Bauhaus during 1937-38, that Moholy-Nagy valued Smith's ideas about photographic education, and that Moholy-Nagy asked Smith to return to the faculty when the school re-opened in 1939. Copies of these letters are with the HHS Papers. Also the "Laszlo Moholy-Nagy: Perfecting the Eye By Means of Photography," by Lloyd C. Engelbrecht in Photographs of Moholy-Nagy: From the Collection of William Larson, Rice and Steadman eds. Claremont, Claremont, Calif.: Pomona College, 1976, p. 11. Smith's role at the New Bauhaus is briefly discussed here.
In a letter addressed to Professor Smith, dated September 7, 1948, Beaumont Newhall wrote:

It [Smith's History of Photography Course] will be, to my knowledge, the first such course to be offered by any fine arts department. While I gave a short course of five lectures at the University of Minnesota last spring, it was under the auspices of the Humanities Department, and it was by no means so ambitious as your proposed course....

With congratulations for path breaking, and with every wish for success....

A copy of this letter is with the HHS Papers.


From the Chronology in Henry Holmes Smith's Art: Fifty Years in Retrospect, p. 15.


Nathan Lerner, untitled note of appreciation in Henry Holmes Smith's Art: Fifty Years in Retrospect, p. 10.

All of this biographical material may be found in the Chronology section of Henry Holmes Smith's Art: Fifty Years in Retrospect.

Oral History Interview, March 1978, reel 4, track 1. Just prior to Smith being offered the job at Indiana University Wanda Lee Phares had left her job at The Daily Pantograph. The original plan was for Smith to follow her out to California and to look for work. In reference to that possibility Smith said:

I don't know what I would have done. In fact that was one of the problems. I keep telling you that
I was a very wobbly guy as far as careers went; careers had to be handed to me. I wasn't the kind of guy that knew directly all the strategies about forcing a career.

37 From notes from personal conversations with Henry Smith held in Granville, Ohio, 4 December 1978.

38 Smith's difficulty in getting along with the administration was repeatedly mentioned in interviews with his former colleagues.

39 From notes from personal conversations with Henry Smith held on 4 December 1978 in Granville, Ohio.

40 From the Chronology section in Henry Holmes Smith's Art: Fifty Years in Retrospect.

41 Ibid.

42 Henry Holmes Smith, "Future Fare Well," TS, 2 pages dated May 11, 1978. This essay was written for a student/faculty portfolio at San Francisco State.
CHAPTER III

TOWARD A MORE COMPLETE HISTORY OF PHOTOGRAPHY:
ANTECEDENTS TO THE IMAGERY OF
HENRY HOLMES SMITH

Jerry Uelsmann, a major force in late twentieth century photography, best known for his dream-like multiple prints, and one of Henry Holmes Smith's most prominent students, has said his mentor and former teacher is:

... an active photo-visionary, having produced a body of work of both historical and contemporary significance. His images emerged early as a challenge to accepted thinking about photography and his continuing photographic search has produced an incredible body of images which actively engage the inventive consciousness of all who are willing to view with an open mind. ¹

Jack Welpott, a prominent photographer and photographic educator, who has known Henry Holmes Smith since 1947, having been a student in Smith's first class at Indiana University and having become a life long friend, has said that when the assessment of the twentieth century is complete Henry Holmes Smith will emerge as one of the century's most influential persons in photography. ²

Smith, prominent as an educator and a writer, has received little attention as an imagemaker. His immensely

Why is this so? The answer lies both within the nature of the imagery and within the nature of the man. Henry Holmes Smith has a bifurcated reputation of being extremely generous and extremely cantankerous, easily outraged. He has constantly refused to play by the rules of art world politics. Rather than promoting himself, he more frequently promoted others. But the failure of his photographs to have gained wider acceptance is more involved than just refusing to play the game. Part of the problem has to do with having to play with a deck stacked against him by the gatekeepers of photographic taste and acceptability.

Jerry Uelsmann's statement cuts to the heart of the problem Henry Holmes Smith's work presents. Both Smith's light study photographs from 1946 and 1947 and Smith's "Liquid-and-Light" images done since 1949 defie the conception of what photographs are expected to look like in our culture. For photography Smith's work is as
conception-shattering as was the painting of the Cubist's in the early part of the twentieth century.

Cubism created, by moving beyond the mimetic notions of art, a new kind of dialogue, a new approach to creating meaningful communication without relying upon representational modes says the art historian Lionell Venturi. He wrote that:

... by denying the value of form as representation and assigning the value of art to the purely creative act, the Cubists broke down the barriers between various art forms. Art became the message of a hidden and more real world but one beyond the reach of reason—a pure state of being.

Cubism blurred the traditional distinctions of medium which art historians had employed to differentiate work in various modes.

The philosophical position and the actual artifacts of the Cubists forced the critics and the viewers into the work. Old mimetic models were no longer applicable, nature was no longer being imitated but rather was being redefined. The perceiver of the artifact could not look outside the art for meanings. The meanings were wedded to the forms of the artifact through the creative act of the artist, resulting in the development of a new kind of reality. Venturi wrote, too, of this new reality:

Form that is called abstract, however, is organic and shaped according to internal laws assembled from reality, that is, it is concrete and profoundly realistic. This theory of abstract form as absolute reality
supercedes the ambiguities of Cubist and Surrealist theories and their dialectical predicaments of being caught in a continuous contrast with representational form. Form as the absolute presence is not realized with immediacy in the Impressionist sense but is form that realizes the spirit in its immediacy. 4

The new kind of reality Venturi speaks of is the kind of reality Henry Holmes Smith has been working with. Smith's photographs challenge us to look at the world in a new way. It is a premise of this thesis that the photography of Henry Holmes Smith represents a set of aesthetic assumptions which in the past have been considered at best peripheral to the medium and at worst detrimental to the medium; a set of assumptions which grew out of many of the tenets of Twentieth Century Modernism in general, the philosophy related to the Bauhaus movement primarily, and the philosophy of Smith's mentor, Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, in particular.

When Aaron Siskind began his photographic study of paint and rock fragments in the early 1940s he moved a step beyond object identification (Figure 2), a step beyond Alfred Stieglitz. Siskind's photographs are of objects, but not about them at all. They are statements about transcendent experience. For Siskind the objectness of the subject matter ceased to have importance, and a metaphorical spirit latent in photography was liberated through his nonobject orientation. But Siskind,

Used by permission of Light Gallery, New York.
remaining within the confines of camera generated imagery, was still dependent upon the physicality of objects in the creation of his humanistic metaphorical statements. Smith, through his explorations of the behavior of light without a camera lens system, moves the dialogue of image possibilities to yet another level.

The methodology employed and the aesthetic assumptions made by Henry Holmes Smith have at best been only sporadically and grudgingly accepted as truly photographic. Yet, although the validity of Siskind's imagery was originally questioned, his methodological approach to the medium was not.

As historians are aware, history is often revised because a previously overlooked body of work is "discovered." Or an historian with values different from previous historians decides that this overlooked body of work is significant and then builds a case for its significance.

Photography is a new form of human endeavor with a short history. It has only recently attracted a large following of serious minded scholars, critics, and collectors. The reasons why it took from the mid-nineteenth century for this to occur is not as important for this discussion as the mere fact that the scholarly field of photography and the aesthetic power bases in the field were peopled by just a few men and women; Stieglitz, Steichen, Taft, the Newhalls, the Gernsheims and Szarkowski to name most of them.
When one occupies the kind of position that John Szarkowski does at the Museum of Modern Art the type of photographic image which appeals to his taste becomes a potent style of the time. This observation is not meant to imply that Szarkowski's judgment is necessarily bad, rather it is to point out that John Szarkowski, like all of us, has an aesthetic value system which makes him favor one style of imagery over another.

All too often too many people are not fully cognizant that what has been deemed acceptable by the tastemakers in photography has become the medium's visible history and heritage. What has been acceptable for most of this century has been the straight photograph as exemplified by the work of Edward Weston. As the acceptance of the non-manipulated camera originated photographic image grew, the general acceptability of other kinds of photographic statements diminished. The problem, of course, is that even straight photography is highly manipulative, even if covertly so.

Photography is used as a means to record objects and events. It is used as a means of concretizing conceptual notions. It is used to make the abstract more concrete and the concrete more abstract. It is used to topographically examine the surfaces of our world. And it is used to explore the innermost recesses of our minds. It is used to express emotion and to negate emotion. It is made up of
fragments of time/space, truth made from fiction and fiction made from truth. All this and more is encompassed by that ubiquitous medium referred to as photography.

Yet the medium has been generally perceived by the public tastemakers and through them the public at large to be more narrowly construed. Photography has suffered from canons of what is acceptable to photograph and what is an acceptable photograph. These defining and very much constraining parameters of the medium have been and, to the extent that they still exist, are shackles which hinder the aesthetic development of the medium and limit the framework under which the public can gain an understanding of the potentials of the medium.

From the time Fox Talbot fixed his first photogenic drawings and made his first camera originated images there have been two competing methodologies operating within the medium. The first method uses the camera lens system to focus light onto light sensitive material. The second method uses light and light sensitive material without the mediation of a camera lens system to focus that light. The methodology which has come to predominate is based upon the camera's ability to record the "likeness" of physical objects. This methodology has been raised by various tastemakers into an aesthetic position which asserts that the recording of objects in a form which has a concrete referent in the physical world is of a higher order of worth
than a more pure recording of light and energy on light sensitive material.

A comparison of a color print by William Eggleston and a "Liquid-and-Light" image by Henry Holmes Smith serves to make this methodological distinction clear, while establishing two polar positions. After one looks at Figure 3 by Smith and Figure 4 by Eggleston, it is not difficult to see which of these two photographers' work falls within the dominant accepted position.

However, the last several years have shown that imagemakers whose work has departed from concerns solely with objects as content have begun to gain increasing acceptance. This is not an argument which denies that object images have only object meaning. Clearly Alfred Stieglitz's "Equivalences" exist on several levels, but they are recognizable as objects which carry a concrete statement by their very objectness as well as a metaphorical statement by their execution. Since the 1940s there has been a gradual acceptance within photographic circles of more internalized imagemaking processes as long as these processes stayed within the limitations of object-thought orientation. The imagemaker who moved beyond the object and dealt with process and energy was perceived as ceasing to be working photographically. He was no longer a photographer, but a painter or printmaker or philosopher or sculptor. This perception of the imagemaker runs counter to the
Fig. 3. Henry Holmes Smith, *Mother and Son*, dye-transfer print. The Henry Holmes Smith Archive, I.U. Art Museum, HB #Z.

Photograph by William Eggleston is reproduced by courtesy of Caldecot Chubb, New York.
generally liberating notions of early Modernist Art as exemplified by the Cubists. It is a perception tied to nineteenth century notions of realism which is adhered to by the powerful tastemakers rather than one which is derived from the characteristics of the medium of photography per se. After all, the term photography is derived from two Greek words, phos and graphos, which mean to draw with light.

To fully appreciate the atmosphere in which Henry Holmes Smith has spent his career as an imagemaker one may turn to America's foremost photographic historian, Beaumont Newhall, who has written:

On this point the masters are unanimous: the photographic image must not be tampered with. For them, the work of any human hand is clumsy, any piecing together of negatives glaringly false, any cropping not envisaged before exposure an admission of weakness. In the darkroom these photographers use controls, but only those which enhance conviction, which help convey the truth behind the illusion. Newhall fails to take into account that several of the masters he is referring to have been elevated to that status through his aesthetic judgment. (This is not to say these masters do not deserve their position.) And that the truth behind the illusion is his truth and not a universal truth.

Newhall was not alone in his judgment of photographic truth. Helmut Gernsheim, the respected English photographic historian, made the point that when he began his own photographic studies in Munich in 1934 at the State School
of Photography that he "soon learned that good photography and a factual, realistic presentation were inseparable."

Perhaps the fact that Henry Holmes Smith grew up in rather isolated Bloomington, Illinois and stayed within the mid-west during his young adulthood saved him from the pretentious notions of the correct aesthetic position of which Gernsheim spoke. If one can argue that isolation has virtues it would seem that the lack of exposure to "correct" viewpoints by leaders in the field was one such virtue. Henry Smith, neither knowing, nor probably caring if he had known, the prevailing opinion was that Moholy-Nagy was operating outside the limits of photography, felt inspired by his writings.

Gernsheim's views are, nevertheless, the product of the entrenched and then current photographic philosophy, found on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. It is a philosophy that was under attack through practice as well as polemic, at least as early as 1917 when Alvin Langdon Coburn began making his nonobjective "vortographs" (Figure 5), and 1918 when Christian Schad (Figure 6), began his experiments in nonobjective photography.

Coburn, a member of the Photo-Secession, was involved with camera originated abstractions as early as 1910. His "vortographs" made in the late teens demonstrate a move toward nonobjective camera originated photographic imagery. He was one of the first to devote:
... his energies to the liberation of photography from its dependence on visible reality.... Coburn developed a device consisting of three mirrors which he used to make surprising photographs of transparent or opaque objects which he entirely de-materialized and formalized by multiple reflection. Ezra Pound called these abstract photographs "vortographs," and they are among the earliest attempts at abstract photography.  

Christian Schad, one of the principal Dadaists, called his images "Schadographs." Although produced in a similar fashion to Fox Talbot's photogenic drawings where the intent was to produce a likeness of reality, Schad was concerned with creating a new reality through chance combinations utilizing largely waste materials. The element of chance, the negative reversals of tone and the reversals of typographic elements indicate a conception of reality which is both relative and figurative. It is a conception of reality remarkably similar to that found in Henry Holmes Smith's work.

Schad has said about his photographic endeavors that:

The attraction which I felt toward the things I found around me, on the street, in shop windows, in cafes, and even in dustbins made them appear useful and attractive in my eyes; for they radiated an enchantment and the patina of age. By combining the materials I found, I developed something new and created a new reality. My technique consisted of laying the objects on either photo-paper or a photo-plate and exposing them. It was possible to regulate the intensity of the light as desired—a procedure with which every photographer is familiar. It was also possible to expose two
separate and different compositions on a single plate, or to combine them with one another. There are a great many variations of combination—you only have to know how to choose and arrange correctly. All sorts of waste products can be useful if they are remodeled or supplemented. Everything depends on one's personal taste and ability.13

W. Rotzler in his *Photography as Artistic Experiment*, tries to account for the growing interest in photography in the early part of the twentieth century in art circles. He speculated that:

> It must have been photography's latent ability to create something more than mere likenesses of visible reality which suddenly drew the attention of artists to the medium. The striking change in the attitude of outsiders in favor of photography since 1916 had a number of reasons. First of all, all photographs, even the most realistic, are really abstractions by virtue of the alienation of "natural" color in a scale of gray tones between black and white, and this fact must have endeared photography particularly to artists who aspired to create abstractions of visible reality in their work.14

Man Ray and Moholy-Nagy both picked up on Christian Schad's experiments and created important bodies of non-objective photographic work. Curiously, Gernsheim states:

> Undeniably these revolutionary experiments extended the boundaries of photography and uprooted outworn conventions. Most of them were achieved by purely chemical or optical techniques and so could not be objected to on photographic grounds.15

Yet he follows that insight with a condemnation of non-objective photography. He adheres to a concept of "real" photography which is bound to the nineteenth century
notions of realism in painting as well as photography. It is a philosophical viewpoint wherein transcription of the visible is valid while revelation of the invisible is revolutionary heresy.

Much of Moholy-Nagy's darkroom experiments were misapplied from the point of view of furthering photography itself; they had as little to do with real photography as the composite productions of the fine art photographers or the photopaintings of the impressionists. Abstract photography is just as much an aberration as these. None of the photograms and photo-montages by Moholy-Nagy, Max Ernst, John Heartfield and other Constructivist or Surrealist artists has any significance for true photography.¹⁶

Whilst non-objective art may be the purest form of painting, in photography it is a contradiction in terms, a negation of everything that is truly photographic: in short, photographic suicide.¹⁷

If one accepts the notion that beginning with Da Vinci men worked toward the goal of reproducing natural objects by mechanical means, then is not a photogram, photogenic drawing, and refraction "drawing" an extension of this concept where the physical object which leaves its mark through the action of light is replaced by the recording of the no less real, no less physical traces of the dematerialized light waves? How different really are the photogenic drawings of Fox Talbot where plants left their mark of light and the refraction "drawings" where syrup and water leave their mark of light? In terms of materials, how far is it from the discarded objects of Christian Schad to
Much of the activity of photographers has been directed toward the problem of description. For the landscape photographers of the nineteenth century the problem was to describe the land topographically to function as scientific data for U.S. Geological surveys. For the social documentarians of the twentieth century the problem has been to describe the interrelationships found in the economic-social-political structure of society. For the photographers of NASA the problem again is topographic in an inter-galactic sense. But description use is only one of several functions which photography has; revelation of the nonvisible in visible terms is another, though perhaps less easily understood one. The creation of a material reality built upon nonvisible elements of the material universe may be part of photography's function, too.

The work of the Dadaists, Surrealists and Constructivists demonstrates this, for in a metaphysical sense they each took facets of reality (the seen) and fashioned these facets into heretofore nonseen form. In effect they redefined reality so that it included not only what could be observed by the eye, but also that which could be conjured up by the mind. This breakthrough opened wide the doors to investigations of internal states of consciousness, of dreams, of fantasy and of archetypal constructs in the cultural anthropological sense.
The work of scientists who use photography to explore structures too small for the eye to see demonstrates a willingness to explore the unknown. At times the photographic images they have made have necessitated a re-evaluation of our concept of what is truly real in our universe. Both artists and scientists have engaged photography in the metaphysical task of redefining notions of reality.

In photography there is a strong line of work beginning with Christian Schad which deals with questions and problems in a metaphysical way that a large number of the practitioners of photography were not concerned with. The fact that they were not concerned with these problems does not make the problems any less truly photographic. The fact that these problems were the concerns of people who were artists looking for new materials to convey new ideas, accounts perhaps for both the split within mainstream photography, and for the resistance practiced by the mainstream when confronted by ideas not concerned with the transcriptive but with the revelatory possibilities in the medium.

The idea that one was no longer bound by the visible but limited only by one's own imaginative possibilities was a breakthrough in modern art which made possible the Da-daist, Cubist, Surrealist, and Futurist movements in art. In short, this change in concept made possible what many twentieth century photographers and artists have spent their lives investigating. It is a vision concerned with
internal states of consciousness, with the subconscious, and with fantasy. It may or may not reflect or abstract the visible, but it is not dependent upon that world for either image derivation or meaning. It is not so much that the properties of the medium had changed as it was that new ideas lead to latent properties being discovered.

While historians are still arguing whether the non-objective photography of Christian Schad, Man Ray and Moholy-Nagy was a cul-de-sac or truly liberating new force, it is clear that their work stands as energetic investigations into the interaction of light and light sensitive materials in a nonobjective way. These bodies of work are extremely important as historical and philosophical antecedents to Henry Holmes Smith's mature work.

One might liken the atmosphere in terms of photographic philosophy of the mid-west in the 1920s and 1930s to that of Paris in the late 1920s. Writing about Paris of that period Julien Levy, the art and photography dealer, experienced under the tutelage of Man Ray and Marcel Duchamp, David Travis, Assistant Curator of Photography at the Art Institute of Chicago, said:

There were no spokesmen preaching, no factions worrying and no official publications or critics with any especial visibility. One was on his own. Photographers worked alone or among friends without manifestos, crusades, or congratulations.
If one had not done so already, it was the time to begin something new. The traditional attractions, painting and literature began to give ground to film and photography. Those who came to film and photography, from other arts or disciplines, found a territory without the supervision of past masters, without an established iconography, and without a well-footnoted history. They found a frontier. Most were self-taught, and took advantage of both innocence and blunder. To them the limits and the propriety of the two media were unknown.  

If historians build their cases from hindsight, then collectors build their collections from speculative foresight. It is part of the nature of the historian to operate from a position of conservative strength whereas the collector operates out of intuitive feeling. The collector helps to build a body of art that is visible to the public and which then becomes material for future historians to evaluate. The photography collection of Julien Levy demonstrates that he became an active exponent of the "New Vision" in photography long before it was fashionable. He was showing in his gallery in New York in the early 1930s many of the people Newhall and Gernsheim considered to be, at best, peripheral to the medium of photography. What is peripheral to one person's philosophy, however, is central to anothers. To Man Ray, Moholy-Nagy, Henry Holmes Smith, and others light, and not objects is central in photography.

Man Ray, dissatisfied with the medium of paint, writes of his first photograms to Mr. Howald, his patron, in a
letter dated 5 April 1922:

... you may regret to hear it, but I have finally freed myself of the sticky medium of paint, and am working directly with light itself. I have found a way of recording it. The subjects were never so near to life itself as in my work, and never so completely translated to the medium.21

The letter reveals facets of Man Ray's philosophy as it pertains to photography. First, in asserting that his "subjects were never so near to life," he is countering the assumption prevalent at the time that photographs were "near to life" because they transcribed life. In Man Ray's Rayograms (Figure 7), one frequently is unable to tell what the original objects were. Even when one can, it is not important because the image is a transcendent experience which uses the material to reach the immaterial. Second, to claim that the work was "completely translated to the medium," contradicts the notion that the medium of photography is bound by the camera-formed image which utilizes Renaissance perspective. Man Ray makes the argument that light and not the camera is the most fundamental and important element in photography. He asserts that it is the agency of light which forms an image. The camera is simply one means of creating a photographic image; it is a tool to achieve an end, it is not an end in itself.

Man Ray, in discussing his photography, has been less than consistent in his explanations as to why he became involved with it. He has been quoted as saying, "I paint
Fig. 7. Man Ray, Rayogram (1921-1928). Illus. 49 in Rotzler, W[illy], *Photography As Artistic Experiment: From Fox Talbot to Moholy-Nagy.* Garden City, N.Y.: Amphoto, 1976.
what I cannot photograph: I photograph what I cannot paint," and as saying, "I had to get money to paint. If I'd had the nerve, I'd have become a thief or a gangster, but since I didn't, I became a photographer." Both statements, true or not, reveal a problem in attempting to get at Man Ray's ideas: he often is contradictory and playful. It is difficult to know when one should take him seriously or when one should laugh with him. His work reveals, however, his extremely inventive mind and his understanding of his materials with a clarity that his words frequently cloud. This, of course, is in keeping with his joy of mystification which one supposes is actually the only constant in his entire body of work.

The history of photography has reflected much discussion, indeed much argument, concerning whether photography is art, reportage, documentation, etc. There has been controversy over the desirability of the manipulation of photographic materials and questions concerning the morality of manipulating these materials. For some, like Edward Weston, the photograph was sacrosant. It was to be made pure and kept pure. But Henry Holmes Smith, like his mentor Moholy-Nagy, understood what the essayist Susan Sontag recently has expressed in her book *On Photography*: that photography is a medium, like language, consequently some configurations created from the medium are art, some are not. Since it is a medium, it is composed of elements
which can be used by the photographer to create a communicative statement. Moholy-Nagy built his theories of photographic imagemaking around this point.

Moholy-Nagy was a visionary as evidenced by his approach to photographic education and his conception of photography. His writings covered as wide a range of subjects as did his visual art. He worked with paint, plastic, metal, light, film and a variety of other materials. He wrote about painting, sculpture, photography, film, light and education. Throughout his life he was fascinated with light as a medium, fascinated with the ways in which one could "paint" with it, mold it, record it, play with it and learn its secrets. And throughout his life he was an educator, beginning his career as a faculty member of the Bauhaus in 1922.

Moholy-Nagy sought to work with light. He explored the relationships created by light markings on light sensitive material without concern for convention. He explored the negative print, solarization, collage, photograms and the straight print (Figures 8 and 9). He let light describe itself; as a material rather than an agency by which objects were transcribed. Photography was a tool to be used to expand one's vision of the phenomenal world. He realized that photography could be used to increase one's visual perception; consequently it was an ideal teaching tool. He put the camera to use in his classroom as a means

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for students to explore the visual world, to learn about shapes, forms, light, line, tone; as a means to synthetically record optical phenomena rather than as a means to make records of objects. The distinction might seem slight but it is not, because with Moholy-Nagy the behavior of light was the key, not the object. He delighted in the variations which could be made by modulating a light source. Projects in his classes dealt with photograms and the construction of light modulators which were then photographed.

Moholy-Nagy's exploration of the photogram, like Man Ray's, represented an application of "non-representational syntax" to a medium that had been thought of primarily in representational terms. What Moholy-Nagy was attempting to do with his photograms was to make concrete the light phenomenon which was, in his words, "peculiar to the photographic process and to no other technical invention."24

Richard Kostelanetz, in his book *Moholy-Nagy*, implied that an important reason Moholy-Nagy kept returning from explorations in other media to paints was color. Moholy-Nagy regretted that the available technology was not sufficient to allow him to pursue his vision with color photographic materials, while he believed that color would someday become important in photography "for its own sake, not as a sign or symbol representing an object."25
In a draft manuscript of "On Color Photography--A Brief Memoir" one finds Smith echoing Moholy-Nagy's insistence on openness, experimentation, and nonobjective imagery. For Smith, as well as for Moholy-Nagy, the use of arbitrary color and the total fabrication of images on light sensitive materials are proper uses of the photographic medium. One finds here a key to Smith's philosophical position. He argues that possibilities should not be imposed upon the mind by actual objects and actual real world color. Rather, the mind should be used to liberate itself from the limitations and restrictions of the real world.

Smith like Moholy-Nagy was fascinated with the behavior of light, and the possibilities of color in photography. Yet, unlike Moholy-Nagy, Smith has dedicated the vast majority of his imagemaking career to the exploration of these two areas. He has devoted a lifetime to cameraless generated photographic imagery. And Smith has explored color in the manner in which Moholy-Nagy argued it should be explored, but did not explore it himself.
NOTES

1Jerry N. Uelsmann, Untitled note of appreciation Henry Holmes Smith's Art: Fifty Years in Retrospect, ed. by Wanda Lee Smith (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Art Museum, 1973), p. 7. In "Editor's Note on the Catalog" this publication is listed as "the prototype of a more comprehensive volume that is to follow." As of August 1979 this comprehensive volume has not yet appeared.

2"Interview with Jack Welpott on Henry Holmes Smith" tape recorded by Howard Bossen on July 26, 1978 in Columbus, Ohio, unpublished.
As far as I am concerned there is no more influential person in Twentieth Century photography, anywhere.... And I think that when you can get a body of his work together and if somebody will do a proper job of criticism on it a very strong case can be made that he is one of eight or ten seminal imagemakers in the Twentieth Century.
A copy of this tape is with the Henry Holmes Smith Oral History Materials in the Archive of the International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House, Rochester, New York. (Hereafter cited HHS Oral History at IMP/GEH.)


4Ibid., p. 311.

5In addition to the photographs of Aaron Siskind's contained in this study the reader is referred to the following works:

6John Szarkowski is the Director of the Department of Photography at the Museum of Modern Art. In that capacity he has developed many influential shows and largely determined the collecting priorities of his department. He has held the position since he succeeded the late Edward Steichen in 1962.
For a time in the mid-1800s painters were known to have explored the cliche-verre technique, a technique in which a glass plate coated with an opaque adhesive layer was scratched with an etching needle. This drawing on glass was then used as a photographic negative to produce positive prints. The painters were: Eugene Delacroix, Jean Baptiste Camille Corot, Charles Francois Daubigny, Theodore Rousseau, and Jean Francois Millet. This kind of exploration demonstrates, that along with the photogenic drawings of Fox Talbot, people in the mid-1800s had begun to explore the expressive possibilities of photosensitive materials apart from the transcriptive potential of camera generated imagery. For a fuller discussion of this see W. Rotzler, Photography as Artistic Experiment: From Fox Talbot to Moholy-Nagy (Garden City, New York: Amphoto, 1976).

For a selection of Smith's cameraless images the reader is referred to Chapter 4.


Rotzler, Photography as Artistic Experiment..., p. 81.

Ibid., p. 82.

Ibid., p. 82.

Ibid., p. 81.

Gernsheim, Creative Photography..., pp. 167-168.

Ibid., p. 168.

Ibid., p. 207.

David Travis, Photographs from the Julien Levy Collection Starting with Atget (Chicago: The Art Institute of Chicago, 1976), p. 12.

Ibid., p. 9.
Among the photographers shown in the Levy Gallery were: Walter Peterhans, Peter Weller, Herbert Bayer, Umbo (Otto Umbrh), Walter Hege, Helman Lerski, Alice Lex (Nerlinger), Oscar Nerlinger, Luc Moholy, Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, Man Ray, Lee Miller, Roger Parry, Eli Lotar, Ilse Bing, Ecce Photo, Florence Henri, Emmanuel Sougez, Maurice Tabard, Andre Kertesz and Brassai, Atget, Nadar, Matthew Brady, Walker Evans and George Platt Lynes.

Man Ray, personal letter to his patron Mr. Howald. A copy of this letter is in the Ross Room in the Department of Photography and Cinema, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio.


Susan Sontag states:
Although photography generates works that can be called art—it requires subjectivity, it can lie, it gives aesthetic pleasure—photography is not, to begin with, an art form at all. Like language, it is a medium in which works of art (among other things) are made.


Ibid., pp. 7-8.

CHAPTER IV

"LIQUID-AND-LIGHT": THE IMAGERY OF

HENRY HOLMES SMITH

As the syrup lens runs down the sheet of glass it causes light falling on it to refract making marks that celebrate light itself. This celebration, in turn, honors sight and in this double celebration I honor not only light and sight by my true Master, L. Moholy-Nagy as well.

Henry Holmes Smith

Preface

Henry Holmes Smith's vision is unique in American photography. In his mature imagery he does not explore the external world of objects. His imagery has neither the content nor the narrative concerns found in documentary photography. His imagery deals with space, with scale, with time, with fantasy, with dreams. His imagery explores the emotive and symbolic possibilities of color. Both metaphorically and literally his photographs are made of "Liquid-and-Light."

Smith commented in a statement written for an exhibition of his work in 1972 that:

It is time for photographic shows to deal with the development of an individual with candor and openness. It is time for students to see
where and under what circumstances early work originates; to look at it carefully for evidence of what may come later. I think it is time for anyone who shows his work to let the ways his mind has worked be seen, compared and put into perspective. If one believes that in a person's early work are the seeds which take root, grow, and with proper nurturing become mature work, then one must look at the full spectrum of a person's work in order to gain an understanding of where ideas come from and when sensibilities are first manifest. This belief is central to Henry Holmes Smith. In this study it will be respected, but not dwelled upon. The early work gives us glimmers of directions, nuances of understandings. The mature work gives us a richness of meaning. From an early fascination with light and an appreciation of the mystery of the photographic process Henry Holmes Smith developed a profound understanding of the potentials of the photographic medium.

Early Art and Photography

Henry Holmes Smith's art spans more than five decades; his exploration of serious photographic possibilities reaches back to the early 1930s. Unlike many figures in photography who are solely photographers, Smith also was involved with cartooning, fantasy drawings, watercolor painting, and design. Even though his important work is in photography, these other areas of activity illuminate the states of inner consciousness revealed in his
photographs and some of the sensibilities that are masterfully controlled and played in them.

His cartoons began in high school as commentary, in rather naive terms, on issues in the town of Bloomington, Illinois. It was not long before the issues addressed in these cartoons became more socially and culturally broad based. In 1925 Smith made a watercolor and ink drawing called **Nude Falling Down a Staircase** (Figure 10). This unpublished cartoon is the "... result of the influence of newspaper reports of Duchamp's 'Nude Descending a Staircase.'"³ This piece demonstrates an early awareness by Smith of concepts in Modern Art even though the awareness was based more upon popular media conceptions than actual art theory and art practice.

From 1927 to 1930 he sold cartoons and cartoon ideas to **The Chicagoan** and **The New Yorker** and until 1933 did some cartoons for college publications. The published cartoons dealt with social and cultural issues. "My God, Thick Ankles!"⁴ (Figure 11), published in **The New Yorker** in 1928 is a slap at the obtuseness of the general populace concerning concepts of Modern Art. This cartoon, however, represents a deeper understanding of the cultural implications of Modern Art. It poked fun at the difficulty many people, including the relatively well educated to which **The New Yorker** appealed, were having in accepting the precedent shattering concepts involved in Modern
Fig. 10. Henry Holmes Smith, *Nude Falling Down a Staircase*. Watercolor and ink line drawing, 1925, signed and dated. The Henry Holmes Smith Archive, I.U. Art Museum.
Fig. 11. Henry Holmes Smith, "My God, Thick Ankles!"

Used by permission of The New Yorker Magazine, Inc.
Art. Even though these cartoons became more sophisticated in style and concept, he soon tired of them.

Smith's knowledge of color properties, of transparency and opacity, and of emotions linked to color are apparent in his watercolor landscapes done in the 1930s. His knowledge of color theory comes from the Ostwald color system introduced to him during 1932-1933 by Felix Payant at The Ohio State University. Later, Smith also relied upon Faber Birren's book Color Dimensions which adapted the Ostwald system. He says, however, that he has "never in the past thirty years used such a system consciously...."\(^5\)

Smith's watercolors are of two varieties: the first group is comprised of landscapes where the form, line, and color all come from innate qualities of the watercolor medium (Figure 12); the second is comprised of fantasy sketches where the line is occasionally black watercolor, but usually a thin ink line (Figures 13 and 14). In this latter group, the watercolor fills in the outlines of forms rather than being a part of the form itself. The landscape watercolors, stylistically and thematically similar to John Marin's paintings in oil and in watercolor, are studies in serenity. Color, as is typical in the watercolor process, is layered and relatively transparent. Density appears to come about, not through opacity of any one pigment, but through a build-up of pigment layers, one upon another. This layering approach is followed in
dye-transfer color photographs; in fact, it is central to the process. The transparency of color favored by Smith seems related to this early watercolor technique. The difference, however, is that color in his watercolors is muted, suppressed, and perceptually flat, while in the dye-transfer prints the color has a luminescent quality to it which is purely photographic in nature. The color in his dye-transfer prints is much brighter, more vibrant, and frequently gives a feeling of depth not present in his paintings.

Concurrent with his landscape watercolors in the early 1930s he began doing pen and ink and watercolor drawings which depended upon cartoon-like caricature. But rather than being primarily social commentary, they dealt with internal flights of fancy. Smith's sense of humor, of caricature, and of the absurd are revealed both in the cartoons and fantasy drawings which stopped and then were resumed during times of stress, after World War II and again in 1973, and in his mature photographic work.

Whereas representational photography, design and landscape watercolor painting fall out of his repertoire, the fantasy drawings, like the refraction "drawings" have remained a part of Smith's oeuvre. Some of these drawings are quite amusing, some are rather horrific. They seem to look a little like the imagery of George Grosz. They are sometimes satirical, like his early cartoons, yet
they are not overtly political or social. Rather, they are intensely personal and only political or social in a more covert, culturally symbolic way.7

The fantasy drawings executed in watercolor and in ink relate to the dye-transfer refraction "drawings" in their cartoonesque qualities and somewhat by their themes. Some of the pen and ink fantasy drawings share a relationship to the black and white refraction images in terms of thematic content. Yet, the fantasy drawings are not sketches for the refraction "drawings."

When one examines the watercolor and ink drawings, The Hermit (Figure 13), and Illustration for Tampico (Figure 14), both done in 1931 and the ink fantasy drawing, Come Back Eyes (Figure 15), done in 1974, after Smith's operation to repair a detached retina, one finds certain important commonalities which are also evident in Smith's photographic work. In all three pieces eyes are prominently featured and arms are outstretched. One or more figures in each is imploring, through the use of hand gestures, another figure. In the earlier two pieces notions of vision are suggested by the stylistic prominence given to the eyes. In the later piece concerns with both light and sight are evident because of the depiction of an eyeless head shrouded in darkness imploring two anthropomorphic eyes, which have the sun radiating down upon them, to come back. This notion is, of course, reinforced
by the title, Come Back Eyes. The concern with light and
with sight, and with reaching out to another runs through
Smith's work from the early drawings to his later drawings
and most importantly can be discerned very clearly in his
photographic work, particularly in the light study begun
in 1946 and the refraction "drawings" begun in 1949.

A classical and straightforward use of the camera
dominated Smith's photography from the time of his adoles-
cence during the 1920s, through his work at Illinois State
Normal University, The Art Institute of Chicago, and The
Ohio State University and ended as a serious area of ex-
ploration in the late 1930s. It is in this early hard-
edged representational work that Henry Holmes Smith's
sensibility to light is first manifest. He has been making
images which are primarily concerned with light refraction
ever since he photographed a sleet storm in 1924. In the
1926 photograph of Emma Onstadt (Figure 16), the librarian
in Bloomington, Illinois, one can clearly see Smith's in-
terest in the behavior of light. One can see how the
angular shaft of light which moves from the top left to the
bottom right of the picture is used as a dramatic device.
The brilliant sunlight illuminates Ms. Onstadt's head and
hands, it illuminates the edge of the chair and her arm and
mid-section, while her shoulder and chest remain in shadow.
The photograph is as much a statement about the dramatic
potential of light as it is a portrait of a person.
Fig. 16. Henry Holmes Smith. [Emma Onstadt, Bloomington, Illinois, Librarian], 1926. 4 1/4" x 3 1/4". The Henry Holmes Smith Archive, I.U. Art Museum. Accn. No. 200 III 61.
These early photographs represent experimentation with concepts that were contained within many of the precepts of early twentieth century art and design. According to Smith, he began to experiment with ideas found in these concepts before he had had any formal exposure to them. His untitled black and white photograph from 1923 (Figure 17), which depicts a view from the top of a pump station chimney at the waterworks in Bloomington, Illinois is one such example. It is clear, however, that by the late 1920s Smith did have at least some exposure to concepts of modern art and design and that by the 1930s he was being heavily influenced by these ideas. This can be seen in his in-camera multiple exposures and in photographs made from unusual angles in which the design of the landscape appears to be more important than the specific content of the scene. Smith used high angles and low angles and held the camera askew from normal perspective continually exploring photographic form. This can clearly be seen in his 1932 photographs of a smokestack (Figure 18), and a building (Figure 19), which appeared along with many of his other works in his college yearbook, The Index. Smith, through Theater Arts Monthly, in 1927 discovered the photographic work of Francis Bruguiere. In Bruguiere's work a sensibility to light was revealed which Smith had not experienced before. For Bruguiere the interaction of an object with the behavior of light
Fig. 17. Henry Holmes Smith, [View from Top of Pump Station Chimney at Waterworks, Bloomington, Illinois], 1923. The Henry Holmes Smith Archive, I.U. Art Museum.
Fig. 18. Henry Holmes Smith, [Smokestacks], in Smith, Henry Holmes, ed., 1932 Index. Normal, Ill.: Illinois State Normal University, 1932.
Fig. 19. Henry Holmes Smith, [Building Detail], in Smith, Henry Holmes, ed., 1932 Index. Normal, Ill.: Illinois State Normal University, 1932.
reflecting from the object's surface was more important than the representational quality of the object. Bruguiere's photographs of theatrical productions, which revealed a concern for special light qualities, and his photographs of theatrically lit cut paper (Figure 20), acted as a latent catalyst for Smith.

This can be seen both in Smith's 1931 photographic collage "Do Sparrows Migrate?" from his illustrated humorous story entitled "The Bunny Boys of Old Normal" (Figure 21), printed in the 1931 Index, and in a photographic collage (Figure 22), printed in the 1933 Ohio State University Sun Dial. Both sets of cartoon collages were made from cut paper figures. In "Do Sparrows Migrate?", which was created as one of a set of ten illustrations for "The Bunny Boys of Old Normal," one is confronted with the prominent and imploring eyes and hands which are so integral to his watercolor and ink fantasy sketches. In the collage from the Sun Dial the heavy cast shadows reveal the use of projected light and the cut paper as major structural elements, which is a strong, although possibly subconscious reference to Bruguiere's cut paper images. And although "Do Sparrows Migrate?" is less dramatically lit, it too is illuminated by projected light. Both photographic cartoon collages use a dramatic kind of lighting similar to the kind which Bruguiere employed in his photographs of theatrical productions. The dramatic use of
Fig. 22. Henry Holmes Smith. [Fashioned with Shears by Henry Smith], photocartoon, cover inset *Sun Dial* 22:10 (June 1933). The *Sun Dial* was a student publication at The Ohio State University.
projected light first explored with these cut paper collages surfaces as integral elements in Smith's later light studies and in his refraction "drawings."

Also, beginning in the early 1930s, Smith experimented with combination printing. In these he laid figurative cutouts on unexposed printing paper which has been placed underneath an enlarger so that a regular negative could be projected upon it. The combination image produced was part positive representational photograph, part negative shadow image. This idea lay fallow for almost thirty years, when Smith began to explore a variation of it in 1965. He made a combination image based upon a black and white photogram of a hand and a dye-transfer image of a female nude (Figure 23). According to Smith, this represented an aesthetic breakthrough which would lead to the conceptualization of his Royal Pair suite begun in 1976.14

The Influence of Moholy-Nagy

Smith's discovery of the writings of Laszlo Moholy-Nagy in 1933 in a bookstore in Columbus, Ohio was a second catalyst for his mature photographic work, as well as a primary influence upon his philosophy of education. Smith, during the mid-1930s, began to work on the visual problems formulated in Moholy-Nagy's book The New Vision.15 As he worked out Moholy-Nagy's exercises in typography, design, and photography, Smith became less interested in
photographs which relied upon conventional subject matter and more, interested in photographs of light patterns made with light modulating devices.

In a letter to Moholy-Nagy written in 1935 Smith commented on the influence Moholy-Nagy's *The New Vision* had upon him. He wrote:

I want you to know that I among others in this country, appreciate what you have done in setting down this new approach to life. I also want you to know that some of these ideas embodied in your book, *THE NEW VISION*, have been the most stimulating thoughts on education encountered here in the middle-western United States.16

That Smith refers to Moholy-Nagy's approach to education rather than specifically to Moholy-Nagy's concepts of image-making should not be construed as influence upon Smith only in terms of educational philosophy, however great that was; for Moholy-Nagy's notions of education are integrally linked to his ideas on image-making. In fact, Moholy-Nagy presents a holistic model which integrates art, design, education, science, and life. Further, one must remember that influences are often not clearly seen at the time of initial exposure. Smith began to work on the ideas outlined in *The New Vision* shortly after he obtained his copy of it. Yet the synthesis between Moholy-Nagy's ideas and Smith's vision did not occur until many years later.

Because the ideas of Moholy-Nagy were so influential in the formation of Smith's concepts it is fruitful to
examine in some detail those ideas. Writing in 1922 Moholy-Nagy first outlined his position as a constructivist. In *The New Vision* he commented:

... in constructivism, even the neutral object disappeared. The aim was no longer the reproduction of objects in the search for a resemblance to life, not the representation of the object, or even of sentiment, but the establishing of relations of volume, material, mass, shape, direction, position and light, symbolizing the meaning of a new reality, based upon all-embracing relationships.\(^{17}\)

It is important, in terms of how Moholy-Nagy approached education and how he approached art, to understand that for him constructivism was not just an artistic convention, it was also a social philosophy. He comments that "The new world of the proletariat needs Constructivism; it needs fundamentals that are without deceit."\(^{18}\) The deceit he is referring to is art which pretends to imitate nature, which relies upon the use of Renaissance perspective, and which deadens true experience for the viewer. He calls for a replacing of "the static principle of classical art with the dynamic principle of universal life," and he asserts that "static material construction (relationships of material and form)" must give way to "dynamic construction (vital constructivity, energy relationships), in which the material functions solely as a conveyor of energy."\(^{19}\)

One can reasonably conjecture that the exploration of light is what led Moholy-Nagy to photography and from
photography to film and kinetic light modulators. His exploration of light in a constructivist context, which can be seen in some of his unmanipulated photographs and some of his photograms (Figure 8), but mostly in his photomontages (Figure 9), and photocollages, curiously can be regarded as the element which led him into surrealism. He states in "Surrealism and the Photographer" that:

Surrealism or not, the goal [of photography] becomes a direct handling of light, either as the real or the imaginary emanation of the object, or as the play of forces in space. Whether consciously or subconsciously, from all these experiments a new structure of light creation will emerge.

As a sculptor and a painter he was primarily a constructivist, with some influences of cubism and occasionally some of futurism. Whether working in a constructivist or a surrealist manner, however, Moholy-Nagy believed that "Art attains its effects in the main by means of subconscious sensations." The perception of a work of art, in this view, was a simultaneous apprehension of a holistic entry rather than a linear apprehension as in literature.

In his article "Surrealism and the Photographer," Moholy-Nagy argues, too, that the "mental habit structure" acquired from the Industrial Revolution and directed toward "exact observation" paradoxically is "one of the main incentives for the foundation of surrealism by forcing its adherents to go in the opposite direction to find an
outlet for the 'essential reality' of the subconscious." He further argues that: "The photographer of today is no longer exclusively interested in ... records, but in situations synthetically produced as well.... He tries to acquire not only a photogenic, but a photocreative mind." This position allowed for him to work as a constructivist in other media and as a surrealist in photography. Both in his photograms and his photocollages, he revealed strong surrealist interests. Perhaps it is partly due to the nature of the photographic medium that constructivist impulses lead to surrealist experiences. One can see this in the structure of his photocollages and photomontages where the lines anchor cut figures in space and create dreamscapes. The dreams, unlike Man Ray's sensual ones, are hard, precise, almost mathematically balanced, descriptive on their surface level and enigmatic as total entities. As hard as his photocollages and photomontages are, his photograms tend to be soft and frequently involve parts of the human form. They, like Man Ray's, are often ephemeral.

In "Moholy-Nagy: The Risk and Necessity of Artistic Adventurism," Richard Kostelanetz says of Moholy-Nagy's photographic work:

If the historically earliest photography emulated the realistic aspirations of classical painting, thereby making the medium a vehicle of reportage, Moholy imitated the
forms and perceptions of a more contemporary art, so that his photographs not only define those expressive languages intrinsic to the medium, they also clearly look like photographs and nothing else.25

Moholy-Nagy was interested in the relationships of forms, of volumes, of shapes, of tones, of light and of dark, of opacity and of transparency. He created delicately balanced statements which were dependent upon the way he manipulated his forms for meaning. With Moholy-Nagy the form was the content, and the form was dictated by the inherent properties of whatever medium he was using. He wrote: "... it is only the relationship between visual elements, and not the subject matter which produces visual structure with an intrinsic meaning."26

Freed of notions of content being necessary to a visual statement Moholy-Nagy explored wherever his vision led him. He was not bound to conventional ways of seeing, rather he defined a "New Vision" in photography as well as in education. Moholy-Nagy came to photography from other media, he gave to photography a syntax it could call its own. Henry Holmes Smith has been engaged, for most of his life, in an exploration of the syntax Moholy-Nagy bequeathed to photography.

In 1936 Smith began to explore Wash-Off Relief Imbibition printing,27 a system which in a somewhat altered form became known in 1945 as the dye-transfer process of color print making. Like his early attempts in black and
white photography, his early attempts with color were with representational images, typical still lifes and female nudes. At this time he made a few attempts at combining more than one image within the picture frame. These images point toward his later, mature work which is built upon the overlaying of different separation mats of the same and different images to produce a finished piece. He realized, in 1937, when making color separation negatives of a glass perfume bottle that glass is not associated with a single color. From this realization came the idea that he could make light refraction photographs employing the use of arbitrary, or synthetic, color in the final print.

This realization carried the possibilities which Moholy-Nagy had outlined in his article "Paths to the Unleashed Colour Vision" one step further. In that article Moholy-Nagy had argued that color in photography should be explored without reference to natural representation. But it had not occurred to Moholy-Nagy that color could be both arbitrary and derived from black and white photographic materials.

**Light Study Photographs**

The implementation of this idea and the exploration of its ramifications would wait until the end of World War II. The war years he spent in the Pacific prevented
Smith from working creatively as a photographer. They did provide ample time for him to think philosophically and conceptually about the medium. In the spring of 1946, several months after Smith had been released from the service, he began to actively work upon ideas involving synthetic color and to work upon his light study project. This project emerged from light study problems he had introduced to his students at The New Bauhaus in 1937.30

On January 7, 1947, Smith presented an illustrated lecture at the Art Center of Illinois Wesleyan University titled "Light Study: Notes on a Method Related to the Study."31 The lecture, which exists in unpublished typescript form, was a clear statement of the problem Smith was exploring, the philosophy behind the problem, historical resistance to the problem, and the logical result of working out the problem.

This document along with the photographs presented as illustrations reveal the highly conceptual nature of Smith's thinking and enable us to see the clear links between this work and the later refraction "drawings." Partly because of this document it is possible to understand the extremely important nature of these studies in the development of Smith's oeuvre; how these images are at once a breakthrough and a way station and how these images relate to the philosophy expressed by Moholy-Nagy.32
The first part of the lecture describes the philosophical closure present in then current conceptions of photography. He cites Beaumont Newhall as one who espoused a "system-closing" doctrine. Smith makes the point that new problems tend to make "old systems of ideas fly wide open." He mentions Moholy-Nagy's position that "from the standpoint of technical development ... the picture painted by hand is surpassed by the purer 'pictorial' light projection...." He laments the fact that in so much of photography attention is diverted to technical side issues with "less thinking [going] into the problem of the intellectual or formal content of the photographic image."  

The tone is somewhat defensive, which is not surprising considering that the kind of image Smith was making was not taken as relevant by those people who he observed espoused system closing positions. Smith wrote that: "... in the field of esthetics photography still generally follows the lead of experimental painters, lagging as much as a generation behind." Part of the reason for this he argued was that in the drive toward "the development of superb technique [photographers have not attended] to the development of an esthetic standard based on the unique qualities inherent in the photographic process." Smith's photographs based upon the behavior of light stand as a testament to his exploration of the qualities he perceived to be "inherent in the photographic process."
He argued that a direct philosophical statement of the basis for photographic esthetics did not emerge until the twentieth century. This esthetic, visually present in the work of Christian Schad, Man Ray, Francis Bruguière, and Moholy-Nagy well before it surfaced in Smith's work, is explicitly stated in Moholy-Nagy's writings. Smith echoed Moholy-Nagy's statements when he wrote:

> the photographic quality derives from the manner in which photo-sensitive material becomes dark in proportion to the amount of light falling upon it. We have here a direct and inescapable relationship between light and material. This, of course, is a necessity in all the visual arts, but only in photography do we escape the pitfall of having to use the human eye as an intermediary.

At once we find ourselves freed from an obligation to deal constantly with associative images. At least we may say we are outside the field of image reproduction in its traditional sense. A hitherto arbitrarily closed system or, more exactly, a labyrinth of passageways carved out by science on the one hand and art on the other hand are now discovered to converge into a new working space. This is the principal reason for the importance of the cameraless picture in which we record light that falls directly upon a photo-sensitive material. Of course, to reveal the essential photographic characteristic, light so falling must be of varying intensities.

Presented as a wall exhibition in the same room where Smith was giving his lecture were some "color photograms printed on black and white photograms" (Figure 24). However, what he presented in this illustrated lecture were not cameraless images, but light study images which in
their dependence upon a conventional camera-lens system for
the image to be recorded were not as pure an expression of
the photographic esthetic Smith described as either his
photograms or his later refraction "drawings." Nor were
these light study images, his photograms, and his later re-
fraction "drawings" nonassociative. They are nonrepresen-
tational in traditional terms, and in that they are not
associative in terms of objects found in the physical world.
But, the most successful of the light study images and the
refraction "drawings" are associative in the psychological
sense.

Smith continued this lecture with a description of the
experiments he made. These experiments, an outgrowth of
the earlier light modulation studies, differed because
Smith stopped using opaque objects such as wood or paper and
began to systematically explore the reflective and refrac-
tive properties of light as it struck glass, prisms, mirrors,
translucent mesh and other materials. Light emanating from
a projector which he called an "initial aperture" was
directed at light refracting and reflecting from objects
called "intermediate interceptors." These "intermediate in-
terceptors" were located between the "initial aperture" and
a "final surface, which you may think of as the old picture
plane or projection screen" called a "terminal intercep-
tor."41 These studies (Figures 25, 26, and 27), like the
ones of the 1930s, were made in black and white. And the
Fig. 25. Henry Holmes Smith. [Light Study C-1-b], 1946. Black and white photograph. Approx. 5" x 7". The Henry Holmes Smith Archive, I.U. Art Museum.
Fig. 26. Henry Holmes Smith. [Light Study C-2-a], 1946. Black and white photograph. Approx. 5" x 7". The Henry Holmes Smith Archive, I.U. Art Museum.
Fig. 27. Henry Holmes Smith. [Light Study C-7-o], 1946. Black and white photograph. Approx 5" x 7". The Henry Holmes Smith Archive, I.U. Art Museum.
dramatic quality of the light in them is somewhat reminis­
cent of the 1926 portrait of Emma Onstadt (Figure 16). In
that portrait and in these light studies light is used as a
dramatic element. In the former it was the touch which
added the drama, while in the latter it was the primary
reason for and material of the images.

However, he began to convert some of these light modu­
lation images into dye-transfer prints (Figures 28, 29, and
30). He combined both black and white and dye-transfer
color in a few of the light studies. With some of the dye-
transfer pieces different images were layered one upon an­
other and occasionally the scale of one image differed from
the scale of another image. The use of arbitrary color,
which in these pictures is dramatic in a theatrical sense,
represents a major breakthrough for Smith. Smith's
exploration into the possibilities of using the mono­
chromatic materials of the light study images as the basis
for dye-transfer prints points to the way he uses color in
his later dye-transfer work.

The light study photographs, on the surface, appear in
many ways to be an anomaly within the Smith oeuvre. They
are specific, the refraction "drawings" more amorphous.
They are analytical and cold, the rest of Smith's work is
fantastic and emotional. They are constructivistic,
whereas the rest of the work is romantic. Their beauty is
mechanistic rather than humanistic. Yet, the light study
images are closely related to the refraction "drawings" in that they are studies of volumes of light, studies in how it reflects and refracts. In that, they anticipate the refraction "drawings" which are studies in light volume too. But they differ, too, in that they are made by using a light modulating device and various objects, such as glass, wire, and prisms to intercept the light flow. This interrupted light flow is then photographed in a conventional manner utilizing a camera-lens system. When Smith began to make his refraction "drawings" he abandoned the camera-lens system in favor of a more simple and more ephemeral method for focusing his light.

The use of projected light can be viewed as an outgrowth of the kind of lighting employed by Smith for his paper and light collage cartoons of the early 1930s. This would mean, too, that these light studies are also referential to the influence Bruguiere's photography of the theater had upon Smith. In these light study photographs there are hints at phenomenal depth within the picture space. These light studies demonstrate in two dimensions a use of space, form, and color similar to that created by the three dimensional constructivistic "light paintings" by Moholy-Nagy. Finally it can be observed that [Light Study C-7-c] (Figure 27), from 1946 which is largely composed of wave-like movements of light and [Light Study C-1-b] and [Light Study C-2-a] (Figures 25 and 26), also from 1946, which
reveal light reflecting from mirror surfaces in waves, anticipate the undulating forms which occur later in the syrup images.

Smith's light study photographs and his refraction "drawings" have a feeling that the ever changing quality of light has been frozen. Both the light study photographs and the later refraction "drawings" have a quality of life in them that makes them feel they are in a process of ever becoming, that though extirpated from time, they must inevitably return to the fluid path of time. They inevitably will grow, shrink, come forward in space, recede in space, be loud, or be soft. They are totally mutable and constantly evolving. They have a rhythm which is truly protean, a life quality which is musical in nature.

"Liquid-and-Light"

Smith's mature photographic work was preceded by painting and printmaking, as well as by photography. He has been described by Reginald Heron, a former colleague at Indiana University, as being "a printmaker, and yet a printmaker of the mark of light (with a light touch), which makes him a photographer by convention." Henry Smith has, however, rarely been conventional. He has worked with nonobjective photographic imagery since the early 1930s and with direct color photography since 1936. He has lamented the lack of understanding that the true
problem of color photography is not "'natural' color but genuinely personal control of one's color imagery." 46

Whether referring to the camera-formed light study images made in 1946 and 1947, or the subsequent cameraless refraction "drawings" made since 1949, one finds that all these images were formed with black and white photographic materials, including the pieces printed in color. This is in keeping with Smith's philosophical position that images can have any color ascribed to them by the photographer. 47

The process Smith uses to make his photographs seems somewhat unusual. Yet it is well grounded within the history of the medium, even though his mature work eschews the use of a conventional camera lens system in its initial formulation. For Smith the camera body is a throwback to the early camera obscuras where light came through a tiny hole in a large room or tent and was focused on the opposite wall, at first, and later upon ground glass. Smith's camera body is a darkened room. The light source is not external nor is the lens on the exterior wall. These images, so concerned with inner states of consciousness, are themselves created in an inner sanctum. The lens rather than being made of high grade optical glass is created from syrup and water on sheets of glass or plastic. The light source is not the external light of the sun, but the light of a theatrical spot, at least until recently when the spot was replaced with an electronic flash unit.
The shutter release mechanism, too, is internal. Henry Holmes Smith sets up parameters in which events unfold. He has said that:

"The syrup and water flow too quickly for contemplation. I set up the glass vertically and expose the paper which has been positioned before setting up the glass. The instant the glass is vertical gravity begins to pull the liquids down across the plate. Generally the exposure takes place within a second or two after the glass is in a vertical position. It is as chancy as crowd photography."\(^{48}\)

These refraction "drawings," as Smith refers to them, are photographic prints made in black and white. They are made by using simple lenses created from syrup and water which are placed between a light source and photosensitive material. Some of these images are later used as the basis for his color work too. Most, however, remain as one-of-a-kind images.

This area of exploration began at Indiana University in 1947 when a student in Smith's first class, Clyde "Red" Hare, brought a small amount of Karo syrup to class.\(^{49}\) Their explorations of this and other light refraction materials sparked a thirty year exploration of refracting liquids as the basis for creating images of light. This work eschews the use of a conventional camera-lens system in its initial formulation. Yet it is, nonetheless, conventional photography created by unconventional means. It is from these black and white refraction "drawings" that Henry Holmes Smith has drawn a core group
of images upon which to lavish his attention (Figures 31 through 37). For thirty years Smith has worked with a relatively few of these images to produce a remarkable body of photographs and silkscreens to which certain syrup figures are central. They change their meaning through alterations of scale, color, transparency, and layering. For a few years in the 1970s he made a series of large silkscreens, based upon the black and white refraction images, that belong to the center of his work. Since he made Giant in 1949 (Figure 31), his first successful syrup photograph, his work has consisted primarily of black and white refraction "drawings." Some of these stand alone while others have served as the basis for dye-transfer prints and silkscreens. Smith has called this body of work, images made of "Liquid-and-Light." This is both a metaphor for and a description of his mature photographic work.

The majority of Smith's images are one-of-a-kind black and white prints. They represent statements complete in one psychological sphere, although some have served a dual function by being the base image from which Smith builds his suites of color variations. He has chosen to make this transition with relatively few images, preferring to work out the endless combinations and permutations available in color and scale until he feels they are exhausted. These color suites form his largest body of work.
Fig. 31. Henry Holmes Smith. Giant in Smith, Portfolio II. Louisville, Ky.: Ctr. for Photographic Studies, 1973. The Henry Holmes Smith Archive, I.U. Art Museum.
Since the light study work, with the exception of one example, he has chosen to use only images made with "Liquid-and-Light" for his color work. His intense activity with color ceased in 1947. It was picked up again in 1957 and until 1962 Smith had a small but steady output. Between 1947 and 1957 and post 1962 until 1970 when the color suites began to be produced his imagemaking was done only sporadically. During the eighteen year span from 1952 to 1970 the most intense and productive period was 1959 through 1960. This activity beginning in 1959 was sparked by an invitation to contribute prints for Edward Stiechen's "Sense of Abstraction" show at the Museum of Modern Art during 1960.

The refraction "drawings" were primarily made from 1949 through 1952, while teaching at Indiana University, during 1972 while teaching in San Francisco, and during 1974 while teaching in North Carolina. There were many distinct groups made. However, there seems to be some overlapping for many of these groups, rather than distinctly delimited demarcations. The division of Smith's black and white cameraleass images, by this writer, into eight categories is useful in creating an understanding of the differences in image style and in construction. The divisions do not necessarily represent large numbers of prints in any one group. Rather they serve as markers in an exploration of the various experimental paths Smith was
traveling upon. The divisions become a tool of convenience imposed upon the work through historical hindsight, rather than being discrete units previously established by Smith.

One of the key transitions in Smith's imagery which led to his mature "Liquid-and-Light" photographs came in 1949. From then through 1952 there were cameraless images made which were specifically referential in structure to the camera-made light study photographs. These images, which comprise group one, were made using stencils (Figure 38), and, in 1952, stencils used in conjunction with venice turpentine (Figure 39). The 1949 work made without the use of a refracting liquid, which Smith referred to simply as "light collages," reveal clear structural links to the light study work done in 1946 and 1947. In (Figure 38), Untitled from 1949, the shapes created by voids in the stencils appear to float in space. In the earlier light study pieces many of the shapes appear to be more grounded in space, a perception tied to the physical nature of the objects photographed as opposed to the dematerial nature of the later, more pure light image. When Smith used the refracting liquid, venice turpentine, in conjunction with the stencils he referred to them as "stencil prints." Whether making "stencil prints" or "light collages" Smith utilized two light sources which projected different intensities of light and which were placed at different angles and distances from the stencils and the photographic paper.
When made as "light collages," while they refer back to the camera-made, constructivistic, light study photographs, their undulating forms are referential to the syrup images. When made as "stencil prints," while they also refer back to the light studies, they represent, too, through the use of venice turpentine, a direct bridge to the "Liquid-and-Light" images.

In group two Smith combined a refraction image of syrup on a glass support with conventionally produced shadow images of material. In some, Untitled, c. 1950 (1949) (Figure 40), as an example, one finds crinkled cellophane used as the material. Cellophane refracts light similarly to the syrup, yet it differs from the syrup because it remains a hard nonfluid material. Untitled, 1949 (Figure 41), while belonging to this group is, nevertheless, highly distinctive, for in this one piece Smith has not used the syrup. He has used the cellophane to refract the light and a net-like mesh to create a more conventional shadow image. This kind of shadow image, rather than ones in which liquids have been used, were more in the tradition of cameraless photography. One can see similar explorations of materials in the earlier work of Christian Schad, Man Ray, and Moholy-Nagy.52 The use of liquids as the primary refracting material seems to be an area of investigation in which Smith has had little competition.
The first syrup print Smith made and retained in 1949 was one he called Battles and Games (Figure 42). It was made by pouring Karo syrup onto a glass support which was located between a piece of photographic paper and a one hundred watt theatrical spotlight, which served as his light source. An examination of this image reveals striations which come from the markings within the glass support. This piece of glass, according to Smith, dates to the nineteenth century and was given to him by a student. His Giant (Figure 31), made also in 1949, was made with Karo syrup on this same glass support. Shortly after he made Giant a student broke this piece of glass. As a result of this accident striations in his images caused by markings in the glass cease.

Giant is Smith’s first unarguably figurative refraction "drawing." One can see inklings of figurative concerns in Battles and Games, particularly in the upper right hand quadrant of the image. But the figurative aspect is subservient in this piece to its more purely nonanthropomorphic construction. Only in Diver and Fish (Figure 43), c. 1949-1950, does one find the anthropomorphic qualities made specific. Of all Smith’s refraction "drawings" this one is the most pure embodiment of what Reg Heron has referred to as "Karo-cartoons." Heron’s description fits the caricature-like qualities so integral to many of the refraction "drawings" and so reminiscent of the fantasy
drawings. But the term serves only to partially describe Smith's imagery. The term, "Karo-cartoon," implies both a levity and a simplicity which is misleading, for many of Smith's syrup photographs are visually and emotionally complex and serious.

There is an anthropomorphic quality to many of the figurative elements in the refraction "drawings." This anthropomorphic quality seems related to some of the fantasy sketches. Caricature in the pen and ink drawings remains somewhat stiff and specific. The figurative aspects of Smith's watercolor fantasy _Excuse Me While I Call the Cops_ (Figure 44), from 1946 is similar in shape, movement and energy to the Karo syrup image _Mother and Son_ from 1951 (Figures 32 and 45), and to the Karo syrup image _Royal Pair_ from 1976 (Figures 66 and 67), which is a combination image composed of _Pair II_ (Figure 33), and _Mother and Son_ (Figure 32).

The Karo syrup and venice turpentine images, with their suggestion of anthropomorphism, have a marked similarity to some of the camera made photographic images of Aaron Siskind. And in their evocation of humanistic associations, both bodies of work reveal shared sensibilities. The found drip of paint in Siskind's work (Figures 46 through 52), can be compared to the controlled drip of the syrup in Smith's work (Figures 31 through 37 and 53 through 59). Yet, unlike Aaron Siskind who has figures
Fig. 44. Henry Holmes Smith. *Excuse Me While I Call the Cops*, 1946. Watercolor fantasy drawing. The Henry Holmes Smith Archive, I.U. Art Museum.
Fig. 45. Henry Holmes Smith. *Mother and Son*. Dye-transfer print. The Henry Holmes Smith Archive, I.U. Art Museum. HB #AA.

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Fig. 53. Henry Holmes Smith. *Untitled*, 1950, refraction, 14" x 11". The Henry Holmes Smith Archive, I.U. Art Museum. 200 I 62.
Fig. 57. Henry Holmes Smith. *Untitled*, c. 1951, syrup directly on paper. 11" x 14". The Henry Holmes Smith Archive, I.U. Art Museum. Accn. No. 200 I 27.
Fig. 58. Henry Holmes Smith. Untitled, 1952, refraction. 30 cm. x 23 cm. The Henry Holmes Smith Archive, I.U. Art Museum. Accn. No. 200 I 86.
playing off one another, Smith almost always has a central figure which moves, undulates, flows, which almost springs forth from the surface released from its two dimensional bonds to assume a lively existence in three dimensional space.

One need only look to Growing Up II, 1951 (Figure 34), Mother and Son, 1951 (Figure 32), Pair II, 1951 (Figure 33), and Man and Wife, 1960 (Figure 35), all mainstays of his color work too, to see how important the figurative element is to Smith. It is in these figurative Karo syrup photographs that Smith's earlier interest with cartoons, caricatures, fantasy, and light all merge. The use of water-clear Karo syrup as a light refracting material gave Smith a way of exploring the behavior of light in a nonmechanistic fashion.

In group three are refraction "drawings" defined by the use of a glass support upon which the syrup has been poured and worked into a figurative configuration. Within this group are a majority of the core images later turned into color suites.

Images, such as Meeting made in 1972 (Figure 37), Untitled made in 1949 (Figure 55), and the Battle and Games (Figure 42), also from 1949 belong to a group created in the above fashion, but separated from the figurative pieces by their more fantastic and amorphous shapes. Photographs of this nature form group four.
In experiments made to investigate how the image would change as the material was altered Smith created a group he called "candy refraction drawings." These images, which comprise group five, utilized the glass support of the first two groups, but instead of the Karo syrup remaining viscous it was cooked like taffy and then placed upon room temperature glass. The syrup, which became adhered to the glass support, was again placed between the photographic paper and the light source. The Alchemist (Figure 56), made in 1951 is an example of this kind of image.

In several instances Smith poured his syrup onto photographic paper, made his exposure, washed the syrup off the paper, and then processed the image. Untitled, 1951 (Figure 57), is one such example. It is nonanthropomorphic in nature. Syrup poured directly onto the paper and lacking distinctly figurative qualities delimits the sixth group of refraction "drawings." The refraction of the light with syrup directly on the paper tends to reveal the fiber structure of the paper. These photographs tend to be more tactile than Smith's other ones.

The separation of the figurative from the nonfigurative images accounts for one kind of division. The separation of images made with syrup on a glass support and images made with syrup poured directly onto its surface defines a second kind of division. Thus, Untitled from 1952 (Figure 58), being highly figurative and made
from syrup poured directly onto the paper surface represents a seventh division in the refraction "drawings."

And there is an eighth group which uses Venice turpentine rather than Karo syrup to refract the light (Figure 59). The difference in viscosity of the two liquids results in a different quality of light refraction. The Karo syrup images tend to have wider, softer, more fluid shapes. The Venice turpentine pieces tend to have sharply defined narrow lines and staccato like dots. The field is usually dark in the Venice turpentine images while it varies greatly with the Karo syrup drawings. It is in the Venice turpentine images that the tactile similarity to Siskind's photographs made from fragments of paint drippings are most clearly discernible. Venice turpentine was used as early as 1952, in the "stencil prints," but figure number 59 is Untitled from 1957.

In 1959, during the Christmas season, Smith made Death of Punch (Figure 60). It is an image that is simultaneously an anomaly within his work and an extremely important piece to Smith for it is one of the images he both turned into color and made into many color variations. The image was formed when pieces of a glass Christmas ornament, broken by one of his young sons, were laid upon matrix film and then exposed. Death of Punch harkens back, in Smith's mind, to the Christmas of 1910 when he says, somewhat anecdotally and metaphorically, his fascination with light began.
Fig. 60. Henry Holmes Smith. *Death of Punch*, 1959, dye-transfer print. The Henry Holmes Smith Archive, I.U. Art Museum.
Although he admits to not remembering the incident, he says his family mentioned to him many times over the years how fascinated he was with the candle lit Christmas tree. For Smith, knowledge of the incident is important in fixing the time he became fascinated with the behavior of light. This fascination has been literally life long, for in December 1910 Henry Holmes Smith was less than two years old.55

Death of Punch differs from Smith's primary body of color work in several ways. First, unlike most of the color suite imagery this image was made directly on dye-transfer matrix film rather than on photographic paper. Second, the material used, the broken glass ornament, is hard, not fluid like Karo syrup. Third, the space is flat. It is the viscous liquid acting as a lens which bends the light creating subtle tonal values and deep space within the majority of Smith's images.

And Death of Punch is one piece about which Smith has committed to paper his perceptions of its meaning. His comments reflect the underlying concerns of a humanist embittered by a world mired in chaos and violence who has not forgotten how to laugh at the absurd. Smith wrote in 1977:

Punch is gross, disorderly, cruel, rowdy theater, a world of the child with the prerogatives of the grown-up and none of the obligations. If one imagines death arriving for a character so violent
and self-centered one might be permitted to expect a carnival atmosphere, unrepentant, revelry bordering on chaos, and parts of Punch everywhere. As in those clumsy drawings where faces or animals are concealed in clouds and trees and shadows and unexpected coincidence of edge and shape, in this picture one may look for Punch's face and other parts scattered everywhere. Anyone who cares for such a game will be guided by color and the modified jester's cap. Sixteen years ago this was made in relative innocence. Today I think violence may be a terminal illness and this picture a bitter deathbed laugh that will comfort only the innocent who still live.56

In 1970 Smith took a sabbatical leave from Indiana University. Having no duties or obligations at the university, and with severe eye problems behind him, he began an intensive period of imagemaking. This is the year that the color suite work began in earnest. However, the first extended serial imagery of Smith's goes back to 1946 when he produced extended variations of his light study images. Yet the notion goes back even further, to 1937, to the year he developed his idea of being able to use arbitrary color with black and white materials to produce color photographs whose color saturation and hue were bent to the photographer's imagination rather than dictated to the photographer through the convention of trying to be faithful to "natural" color. This idea represents a radical conceptual breakthrough in photography that only in the late 1970s is beginning to be explored by other photographers. It is an idea, however, which has its roots in
printmaking where multiple copies of slightly different images are part of the tradition.

The dye-transfer prints made primarily from the refraction "drawings," images made of "Liquid-and-Light," represent a convergence of many paths of exploration in Smith's life. It is as if the many bits and pieces of expression and of experience not fully resolved were moving inexorably toward a point where when they converged they would explode into a new visual form. Smith, aware of the life process involved in the maturation of an artist's work, traces the network of threads entwined in his work which lead to "synthetic color" and to the refraction "drawings."

After recounting his Christmas tree memory he goes on to say:

For years I did not know what to do with this image [of the candle lit Christmas tree] except to enjoy it and savor it which I did. Some seventeen years later I first saw several of Francis Bruguiere's "light sheds" reproduced in a magazine. They were important, mysterious images related to the lighted Christmas tree. By the early 1930s ideas of the photogram, particularly by several exposures on a single piece of photographic paper became a part of my experience. I think of these as potential processes useful someday in the future for enhancing images. At this same time I also first saw examples of constructed visual spaces in which camera pictures could be relocated to become vigorous, optically independent images. . . .

The point of this account is to indicate that forty years ago I had access to process in variety but the resulting images were negligible. I still did not know what to do with my delight in light and lighted objects, the
suggestions from the Bruguiere pictures, the incalculable options opened up by the syntax of the shadow pictures (photograms) and the structures of the photomontage. In 1946 ... I was able to put together some ideas related to the Bruguiere pictures, Moholy-Nagy's photomontages and photograms and a concept involving wash-off relief imbibition printing.... The results were fairly mechanical but delighted me in their theatricality and dawn was beginning to break.57

Most of Smith's color work is double-dated with the first date indicating the year the original black and white image was made and the second indicating the year the dye-transfer print based upon the original black and white was made. Many pieces, too, have been dated by Smith with a small rubber mark on the back indicating the exact day he made that particular dye-transfer print.58

Death of Punch, the first color series based upon the black and white cameraless images, was started in 1960. In Ikon, which Smith made in 1961, he began using as many as seven transfers with three dye impregnated mats.59 A small series called Blood Brothers was done in 1965. It was based upon a 1961 image. His Winner and Loser, originally made in 1959, was turned into a dye-transfer series in 1966. And a small untitled series was done in 1968. This material, some of which Smith has picked up and worked with again in the 1970s, shows that the intensive work begun in 1970 grew out of an investigation begun thirty-three years earlier, an investigation which was plagued by numerous hiatuses. Although the notion of variations goes
back many years, the serial approach did not become an
overriding concern until 1970.

During his sabbatical in 1970 he began to copy onto
matrix film many of his unique refraction "drawings."
Previously, all dye-transfer prints would have been made
directly on the matrix film. He made, from the same image,
many mats of varying densities. His procedure, designed
to give him tremendous flexibility with color, differs
greatly from the conventional approach to dye-transfer work
where three separations are made and each resulting mat is
assigned to its correct dye—yellow, cyan, or magenta.

The use of Karo syrup allowed Smith to wed his sense
of fancy and his exploration of "synthetic" color to the
study of the behavior of light. The decision to make copy
negatives allowed Smith to begin to experiment with scale
as well as with color. While most of the color suite
material began with a black and white image on 11 x 14 inch
paper, the color suites themselves have been made in a
variety of sizes. For example, his Mother and Son and
Giant have been reduced to about two and one quarter by
three and one half inches and exploded in his large silk-
screen versions done in 1973, to two by three feet.

The images of which he has made extended color and
scale variations are: Growing Up II (Figure 61), based upon
a 1959 image and also referred to by Smith as his Prodi-
gal's Return Series, Phoenix (Figure 62), based upon a
1960 image; Ikon a 1960 image also referred to as the One + Two + Three Series; Winner and Loser based upon a 1959 image; Man and Wife (Figure 63), based upon a 1960 image, and also referred to as Husband and Wife, and Man and Woman; Giant (Figure 64), dating from 1949; Grotesque (Figure 65), from 1950; Blood Brothers, from 1961; Mother and Son from 1951; Pair II from 1951; and Royal Pair (Figures 66 and 67), from 1976. This is an image which combines both Mother and Son (Figure 32), and Pair II (Figure 33). These two images were, in 1970, the first two extended color suites Smith worked on. As separate images he felt Mother and Son was more receptive to variation.

With the exception of Grotesque and Phoenix, all the color suite material is highly figurative.

If the black and white light study photographs and the one-of-a-kind black and white cameraless images posed problems in terms of being accepted and understood, then the color variations posed even greater problems. Although there is a tradition within photography of making series based around common themes, before Smith, photographers have rarely, if ever, made series around literally the same image. The serial approach Smith has been extensively involved with since 1970 should not be confused with series based upon the same subject, such as Stieglitz's lengthy study of Georgia O'Keefe. For Smith works with exactly the same image, exploring how meaning changes as scale,
Fig. 64. Henry Holmes Smith. *Giant*, golden dye-transfer variation. The Henry Holmes Smith Archive, I.U. Art Museum.
Fig. 65. Henry Holmes Smith. *Grotesque*, red, blue dye-transfer variation. The Henry Holmes Smith Archive, I.U. Art Museum.
Fig. 66. Henry Holmes Smith. *Royal Pair*, red, blue, white, black dye-transfer variation. The Henry Holmes Smith Archive, I.U. Art Museum.
Fig. 67. Henry Holmes Smith. *Royal Pair*, free registration. The Henry Holmes Smith Archive, I.U. Art Museum.
color and material changes. This is different than photographing O'Keefe as she changed over a period of time.

Smith's core structure, once extirpated from their mutable, malleable flow of time are fixed. The shape of the Mother and Son figures is a constant (Figures 68 through 75). This fact forces the viewer into a consideration of how color operates within Smith's work. It leads to the conclusion that finding meaning in Smith's images is dependent upon an understanding of the relationship of the title to the form from which the subtleties spring when Smith adds color and manipulates scale. He acknowledge this when he wrote:

Referring to the shapes themselves created by these unconventional lenses and this special refraction, they tell me things; the way of a parent with a child, the adventures and misadventures of adolescence, marriage, and I suppose someday now, old age too. If, one way or another, some of what I have been told I can tell others through these pictures I will settle for that. There is more besides these personal messages: how a child might imagine a giant in a horrid ancient tale, the mystery of all that I shall never see and the wonder of a good many things I shall never understand. There may be more than I know in the pictures and I am content to know that.

To find the philosophical underpinnings of Smith's work one must look to the ideas which emanate from the Bauhaus, to Wassily Kandinsky, to Josef Albers, and to Smith's mentor, Laszlo Moholy-Nagy. Although Henry Holmes Smith's philosophy concerning how color can be used and the relationship of color to form comes from Moholy-Nagy, in certain respects it is remarkably similar to the ideas
expressed by the Bauhaus painter Wassily Kandinsky, too.

Like Kandinsky, Smith has been concerned with the psychological nuances of the meaning of color, and with the nuances of color as a vehicle to express human emotion. And like Kandinsky, he has been concerned with the way in which the spirit can be liberated by opening oneself to color.

Kandinsky's art grew out of and refined his theoretical constructs. His theory clarified his vision and predicted the constructivist movement in art. He wrote that: "This [nonobjective] art creates alongside the the real world a new world which has nothing to do externally with reality. It is subordinate internally to cosmic laws." Kandinsky asserts that just as nature has principles of its own so too does art. These principles of art, moreover, are as discoverable and as understandable as the principles of nature. Kandinsky wrote: "It is evident that form harmony must rest only on the purposive vibration of the human soul. This principle has been designated as the principle of internal necessity." For Kandinsky vibrations of the human soul, art's ultimate goal, are achieved through the use of form and color. These are the elements primary to his argument.

He argues that form can exist by itself, as representing "an object (real or not), or as an abstract limit to a space or surface"; but color is always limited by its
boundaries, it cannot stand by itself. Color, its harmonics, its vibrations, its psychological and motivational implications are extremely important to Kandinsky and to Smith. Form, by encompassing color helps to establish the various harmonic, and vibrational relationships. "Form is the external expression of inner meaning." 66

Smith's color variations retain a constant form that gives to the colors used their shape, their depth, their vibrations, and their associative powers. Smith's controlled use of shape and color allow his work to be seen as having external parameters within which almost unlimited shifts of meaning occur as he varies his color relationships. If the form of the image remains constant, then the shifts in meaning must be defined by the way the color is altered. His work represents the spiritual use and understanding of color that Kandinsky wrote about in Concerning the Spiritual in Art. Yet for Smith the use of color seems more intuitive, more free, less overtly controlled than the approach outlined by Kandinsky.

Further, the examination of color through the development of the extended series brings to mind Josef Albers' series "Homage to the Square." Smith who acknowledges knowing of Albers' work, says he was not influenced by it and only got to know it well after he had begun his own work. 67
Like Albers' extended series "Homage to the Square," Smith has been involved in an exploration of color and scale variations using a relatively limited number of images over a thirty year time span. Yet Smith's work differs from Albers; in two important ways. First, Smith's work is more concerned with both the perceptual and the psychological nuances of color, while Albers' work in its cold precision is concerned primarily with perceptual aspects of color. And Smith's work blends colors very subtly resulting in many complex coloristic effects whereas Alber's work is dependent upon simpler color relationships.

Because variation rather than constancy is what Smith is after, there are practically no two identical prints. This is true with the dye-transfer prints as well as with the silkscreens done in 1972 and in 1973. There are hundreds of variations of each image, made in three sizes of dye-transfer image and in from one to three sizes of silkscreen.

When dye-transfer prints and silkscreen prints are made in a conventional way the printmaker carefully registers each layer of color upon the preceding one. When Smith prints he does not use exact registration; rather, he prefers a system he refers to as "free printing." In this system registration pins are not used. Each succeeding matrix is placed into position based upon Smith's aesthetic judgment. This results frequently in images
whose edges vibrate and in images which have slightly dis-
placed echoes of themselves in another color in close prox-
imity. Figure 67 is an example of a dye-transfer print of
the Royal Pair which has not been overmatted. One can
clearly see the unregistered "free" edges.

The way in which scale operates within these pieces
is perhaps the easiest variable to explain. The smaller
the images are printed the more precious and jewel-like they
become. Since the smallest of the prints measures just
two and three quarter by three and a half inches, in order
to examine the surface, to really see the print, the viewer
is forced into intimate contact with the print. The eye
must literally be very close to the print to see the rich
details, the subtle tones. In this size image the color,
being so compacted, vibrates more readily than in the
larger prints. In this size print it is not unusual to
find that after looking intensely at a print, the colors
appear to begin to move, to undulate, to separate into
layers. This results in a sensation of perceiving an un-
believably deep space where "_ms float free of any gravi-
tational pull. These tiny prints present a phenomena un-
explored in photography.

As the print size gets larger the forms become less
compressed and details, barely perceptible in the smaller
scale prints, become very noticeable. Much of Smith's
work is made in a size range of 8 x 10 to 11 x 14 inches.
The scale of these prints invites contemplation, but not the intensely close examination that the very small ones do. However, these standard size prints generally have a transparency of color that is not seen in the smaller more compressed ones.

When Smith translates these same images to the large silkscreens he replaces intimacy with confrontation. The luminescent color of the dye-transfer prints is replaced with the flat color of the silkscreen inks. The transparency of color tends to remain, but the photographic seamless silkenness of the color is gone. These large pieces are very imposing. They totally dominate the space they occupy. This scale change shifts the viewers relationship to the pieces and alters the meaning. Two figures intertwined, as in Mother and Son, presented as little jewels, are to be savored, enjoyed, entered into. The same two figures presented in monumental scale, dominate the space, impose themselves on the viewer. They threaten the viewer. They cannot be ignored by the viewer. Their gentleness has vanished as their scale has increased.

His choice of titles, while sometimes rooted in notions of myth, seems mostly referential to life's natural order of growing, maturing, and pairing, and to the shapes he has created. The titles are suggestive of inter-locking relationships, both within specific series and extended to the entire body of work. One can especially see
this suggestion in *Mother and Son* in which the visually intertwined figures reinforce the stated idea of the interactive relationship between a parent and child. When Smith made color variations of this image he used them as a vehicle to explore with color the ever changing relationship between closely intertwined people.

Smith's images remind one that, at least for him, "the true problem of color is not 'natural' color, but genuinely personal control of one's color imagery." He uses color to express emotion. This use is in contradiction to the tradition in photography where black and white has been considered emotive while color has been viewed as merely decorative.

Smith uses color to explore psychological and perceptual nuances rather than as a means of producing "realistic" and "lifelike" images. Since the end of World War II virtually all of his color work deals with the use of "synthetic" and arbitrary color. If Smith desired an area to be green, it was rendered green. He was free of all notions of rightness or wrongness and was concerned more with notions of mood, of feeling, and quality and intensity of hue and saturation of color. He has freed color, in photography, from its anticipated representational association.

If one examines a group of prints from Smith's series *Mother and Son* (Figures 68 through 75), one begins to see
Fig. 68. Henry Holmes Smith. *Mother and Son*, dye-transfer print. The Henry Holmes Smith Archive, I.U. Art Museum. HB # W.
Fig. 69. Henry Holmes Smith. *Mother and Son*, dye-transfer print. The Henry Holmes Smith Archive, I.U. Art Museum. HB # U.
Fig. 70. Henry Holmes Smith. *Mother and Son*, dye-transfer print. The Henry Holmes Smith Archive, I.U. Art Museum. HB # FF.
Fig. 71. Henry Holmes Smith. *Mother and Son*, dye-transfer print. The Henry Holmes Smith Archive, I.U. Art Museum. HB # T.
Fig. 72. Henry Holmes Smith. *Mother and Son*, dye-transfer print. The Henry Holmes Smith Archive, I.U. Art Museum. HB # CC.
Fig. 73. Henry Holmes Smith. *Mother and Son*, dye-transfer print. The Henry Holmes Smith Archive, I.U. Art Museum. HB # DD.
Fig. 74. Henry Holmes Smith. *Mother and Son*, dye-transfer print. The Henry Holmes Smith Archive, I.U. Art Museum. HB # X.
Fig. 75. Henry Holmes Smith. *Mother and Son*, dye-transfer print. The Henry Holmes Smith Archive, I.U. Art Museum. HB # V.
how the mood alters, the space changes, the figures advance and recede differently because of variations in the saturation and hue of the dyes. In many of these photographs, the vibrations set off by the color literally create a sensation of three dimensions. The colors separate into undulating, shimmering layers. The simple lens which is in a state of constant flux, the light sensitive photographic emulsion, and the light are his materials. His subjects are mythical creatures, psychological and emotional states of being created out of a deeply felt sense of humanism from one of the purist of the photographic purists. 71

He works with the behavior of light as his primary substance, not as a means of delineating objects, but as a material in itself to be manipulated and molded by him in order to explore a more internal world concerned with emotions and with an evocation of the universal. 72 Smith is concerned with the liberation of spirit and the expansion of consciousness of visual, emotional, and psychological possibilities. 73

His early work has elements of constructivism, while his later work has a fluidity to it which visually has some similarities to action painting, but which does not fit any "ism" comfortably. His work belongs in the company of painters and photographers whose search was for a content defined by and inseparable from form. And
Smith's work belongs in the company of those men and women who felt that there is no opposition between the mind and reality. Many of the tenets of modernist art thought are found in his work. A casual examination of the mature "Liquid-and-Light" imagery, prompts one to say that it looks more like the abstract expressionist painting of the 1940s and 1950s than it resembles anything one commonly assumes to be photography. This resemblance is more superficial than profound, because Smith's work in its purism belongs to photography, not to painting. It shows a kinship, with its seamless integration of form and content, its concern with the subconscious, its exploration of space and time, to the photographic work of those modernist artists, whose imagery demonstrates a concern for transcendent experience rather than for fact or narration.

His imagery, once mechanistic, became quite fluid with the introduction of his Karo syrup technique. He found a way to use color as color. He found a way to make the immaterial seem material and the transient permanent. His work represents the fulfillment of Moholy-Nagy's desire for color photography to be "understood for its own sake and not as a sign or symbol representing an object."

The work reveals Smith to be one of the pioneers of color photography. His vision, in going beyond that of his mentor, Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, makes concrete Moholy-
Nagy's postulates concerning the possibilities of color photography. Most importantly Smith is a pioneer in freeing photography from the nineteenth century notions of realism still so prevalent in photographic circles today.

One may look at the writings and exhibitions of John Szarkowski, Director of the Department of Photography at the Museum of Modern Art, to see how healthy the aesthetic preoccupations of an earlier era still are. Szarkowski is a prominent proponent of a realism embodied in an aesthetic of "correct camera vision," which has its roots in the nineteenth century. As Szarkowski so ably states in an essay on his most recent show Mirrors and Windows, photographs are either mirrors, "reflecting a portrait of the artist who made it, or ... a window, through which one might better know the world." In the latter the image is a faithful and neutral rendering of the real world into two dimensions sometimes utilizing color and sometimes not. In the former the hand of the photographer is apparent, resulting in images removed from neutrality and placed within the realm of personal expression. These photographs, no matter how distorted, are always tied to real world representational experience.

Smith's images, however, free photography from those notions of nineteenth century realism; free photography from the bonds of traditional representation. His sensibilities are directly related to twentieth century concerns
where the psychological properties of man, along with the physical world are a part of nature. Internal vision is as legitimate to explore as external vision and, most importantly, just as real.

What separates Smith from Szarkowski is a difference in sensibility, a difference that results in a more conservative and restrictive notion of the parameters of the photographic medium for Szarkowski than for Smith.

What this work by Henry Holmes Smith argues for is a freeing of the mind from convention, an opening of the eye to the widest possible range of perceptual experience. Smith's images in their involvement with the nonrepresentational force the viewer to consider them not in terms of what they are composed from, but in terms of the associations which emerge from the forms and the colors created directly from Smith's mind and hand. He has said in "Color on the Cusp" that:

> In my view the use of color for symbolic ends, however personal, is redemptive. No matter from what or in what way such color is generated, as it functions symbolically it will let our spirits soar. All for whom it functions in that way will know what it is doing. We will know this by the way we feel. It may even give us courage to become ourselves.
NOTES

1 Henry Holmes Smith, Untitled statement published with Portfolio II, ten photographic reproductions of original refraction drawings issued in 1973 by the Center for Photographic Studies, Louisville, Kentucky. Statement dated December 3, 1972. A copy of this Portfolio is in the Henry Holmes Smith Archive at the Indiana University Art Museum, Bloomington, Indiana. (Hereafter cited as Henry Holmes Smith Archive.)


4 Henry Holmes Smith, "My God, Thick Ankles!" The New Yorker, Vol. 4, No. 10, 1928, p. 48. This cartoon was published under "Deis," a pseudonym Smith frequently used with his cartoons.

5 Henry Holmes Smith, personal letter to Howard Bossen, April 2, 1979.

I think the Ostwald color system which I learned about from Felix Payant in 1932-1933, was more helpful to me in a formal way than any other color system I have known about. Later Faber Birren wrote a book "Color Dimensions" which adapted the Ostwald system and seemed to me to be helpful, too. I have never in the past thirty years used such a system consciously, however.

I did find out that working on a black paper (usually watercolor, opaque water color on a sheet of rough paper covered with black India ink) was an extremely satisfying way of working. Such a picture made in the mid-1940s and belonging now to Jane Hinman whose address I have misplaced shows Leopold Bloom and Stephen Dedalus walking side by side after their visit to "Night Towan" [sic]. Leopold Bloom has a bar of lemon soap in his hand. For a discussion of the Ostwald color system the reader is referred to the book Basic Color by Egbert Jacobson. Egbert Jacobson, Basic Color: An Interpretation of the Ostwald Color System (Chicago: Paul Theobald, 1948).

Imbibition or dye-transfer processes rely on the property of a gelatine relief image to take up dye from a dye solution and then to release the dye by imbibition transfer to another gelatine receiving layer. This transfer or migration of the dye from one gelatine layer to another depends on the relative hardness of the two layers, on the dye and on the presence in the receiving layer of a mordant—a chemical which will hold the dye in position.

After reading a draft copy of this chapter Henry Holmes Smith commented in a personal letter on April 2, 1979 as follows:

I think you have hit the nail on the head here. I think "horrifying" or expression of fear and terror was the feeling (minimally anxiety) I most frequently felt at the time I was drawing the 1946 pictures "Excuse me while I call the cops," "Encounter in the Garden" and "Chase in the Garden." It seems to me the male-female encounter in the 1946 drawings could be contrasted with the 1930-1931 fantasy drawings where the confrontation seems more involved with attitudes of a supplicant.

In a personal letter from April 2, 1979, Henry Holmes Smith commented as follows:

I have never rejected straightforward use of the camera and have used it one way or another even in my later years, mainly to reproduce my refraction prints as a matter of convenience. I have never lost my admiration for people who use this method of photography in a masterly way. It has seldom enabled me to be in touch with what matters most to me.

Private conversation with Henry Holmes Smith, December 1978, Columbus, Ohio.

Smith was familiar with *Theater Arts Monthly* and *Creative Arts* magazine which contained work by Ralph Steiner, Francis Bruguiere, Edward Steichen and so on. He was familiar with *The New Yorker*, whose advertising illustrations were frequently done by Anton Bruehl, and with *Vanity Fair* which contained Steichen's work. In 1933 he discovered the writings of Moholy-Nagy.
This was the yearbook for the Illinois State Normal University. In the 1932 edition, which Smith edited, he also contributed cartoons, photography, typography, and writing.

Francis Bruguiere photographs in Theater Arts Monthly, Vol. 11, April 1927, pp. 273-276, June 1927, pp. 464-465. Also in this issue were photographs by Ralph Steiner which demonstrate exploration of constructivist concepts.


Henry Holmes Smith, untitled cover photograph, The Sun Dial (Columbus, Ohio: The Ohio State University, 1933).

In a personal letter to Howard Bossen dated 8 May 1979 Henry Holmes Smith commented:

c. 1965. Three matrices from separation negatives printed on a photogram of a hand. "Nude on Hand" ... Photogram was a B & W silverprint. This was an aesthetic break through for me which later came into view again in the "Royal Pair" variations.

In the Oral History interview with Henry Holmes Smith March 1978 McQuaid-Lewis in reel 3 track 1 there is mention that Henry Holmes Smith first came across the writings of Moholy-Nagy in a bookstore in Columbus, Ohio in 1933. Smith comments on his reaction to finding Moholy-Nagy's The New Vision: "Well all the things I'd been questioning in the Art Education I'd been up against ... came to a focus, and ... seemed to be summarized, and objected to in a way that I could support in The New Vision ... it was an inspiration beyond any other inspiration that I'd had. And I did study the book, I did try to do the suggested exercises...." In Henry Holmes Smith's Art: Fifty Years in Retrospect, Smith mentions working out the exercises in The New Vision, too. The 1928 edition was the one Smith first came across.

In two unpublished letters to Moholy-Nagy, Smith mentions the influence that The New Vision had upon him. The quoted passage is from the first letter Smith wrote to Moholy-Nagy in 1935 before Moholy-Nagy came to the United States. That letter dated May 6, 1935 never reached Moholy-Nagy in Germany. However, in a letter to Moholy-Nagy in 1938 Smith enclosed a copy of the 1935 letter. In the letter dated December 5, 1938, Smith wrote:

Last August or early September I placed an order for your book through a local dealer and received...
my copy on the 23rd of November. I have read it with real pleasure and gratitude for your mentioning my name in the company of those really distinguished persons whose work you discuss. I treasure above all other books my well-worn copy of the "The New Vision" in its original form and this new revision.

These comments indicate the high regard Smith held Moholy-Nagy's ideas, specifically in terms of education. What has not been stated specifically, but is apparent when one reads Moholy-Nagy's writings and looks at Smith's imagery is the influence present. These influences are examined later in this chapter. Copies of both of these letters are in the HHS Papers.


23Ibid., pp. 3339-3340.


In a personal letter from April 2, 1979, Smith commented that the dye-transfer process allowed him to work with color in a way which was "within reach of my purse."

From a personal conversation with Henry Holmes Smith held during December 1978 in Granville, Ohio.


One of Smith's students, Nathan Lerner, became very involved with images made from light modulators. Smith corresponded with Lerner in the late 1940s concerning his own light study work. Lerner, who gained a new degree of control over light studies when he developed a light box in 1938, was credited by Moholy-Nagy as "the first to make a creative use of the light box." Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, Vision in Motion, p. 200. The reader will find a lengthier discussion of Smith's relationship to the New Bauhaus in Chapter 6.

Henry Holmes Smith, "Light Study: Notes on a Method Related to the Study," unpublished typescript based on a lecture delivered on January 7, 1947 at the Illinois Wesleyan University Art Center, 15 pages. A copy of this document is with the KHS Papers.

See footnote 29.
In 1942 at the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) there was a show entitled "How to Make a Photogram." An examination of the shows at MOMA indicates that the 1940s and 1950s was a period slightly more receptive to abstract imagery than the subsequent decades. This coincides with the fact that John Szarkowski who became Director of the Department of Photography in the early 1960s operates from a more narrowly construed definition of the medium than his predecessor, the late Edward Steichen.

See the quotation from Moholy-Nagy as cited in footnote 20, p. 106 of this chapter.

In a personal letter, April 2, 1979 responding to his receipt of an earlier draft of this material Henry Holmes Smith wrote:

In addition to the slides for the talk there was a small exhibition of color prints made from July 1946 to late that autumn. In this exhibition which was on the wall in the same room where the slide talk was given, were some of the color photograms printed on black and white photograms. The color photograms were produced by making photograms on matrix film and printing these images on black and white photograms on Velour Black C surface. The entire group of these is in the Indiana University Art Museum Henry Holmes Smith archive. Also exhibited were the first color prints from colorless light study photographs. The problem of finding a correct term for this color was recognized from the first color print by this method. I chose the term "synthetic color" at that time to distinguish it from "natural" color which was the term widely used at that time for colors derived from nature (as red roses, green grass or tree leaves, yellow daffodills, blue bluebells, purple violets, etc., or the many vulgar colors of plastic items such as kitchen utensils, childrens' toys, etc.). It struck me at the time that the color I was producing was full of theatrical passages and I
did not find this annoying. It seemed important to me in 1946 to make a distinction between the sources of color outside the system but related to it (natural color) and the sources of color within the system (i.e., the dyes in many combinations and degrees of saturation of dilution and the gray passages in the matrix images. Synthetic color seems a useful term, although I was well aware that the color was produced by a subtractive synthesis no matter whether the matrices were derived from natural color objects or the simple and direct gradations of the matrices no matter what the color of the original if any.

I think the constructivist work ended when I put aside the geometrical light study program. This ended, very probably in the summer of 1946. Yet I continued to print from the matrices made at that time because I liked the color results. They were used extensively in 1970 to help me find my way back into color printing after all the years of sporadic work which was the result of spending much too great amount of time in teaching and other academic pursuits including writing about photography.

41 Smith, "Light Study...," p. 9.

42 Nicholas Haz published a color photogram in Minicam (inside front cover, 3(3)) during November 1939. In the statement which accompanied the picture an editor made the point that "abstractions in full color ... may be made without the use of color film! Separation negatives are made directly on ordinary film and the color print made from black and white negatives." David Travis in Photographs from the Julien Levy Collection mentions that Levy exhibited color photograms made by Haz in the 1930s. Smith has said that after he became an editor of Minicam he saw the Haz photogram. He has said in conversations with the author that he has not seen any other work by Haz and he was not influenced by Haz. At this time both Smith and Haz were independently working out similar problems in photography. Henry Holmes Smith commented in a personal letter on April 2, 1979 as follows:

I have wondered if Haz and Moholy (both of whom were Hungarian) might not have discussed the problem after I broached the topic to Moholy in Sept. 1937. I have no way of knowing and think it probable that we both hit on the method independently. I knew of Haz's photography and he had a reputation among photographers for guiding them (Meatyard in 1956 made direct reference to the help Haz had had for him earlier). The fact that the Haz color photogram
was published when it was led me to think when I saw it after going to work at Minicam in April 1940 that it might have come about from some contact with Moholy. I think Haz was living in Chicago then, although I am not certain. I last saw Haz at a meeting of the Photographic Society of America in St. Louis in about 1952 where he gave a lecture which I attended. He had apparently abandoned photography at that time and illustrated his talk with very conservative water color paintings. He seemed not in touch with his audience which had expected some other subject matter. I now can connect with what appeared to be his feelings: some disappointment and feeling of being out of place. I did not speak with him, but cannot now tell you why I did not.


44 Reginald Heron, Untitled note of appreciation. Henry Holmes Smith's Art: Fifty Years in Retrospect, p. 5.

45 In a personal letter dated April 2, 1979, Smith commented:

The first color photography was hand-applied back in 1925. Three small snapshots which I printed myself were hand tinted with watercolor from the Kodak watercolor set (at that time supplied on small sheets of paper).

The cat picture was colored in yellow, with a bright red glob of color on a tulip in the foreground. The second was a picture of our family's pet dog "Buck" and a neighbor boy named "Tuffy" Cunning. This was a fairly successful one. The third was a murky print (too dark) of the Minnehaha Falls in a park in Minneapolis, and the submerging of the color into the dark black and white print was so unsatisfactory that I abandoned the process. I am sure this was one reason I did not return to coloring photos until I found a direct color method that I could afford in 1936.

And Smith began to work with Agfacolor in 1933. This process was not, however, a direct color process like Wash-Off Relief Imbibition printing.

For a fuller discussion of this idea the reader is referred to: Henry Holmes Smith, "Color on the Cusp" (4 pages unpaginated). Written for the Portfolio, Colors, issued in conjunction with the exhibition of the same name organized by Robert Fichter at Florida State University, Tallahassee, February 1975. A copy of this is with the HHS Papers.

Henry Holmes Smith, personal letter to Howard Bossen, April 2, 1979, p. 2.

Henry Holmes Smith gave me the name of Clyde "Red" Hare when I asked if he could remember who was the student who introduced him to the material. When I presented a paper on Henry Holmes Smith's imagery at the "Symposium on Overlooked Twentieth Century Photography," sponsored by the Pittsburgh Film-makers, Inc., in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania during February 1979, I discovered, to my surprise that "Red" Hare was in the audience. The following paragraph is excerpted from an article by Frank Joseph called "Pittsburgh: Symposium on Overlooked Photography," which appeared in the Correspondents section of Afterimage in May 1979, p. 14).

In the question and answer period that followed, Clyde "Red" Hare spoke of his association with Smith. Hare admitted that he could not recall the Karo syrup incident, but he did say, "When I started at Indiana University in 1946 there was just one semester of photography offered. Four years later, due to Smity's efforts, there was a full, four year photography program." Alluding to Smith's personality Hare said, "I had the happy circumstance to go from a complete ivory-tower approach in college to working with Roy Stryker for eight years who took that ivory tower and made sawdust out of it."

This is Smith's "Death of Punch" made in 1959. In a personal letter dated April 2, 1979 Smith made the following comment about the text.

These matrices made directly on the matrix film from broken Christmas tree ornaments were used in combination with syrup drawings printed directly on matrix film to make "Phoenix" images in the 1960s. Death of Punch was only one of several variations made with those matrices, although it was probably the most successful or meaningful.
Reasons for the sporadic stops and starts and for the periods of inactivity were discussed in Chapter 2. Again, in the letter from April 2, 1979, Smith commented:

I worked with color when I could get at it in the printing room which was also a lecture room and where I had to clean up for classes and was interrupted in what little spare time I had. In 1957 I bought a matrix punch and a print roller and turned again to color printing. I turned what had been my office into a color printing room where I could go and lock the door to keep students away and began again a concerted effort to do color printing. I started this time with color reproduction from objects and separation negatives from nature to get the feel for the process. Then until my cataracts and extra teaching duties interrupted me again I kept up a steady however small output. 1962 was the interrupting time with the formation of a cataract and moving into a new building and the summer workshop. Museum photography took almost all spare time I had until I could no longer photograph because of the cataracts. My eye operations were in the Summer of 1964 and after the eyes healed I had a new surge of energy. This was dissipated in heavy teaching loads and writing.

In addition to Figures 4, 5, 6, 7, the reader is referred to:


Heron wrote:

Just as a cartoon may be a printmaker's graphic wry grin (Daumier, for example), a substantial portion of Henry's present color refraction prints come off as Karo-cartoons—in the best sense. And the wry/dry grin is very contagious. It is this aspect of the human condition that moves him most powerfully, as he in turn moves us with his spectral-gentle jokes.

Reginald Heron, untitled note of appreciation, in Henry Holmes Smith's Art: Fifty Years in Retrospect, p. 6.
54 In the article mentioned in the previous footnote, Heron made the following comment, which draws the analogy tighter. He wrote:

To make the point clearer by analogy, there appears to be direct analogous relationship between his color refraction work (for example, "The Dance Series") and Aaron Siskind's "Martha's Vineyard [Rock] Series," for they both speak of the human condition with a similar degree of intensity and slightly differing degree of abstraction. Both are "people pictures."

55 The importance of this memory was stressed by Smith in private conversations held in December 1978.

56 Henry Holmes Smith, Typescript statement on his work, "Death of Punch," 1 page, dated January 14, 1977, unpublished. A copy of this document is with the HHS Papers.


58 This statement is based upon an examination of prints in the Henry Holmes Smith Archive.

59 Telephone conversation with author 11 February 1979.

60 Smith said in March 1978 interview with Steven Lewis and James McQuaid that: "The point of the syrup [is that] it's viscous, it's maleable, it's very versatile, and it's figurative." This interview was done as part of the HHS Oral History at IMB/GEH, reel 4, track 2.

61 See footnote 1.


63 Ibid., p. 11.

64 Ibid., p. 47.
In a personal letter dated April 2, 1979, Smith wrote in response to an earlier draft of this chapter that: Generally I agree with your comments on this page, although the relationship had never occurred to me consciously during all the years I was doing that color printing. I think my first awareness of the possible relationship was when I was thinking about a question probably brought up by you and relating it to the question from the audience at MIT in 1976 about my use of the same image with color variations being "too simple-minded." Not until 1970 were the matrices varied enough to permit the enormous variety of color effects which were developed in the series that follow that Spring.

In a personal letter dated April 2, 1979, Smith commented:
I am sure with more time away from teaching the use of many more images would have been undertaken. One projected goal always was to use images with subtle modulations but strength of form (as Mother & Son and the pair of "Pairs") so that the color variations could continue almost indefinitely with surprising and unexpected effects.

This term was used by Smith in our conversations about his work. It does seem to nicely describe his working method.

For a fuller discussion of this idea see Smith's typescript "Color on the Cusp". See footnote 47 for full citation.

Smith wrote in his untitled statement for Portfolio II that:
In ordinary practice a lens and camera will generally picture a lighted object in such a way that the object takes on more importance than the light that made the picture possible. I would prefer to reverse the roles of light and object by emphasizing light's behavior.

For full citation see Footnote 1.
See Smith's essay "Color on the Cusp." For full citation see footnote 47.

"Lionell Trilling once remarked [that there is] the chronic American belief that there exists an opposition between reality and mind and that one must enlist oneself in the party of reality." As quoted in Matthew Baigell, The American Scene: American Painting of the 1930's (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974), p. 18. Smith's mature work, represents the notion that "mind and reality" need not be dichotomous, that in fact they can be a synthesis.

Smith, "Color Photography in the Service of the Artist."


Prefacing Henry Holmes Smith's first article in *Aperture*, "Photographs and Public" is a one line quotation from John Milton. "Fit audience find, though few." The search for an audience coupled with a desire for a dialogue may be seen as primary motives for Smith's writing.

Smith's articles, appearing in *Aperture*, the most influential journal on photography since Stieglitz's *Camera Work*, his own mimeo press publications, and lately his opportunity to publish in new journals, *Afterimage*, *Untitled*, and the publication of the Center for Creative Photography's monograph, *Henry Holmes Smith: Selected Critical Articles*, allow one to see a very wide range of ideas expressed in an equally wide range of styles. Some of his articles have lists of questions and statements in them, almost as if these lists were lecture notes. Some of the articles present highly intellectual approaches to analytical problems while others have characteristics reminiscent of Joycian stream of consciousness.
With the exception of exhibition notes and some broad-based philosophical comments about how his work developed he has not written overtly about his own imagery. Yet it may be argued that when he writes about the imagery of his mentor, Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, about Aaron Siskind, and Fred Sommer, and about his friends and former students Jack Welpott and Jerry Uelsmann he is also writing about his own vision as an imagemaker. This observation is stated to point out that many of those photographers Smith has chosen to write about are ones whose vision shares sensibilities with his own; in the case of Moholy-Nagy because he was clearly influenced as a young man by him; in the case of Siskind, because their imagery possesses similar humanistic concerns and visually shares stylistic properties although the genesis of the imagery is very different; in the case of Fred Sommer, because their imagery shares certain humanistic values; and in the case of Welpott and Uelsmann one finds the inspirational hand of the master laid upon the student. And when he writes about these people, about Clarence John Laughlin, and about issues such as curatorial taste or the practice of photojournalism, he is expressing his beliefs concerning the power, importance, and consequences of photography and its practitioners within our culture.

In his writings on the critical act one finds the analytical power of his intellect developing procedures
for image analysis that did not previously exist within photographic literature. He freely and gratefully borrowed ideas from literary criticism, relying largely on I. A. Richard's *Practical Criticism,* for the means to create a verbal dialogue with students not attuned to speaking about images. The intent was not just to put words into the mouths of mutes but to help the student/viewer find a means of understanding the emotional qualities of the image, to help the student move beyond simple object identification in order to find meaning in complex signs and symbols.

In his writings on educating photographers he tends to goad, to cajole, to provoke by making statements which on the surface seem to be outlandish, and unsupportable, but upon reflection cut to the heart of the educational issues he addresses. In his writings on photojournalism he presents the ethical issues which confront all concerned with human subject documentary photography. And in his writings on museums, he takes on the narrow-mindedness of institutional practices. He lambasts the curator and collector for being safe rather than innovative.

He writes, more from the position of an *apologist,* in the Church sense, than from the position of one who is trying to make it, in the art world sense. He writes to explain photography to the audience he hopes is there. His need, which might be seen as egocentric, is more
accurately understood in the context of the voice of a man who understands more than most of his contemporaries do and who generally patiently, although sometimes impatiently, tries to explain why their perceptions are being impeded by certain cultural, institutional, and historical biases that retard their growth as individuals and the growth of photography as a medium.

That Smith was searching for an audience, however small, is clearly seen in a letter he wrote in 1953 to Minor White, editor of *Aperture*. He stated:

> I will continue to send you drafts of material: it is an incentive to write it down to know at last I have an audience. It is actually my first real audience.

This letter was written partially in response to one White wrote in which he said:

> I think you are the first one to respond to *Aperture* pleas for articles of intelligence and evidence of thought.

Smith had published writings earlier, but those writings were more process oriented; his 1939 *Minicam Monthly* article on Solarization, for example. And he had developed theoretical/aesthetic materials for distribution. His Design Research Laboratory Bulletin from the 1930s and his *On Photography* pamphlet from 1953 which he sent to Minor White and which prompted White to invite Smith to begin the dialogue on "reading photographs" in the pages of *Aperture* are examples. Yet, *Aperture* was his first vehicle which held out to him the possibility of visible impact in the
field and remained as his primary outlet for his published ideas until well into the 1960s.

It has recently been argued that there was a plan behind Aperture, a thoughtout approach to the development of the notion of "reading photographs." It is not true, however, that so coherent a scheme, existed. What must be realized is that in the early years White rather than being inundated with articles and images was begging for them. What must be stressed is that the issue of "reading photographs" was one which took an evolutionary course, beginning with Smith's private publication On Photography moving into the pages of Aperture and from there into the general literature of photography.

Letters between Smith and White demonstrate that the ideas printed in Aperture were oft times bounced back and forth in their correspondence. Letters reveal that both men admired each other's intellect and appreciated their open relationship. As the 1950s moved on, White opened the pages of Aperture to the dialogue Smith asked for in 1953.

One of the most important steps in training part of the general audience is to help any interested person realize the rewards of staying with a difficult photograph. I think APERTURE could usefully publish the experience of someone who has noted the way he first responded when he saw a photograph he had not seen before, and then has compared this response with what happened when he subsequently saw the photograph, a day, a week,
Smith then followed his own plea with an example of a reading of one of Minor White’s photographs. It is a reading based upon physical description of the image combined with an interpretation based upon the associations released by the emotive properties of the image. It is also a cumulative reading, wherein the viewer’s past experience of the picture is used to help build toward the present experience which leads to a future experience.

The idea of "reading photographs" is one which occupied the pages of *Aperture* for most of the 1950s. It was an idea extensively examined in Smith’s 1956 workshop on photographic interpretation. It is an idea still actively discussed within the photographic community. John Ward in his 1970 book *The Criticism of Photography as Art: The Photographs of Jerry Uelsmann*, uses both Smith's and White's ideas as a backdrop from which he develops his own concepts of photographic interpretation. Terry Barrett in his 1977 article "Reading as a Method of Photographic Criticism,"14 examines the ideas of Smith and White in regard to "Reading Photographs."

Since these ideas of Smith’s are perhaps his best known ones and certainly the only ones which to this date have received critical attention, the ideas on "reading
photographs" per se will not be examined in detail. Yet, because the idea of "reading photographs" first presented in the classroom, worked its way into his writings on that subject, on photojournalism, on the responsibility of the critic and on the act of interpretation some discussion is necessary. In his "Image, Obscurity and Interpretation" published in *Aperture* in 1957 he first brings his adaptation of I. A. Richard's Practical Criticism to the attention of the general photographic community. (Richard's ideas were among several examined with a small group at his 1956 workshop.) The ideas in this article, written for the rather esoteric audience which subscribed to *Aperture*, found their way into the literature in other places too. For in a 1962 article in *Infinity*, a publication for press photographers, he also discussed his methodological approach to photographic interpretation. The article, "The Fiction of Fact and Vice Versa," begins by discussing the photographers' ability to deliberately falsify the factual, to make an idiot look like a genius or a genius look like an idiot. In it Smith questions the motives and abilities of photojournalists and picture editors. He argues that these people have a moral responsibility not to turn facts into fiction. He then proposed a method based upon I. A. Richard's Practical Criticism, a book about the criticism of poetry, which helps to analyze the meaning in a photograph.
Smith adapted Richard's terms, "sense, feeling, tone, and intention" to photography. These terms are tools designed to help people gain access to meaning within photographs. Sense is "What we plainly see in a photograph." Feeling is "What the photographer feels about the object he is photographing or what he thinks about it." Tone is "The attitude of the photographer toward his audience." And intention is "The photographer's purpose in making the photographs."16

These ideas may seem somewhat simplistic a quarter century after they first began being publically discussed. And in fact, they are somewhat simplistic. They are ideas which resulted in tools which helped an audience more naive than today's picture audience begin to delve beneath the surface of identifiable objects to reach the richness of meaning locked within photographic imagery. These tools Smith helped to forge were amongst the first analytical tools available to the serious picture examiner.

These tools laid part of the foundation contemporary photographic interpretation is based upon. And consequently rather than their relative simplicity being criticized, the beginning attempt to develop verbal analytical tools in a medium sadly historically without very adequate tools of analysis should be praised. The strength of these tools rested partly in the intellectual, analytical approach they provided and partly in the fact the system, like
the literary criticism it was adapted from, required that the viewer always find support for the interpretation in the image, rather than in things external to the image.

But the approach based upon the "New Criticism" in literature had its flaws. It did not provide a way for a response based largely upon emotive and psychological factors, rather response was based largely upon intellectual analysis. For Smith, ultimately the system did not prove flexible enough for him and he moved on to a more complex form of analysis which retained the intellectual strengths of "reading photographs" as well as allowing him to pursue a more ephemeral examination of the psychological and the emotional qualities in photographs. Yet throughout his writings he retains his insistence upon the evidence being found in the photograph. In his "Models for Critics" first published in his mimeo press publication Related Papers on the Classification and Appreciation of Photographs and Photographers in 1963, and republished in One Hundred Years of Photographic History in 1975, 17 Smith insists that the critic must come after the photograph and that the critic must look to the image for clues as to the problems the photographer is pursuing, and the meanings within the work. This position would seem to be rather different than the one taken by conceptual artists where not only is the artist frequently critic and vice versa, but where the idea both proceeds the image and is frequently
primary to the artifact.

... it should be stated flatly that the critic, by definition, must come after the work not before it, and, when the work is really new, the critic is seldom familiar with it. This is a critic's limitation, and should be accepted more willingly than it is.

If, then, the critic must look to photographers and their photographs for the models which are to instruct him, how is he to know which models to consult?18

Models, as Henry Holmes Smith refers to them, are tools used to gain access to art. Their usefulness depends upon the degree of access one gets to any given piece of art through the employment of that particular model. Not all models are relevant to all pieces of art work.

When Smith discusses interpretation he generally is writing about the personally expressive photograph. Yet, issues of interpretation coupled with issues of ethics find their way into his writings on photojournalism, museum and curators, and on education. And Smith discusses ethical issues in photographic interpretation best perhaps in his writing on photojournalism. He is interested in findings ways in which photojournalists can address themselves to more indepth explorations of the subject matter they report on, than is customary in most situations, and in developing a more sophisticated and demanding audience of picture consumers than presently exists.
His praise of Walker Evans's work in "Two for the Photojournalists" reflects his concern for the photojournalist to explore beneath the surface of events, to penetrate to some kind of human truth which moves the viewer as well as informs the viewer. This theme was picked up and expanded upon by Smith in 1967 when he presented a lecture at the National Press Photographers Association Business and Education Seminar. That lecture was called "Problems of the Contemporary Photojournalist." In that presentation he discussed: "Your rights as photographers of public events, intended to be originators of factual, truthful reports on the public aspects of momentous happenings." He said photographers have: "The right to show what you mean ... to know that what you show shows what you mean, and ... as a corollary to know what you mean." There is the assumption that most photographers, because of a lack of education and because of visually backward editors, are deprived of their rights.

He presents an example of an incident involving a car accident. He asks how can the photographer portray the full dimensions of the tragedy represented by the accident. He stated:

What a task for photography! To relate the past to the future through the ever present instant. What prospects for tomorrow, for do we really know how to picture these relationships? On the basis of what I see published, I doubt it.
It seems reasonable to me to assume that if we are ever to master the visual aspects of this yesterday-today-tomorrow relationship we need to know more about what photographs are and how they hold the memories they contain:

1. How much of what we know is really in the photograph, how much somewhere else entirely?

2. What should photographs look like? Isn't that a simple minded question: Should they look like yesterday? If so, how do we know they do? Who told us? Why do we trust them?20

And so on. The theme is familiar, the approach that of a master teacher, always questioning, always giving less the answer and more the question.

The presentation of possibilities meant to expand the horizons of his readers is a characteristic of Smith's writing reaching back to his first published articles related to photography in 1933. His article which presented a photographic collage and a small amount of how to do it commentary, his article on montage which mentioned "shadow pictures" as one form, both from 1933, his Design Research Bulletins from the mid-1930s, and his 1939 article on Solarization although somewhat pedestrian compared to his later writings and visual works do demonstrate an early concern with the extension of visual possibilities as well as his lifelong dominant concern with light as a transformative element.

His writing may be seen to emerge from a definition of photography wherein the straight camera image is just one
kind of valid photographic possibility, where photography's parameters are measured by the limits of light, light modulation and light sensitive material, rather than by the limits of "camera vision." And his writing may be perceived as one means of expanding the dialogue on photography.

Perhaps the most pivotal piece in all of Smith's writings is a one page statement "Heading the Photograph" which appeared in 1953 in his self-published pamphlet On Photography. In this piece are printed two photographs side by side. On the left is a literal camera-made image of paint markings on a segment of a building. There is a rectangle described by painted lines and above it is written "Latest Dope." Next to this easy to read pictorial statement is Smith's Giant (Figure 31). There is no direct reference to either photograph. The article begins: "If we think of a photograph as a kind of 'rebus,' it may help us understand the actual problem of reading a photographic image directly." It ends with:

Other pictures, however, may depict an unfamiliar or completely new form, or if the objects are familiar the relationships may be difficult to interpret. Explanatory words for such pictures may be needed, yet they often short-circuit the careful examination of this kind of image. The result may be similar to reading a partial solution to a puzzle before making a try for the answer.22

These two statements and these two photographs lay out the problem Smith was to pursue in his writings for
the next quarter century. He would be examining the na­
ture of the photographic "rebus" and working on ways to
develop means of interpretation for other's imagery as well
as his own. His search which first took him to art history
and art theory, lead him to literary criticism, poetry,
philosophy, mythology, anthropology and recently to mathe­
matics. It reflects his understanding that one cannot
truly understand photography if one is not culturally
literate.23

"Reading the Photograph" is very carefully crafted,
for without a direct reference to either photograph the
viewer is directed to the problem of gaining access to
meaning within the nonliteral, nonobject oriented image.
The viewer is presented with choices, both easy and diffi­
cult. The viewer is not told the meaning of either image.
The viewer is shown how one can go about discerning mean­
ing for oneself.

This article in presenting Smith's imagery and the
rudiments of a system may be seen as the beginning point
from which his writings about image issues took two gen­
eral directions: the first sought to develop methods to
examine photographs; the second discussed bodies of work
in an historical and interpretative sense.24 The first
path contains the prescriptive reading photograph arti­
cles; the second path, his essays on Moholy-Nagy, Aaron
Siskind, Jack Welpott and Judy Dater, Clarence John
Laughlin, Jerry Uelsmann and Frederick Sommer. Although there are these two basic thrusts they are not mutually exclusive and at times both are pursued within the same piece. For example, in an article on reading photographs Smith sets out some definitions and then gives a reading of five Aaron Siskind photographs based upon those definitions.  

A decade after "Reading the Photograph" appeared, Smith published in 1963 "Representation in Photography." This article like the 1953 "Reading the Photograph" contains reproductions of his work without direct commentary. The commentary on his pictures as in the earlier piece is there in an implied way. As illustrations for this article he included Mother and Son (Figure 32), Pair II (Figure 33), and Pseudoform which he later changed to Grotesque (Figure 36).

This article, published in a journal with a very small circulation is one in which Smith presents his concept, which is an alternative concept, of the meaning of representation in photography.

Representation in photography is generally thought of as being tied to object identification. Smith rejects this, arguing that used in this way the term acts to close off the vast potential for human expression and instead functions to reduce photography to a means of only recording simple facts.
He asks a series of questions which he partly answers by presenting a synoptic view of the issues involved in the imagery of Harry Callahan, Aaron Siskind and Frederick Sommer and by presenting without comment a selection of his own images.

Important questions remain to be answered: Representation actually of what? Representation in which of several conventions? For what reason? Certainly commonplace assumptions about the visible world provide convenient pigeonholes for some public portion of every art. They are genuinely useful to widen the audience capable of understanding what is being pictured. Yet surely now we know and feel and see much more than the garden variety of photography can ever show us. Would it be too much to ask of photography to extend its powers into these regions of human experience? Some observers and some photographers believe it would not be too much.27

He proceeds to discuss various kinds of photographic conventions and asserts that there is a large body of photographic work which really is part of the tradition of photography, although it had been previously systematically excluded.28

It would be wrong to assert that this work is in a new tradition. Actually the product is an extension of an exceedingly early view that was the photograph was a work of both the physiochemical process and of the human being.29

This coupling of the mechanical image with the human mind allows for a viewpoint which claims that meaning within photographs can go beyond surface object identification. In fact, it is a position which argues that perhaps the least
important quality of most photographs is object identification.

In presenting in this order, Callahan, Siskind, Sommer and his own work he is moving from Callahan who he terms "the most traditional of the non-conformist photographers" through Siskind and Sommer who present progressively more nonconformist imagery while utilizing conventional equipment, to his own work which, without actually being stated, is the most nonconformist of all, at least in terms of physical execution. The work of all four, however, is representational, not in the narrowly construed sense of representing things, but in the wider sense of representing human issues, human feelings, human fears, human fantasies, human experience.

Concern with the human experience permeates Smith's writings as an apologist. It is a thread which clearly connects the essays found in the volume edited by Terence Pitts and titled Henry Holmes Smith: Selected Critical Articles as well as other articles by Smith. These articles, while generally theoretical and philosophical, sometimes examine the works of others while at the same time they tend to explicate and validate Smith's own imagery.

The collection of articles edited by Terence Pitts is structured chronologically with the exception of "XI Zero in Photography," originally published in 1959. This piece precedes the other articles, which begin with the 1953
"Photographs and Public." "XI Zero in Photography" serves as Smith's introductory statement, his call for openness, his plea for a re-examination of myopic views and anti-intellectual ideas held by many within the field. It presents for the first time the second field (science) he went to for models for photographic interpretation. Previously he had brought adaptations of models of literary criticism into the discussion of photography. With this piece he suggests that photographers might be well served to look too, to the scientists, who of necessity must remain open to the unexpected, receptive to the unknown.

The title "XI Zero in Photography" is based on:

the name of an atomic particle [XI Zero] with no electrical charge. It leaves no tracks to be photographed in cloud chamber "events."
Yet scientists recently made seventy-thousand photographs in an attempt to obtain evidence about it. In one of those pictures, evidence of this particle was deduced from effects that show "the motions of known particles to be peculiarly skewed by something."  

Science is expected to be precise, analytical, dispassionate. Yet Smith sees in the scientific method, an openness to ideas that photographers, he argues, tend to resist. He rhetorically asks photographers if they "Ought not ... take a lead or two from the practice of these scientists?" And he suggests that a great deal could be learned from "studying with care" and "subjecting to analysis" a body of work by a photographer; that photographers should stop thinking like the lay public so that they can "deal professionally
with photographs that show the world of everyday events to be 'peculiarly skewed by something'"; and that the photographer should "give as much time and thought to improving his skill in understanding what his fellow photographers can do with ideas" as he has traditionally given to technological improvements. He ends this short piece by stating that if photographers do not begin to study their medium analogous to the way scientists study theirs, then "photography is indeed weak and empty."  

It is evident that Smith does not believe photography to be "weak and empty." It is equally evident that he feels the vast majority of those who claim the label of photographer are "weak and empty." It is not surprising that when Smith makes these kinds of statements he creates a certain amount of controversy.  

Yet Smith does not go on the attack without presenting a coherent alternative point of view and without understanding historical forces at work. In "Museum Taste and the Taste of Our Time," an article on "The Art of Photography" an exhibition held in 1961 at George Eastman House, he wrote:

"The Art of Photography" is too generous a title for a show of narrow range and I will not praise narrowness and call it generous. As I viewed the exhibition in August 1961, I kept wishing it were 1941. Then what an eye-opening, stunning, even inspiring show this would have been. But not now; it is twenty years too late.
It is too late because by 1961 not only had the medium begun to explode in terms of the diversity of approach to imagemaking, but also because the sanctity of the aesthetic position presented in the show had begun to be viewed not as the way rather merely as a way.

Smith's strenuous presentation of differing viewpoints is based on the assumption that if there is a path photographers should follow then indeed that path has many forks, each one equally interesting and valid to traverse.

One cannot quarrel with any of these conventions, but they must be recognized for what they are. Only when they occupy a position of absolute and exclusive privilege in photography need they be challenged. All of them and others too are only part of one version of one of contemporary man's most important visual languages.

Further on in the article he presents an idea opposing "picture taker" with "picture maker." He says that when the "picture makers" were presented in "The Art of Photography" show, they were done so in a way which demolished "for an uninformed viewer the basic potential strength of the esthetic of the maker." He called for a show which would fairly present this viewpoint and even goes so far as to suggest many of the people he would include.

How illuminating it would be to see the tableaux of Robinson and Rejlander followed by those of Lejaren and Hiller, Steichen and Sarra. Opposite of them would be Callahan's multiple exposures, Laughlin's fabulous gothic art, Telberg's ingenious, crude, and disturbing images of psychic interplay and
Sommer's intense and accurate measurements of the vast range of reality we are always seeing (when we see it at all) out of the corner of our mind's eye. For Smith, the rich potential of "our mind's eye" differs from the "camera-eye"; for in the former one finds the capacity for thought, feeling, and emotion while in the latter there is only mechanical response. The argument does not advocate throwing away cameras, rather it seeks to blend the mechanical record-making of works of light with the soul of man. The argument does not deny the richness of imagery "picture takers" can create, but it does insist on the richness of imagery "picture makers" create, too. The argument seeks to broaden the scope of human understanding through photographic imagery.

In "Some Guideposts to the Appreciation of Photography" one finds Smith borrowing again from the scientists. Here he adapts to photography some ideas of Thomas S. Kuhn from the preface to "The Structure of Scientific Revolutions." These adaptations of Kuhn's ideas which form part of this article also form the basis for Smith's essay "Models for Critics."

Once again Smith addresses the meaning of representation in photography. Here he makes a statement which cuts through to the essence of the problem his own imagery has faced in being accepted.
photography which by definition is or ought to be inseparable from light is also for most persons almost totally ensnared in the concept of "lighted objects." Attached to this law as a rider is the popular assumption that this connection between object and photograph must necessarily produce a recognizable photographic version of that object in the picture.

A kind of visual Emancipation Proclamation in the 20th Century freed photography from the rider but not the law.... Remaining, however, is a dictum that some connection between the photograph and the objects of everyday experience must be available in even the most obscure pictures or we have not been fairly dealt with.42

In 1965 Smith wrote one of the introductory essays for Aaron Siskind: Photographer. His "New Figures in a Classic Tradition" places Siskind's work, which although dependent on objects for their creation moves beyond objects in their meaning, into a long standing tradition within photography. The arguments he presents in his examination of Siskind, further advance the arguments for the acceptability and importance of his own imagery, too. He accomplishes this, again, without reference to his own visual work. Yet the similarity in basic attitudes brought to Siskind's work and to Smith's is sufficiently strong that when both bodies are examined the links between them become clearly discernible. Both men have an understanding of the avenues of exploration opened by the revolution in art in the early part of the twentieth century. Both men found a great deal of intellectual and emotional sustenance in art
work informed by modernist principles and sensibilities. Both Siskind's personal life and his photographs are often linked to many abstract expressionist painters and particularly to his close friend, Franz Kline. And both Smith's imagery and writing can be directly linked to Moholy-Nagy, as we have seen.

In commenting on the possibilities the "new" art opened up for photographers Smith stated:

[Photographers] could study the new art for structures that were adaptable to traditional photography and incorporate these into photographs made directly from nature. Or, by one of several combinations of photographic and non-photographic techniques, they could create a synthetic imagery (more photo-picture than photographs) quite close in spirit to the new art, but a whole world away from traditional photography.

What separates Smith's and Siskind's images then, is more related to technique than to substance. Siskind makes his photographs using much the same equipment and technique that the most traditional of traditional photographers utilized, a large format camera mounted on a tripod. The images are sharply focused and finely detailed. From Smith's perspective where Siskind departs from tradition is in his vision.

Noting that descriptive illusionistic detail, when redundant or over-precise, tends to cancel out both the strength and mystery of a figurative art, Siskind resorted to neglected methods within the scope of straightforward traditional photographic technique to restore the necessary balance between what the camera pictures and what the photographer feels.
Using carefully composed details from nature, he placed descriptive illusion completely at the service of lively new figures rich with contemporary meaning.  

Where Smith departs from tradition is both in his vision and in his technique; for although cameraless photographic images reach back to Fox Talbot, the use of Karo syrup and the use of color in a synthetic systematic exploration extends from Smith rather than reaching back to others.

Placed after "New Figures in a Classic Tradition" is "The Photographer’s Subject." In this piece, originally presented as a lecture, Smith presents his definition of what a subject is in photography. One should be keenly aware that in this definition there is no reference to the recording of objects or any other more conventionally accepted notions of what subjects are in photography.

"Subject," as used here refers to all aspects of individual human experience which are capable of being summed up in a visual form that may be pictured photographically. This includes experience of the senses and those experiences which are sometimes located "within" that are related to external sense experience only by analogy.

This lecture, first delivered in 1972, represents the most precise statement Smith has made both about what he views as "proper" material for subjects within photography and also clearly alludes to his concept of subject in relationship to his own imagery. For unless his own imagery is to be regarded merely as decorative one must view his imagery as dealing with experiences located "within"
while referring to "external sense experience only by analogy."

Further, in this lecture Smith reveals part of his rationale for writing as well as for making images. This may be subconscious on the part of Smith, yet it seems validated by the tone and substance of many of the essays he has written. He stated:

The central value [of one's subject] will be demonstrated by consistent use of every device that supports it and the rejection of every device that betrays it.

It is, in my judgment, unfortunate and non-productive, to fail to practice one's "subject" in every dimension of which one is capable.

And, writing on and teaching photography are perhaps two of the best means of changing attitudes, of presenting one's notion of subject, content and approach to the public.

Having laid out Smith's position as imagemaker Henry Holmes Smith: Selected Critical Articles concludes with "Trees and Seeds," an essay in which the focus shifts from attempts to explicate the potentials of a medium to the presentation of a warning about the possible dangers of a market-place orientation by photographers. It is an essay which helps to explain partly why Smith has not exhibited his work more often.

Public display of what we do may stop us when we ought to be on our way. Exhibition
is not on our way. It is at best a harmless side path, a part of the general market-place that gives us false notions of what we are really about.48

Yet, knowing the indifference with which Smith's kind of image has received by the tastemakers of his generation one is left, too, with a feeling that he has presented the intellectual side of the argument and not the emotional. By 1972, there were probably many more photographers sensitive to the richness of possibility Smith's viewpoint represented. His aesthetic isolation was diminished.

"Trees and Seeds," written for a group exhibition reflects Smith's sense of a growing community. The essay concludes with:

Returning, now, to the journey along that high trail ridge, the inference may be that the trip is taken alone. Not so. All those kin of the spirit are on the same ridge, my companions, your companions, high up there all together. This makes a rightful company, a worthy joint venture and that's what this group is.49

Once a community exists, a sense of isolation diminishes and that particular struggle is over. It becomes a time to reflect, to look back, to begin to act more the historian and less the critic. It becomes a time to try to place the struggle into perspective. It seems altogether fitting then that when in 1975 Smith wrote an introductory essay to the book Photographs of Moholy-Nagy: From the Collection of William Larson he chose to present the historical background to the work of his mentor, the
prejudices against it, and some interpretative insights into it. "Across the Atlantic and Out of the Woods: Moholy-Nagy's Contribution to Photography in the United States" presents not just the historical case for Moholy-Nagy but the one for Smith as well.

And the interpretive statements largely describe Smith's work too. Of Moholy-Nagy's photograms, the form of image most directly related to Smith's refraction "drawings" he wrote:

Through the photogram, Moholy leads us into the reaches of these solar spaces using dark for light. Into the solar plexus, outward to the solar system, both of which are barely explored, hardly known and charged with energy and mystery, these remarkable pictures take us. Visual spaceships for the imagination.50

Does not this description conjure up his own Grotesque (Figure 36), Giant (Figure 31), Battles and Games (Figure 42), and the Untitled [Venice Turpentine 1957] (Figure 59)? Does not this description provide a metaphor which explicates and illuminates the imagery of the student, beyond the reaches but not beyond the hopes of his master?
NOTES

1 Henry Holmes Smith and Wilson Hicks, "Photographs and Public," *Aperture* 2:3 (1953), p. 9. This is a two part article. Each part is individually authored.

2 A complete breakdown by style of Smith's articles would be a very complex task. There are elements of the three cited styles in many articles, yet few totally fall into one stylistic approach. Since my concern is more with the content of Smith's writing, I cite here an example of an article which has lists, one which is mostly characteristic of intellectual argumentation, and one which by the time it concludes with its discussion of myth, sex and emotion is evocative of a stream of consciousness style.


3 By sensibility I mean the attitude brought to the picture making process combined with the emotive, psychological interaction that occurs between the image and the viewer.

4 For representative articles concerned with education and education issues see:
   - Henry Holmes Smith, "What the Old Have to Tell the Young," T.S. April 1979 based on Smith's 1979 Keynote address to the National Conference of the Society for Photographic Education, Ft. Worth, Texas.

5 For articles concerned with photojournalism see:

See:

I thank Jack Welpott for this notion of apologist in relation to Smith. I think it fits him perfectly and have decided to use it in the same metaphorical spirit Welpott mentioned it to me.

Smith's mimeo press publications indicate that he was more interested in an exchange of ideas rather than in an exchange of money.


Henry Holmes Smith, letter to Minor White, 12 Sept. 1953. A copy of this letter is with the HHS Papers.

Minor White, letter to Henry Holmes Smith, 9 Sept. 1953. A copy of this letter is with the HHS Papers.

In a letter to Smith, dated 8 Feb. 53, Minor White wrote:
Congratz on the little leaflett [sic] called "On Photoy." That is a delightful little number. Best of all it shows that somebody is doing some thinking about pictures.

What do you think of taking these same subjects and enlarging on them a little for APERTURE?... This is an excellent approach to "Reading the Photo" and I hope you find time to write it out completely and for publication in APERTURE.

A copy of this letter is with the HHS Papers.

The reader is referred to the Henry Holmes Smith/Minor White correspondence itemized in the bibliography. Copies of this correspondence may be found with the HHS Papers.


Terry Barrett, "Reading as a Method of Photographic Criticism," Exposure 15:4 (December, 1977), pp. 3-5.


Henry Holmes Smith, Related Papers on the Classification and Appreciation of Photographs and Photographers (Bloomington, Ind.: Photographer's Exhibition Service), 1963.

A copy of this mimeo press publication is in the Archives at the International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House, Rochester, New York.


Henry Holmes Smith, "Problems of the Contemporary Photo-journalist," T.S., n.d. These quotes are taken from a version of the lecture re-written after the lecture Smith gave to the National Press Photographers Association in New Orleans. This version and a version which is part TS and part MS are both with the HHS Papers.

Henry Holmes Smith, "How Shall We Use Montage?" Design Magazine 35:6 (December 1933), pp. 21, 27.

Henry Holmes Smith, "Research Bulletin PM-1" (Columbus, Ohio: Design Research Laboratory), May 1935. A copy of this is with the HHS Papers.


23Many of Smith's colleagues and former students spoke on his voracious reading habits which encompassed an almost encyclopedic variety of subjects. Robert Fichter, one of Smith's former students, remarked in an interview on April 13, 1979 that he was amazed how Smith would bring materials into class from seemingly unrelated fields and build bridges into photography.

When Smith first came to Indiana University he began to study for an M.F.A. After deciding that his own department did not have the courses he felt were necessary to bridge his knowledge gaps, he began taking courses during the summer with literary critics who were brought in for special sessions. This was where he came into contact with I. A. Richards, Kenneth Burke, Francis Ferguson and William Empson.

In our correspondence, Smith has referred to the importance of Weston La Barre's The Ghost Dance, to his thinking about myth, symbol, culture and religion.

Recently Smith has discovered the writings of René Thom on Catastrophe Theory. He sees a strong relationship between this theory in mathematics and his own work.

In a letter from 9 May 1979 he said:
About "Catastrophe Theory": I was first struck by the diagrams of visual "catastrophes" that resembled the light play in some of my pictures. Without trying to stretch the analogy, I have come to the conclusion that my thematic work can be compared in someways to "the problem of succession of form; the universe we see is a ceaseless creation, evolution and destruction of forms...." My process involves the extraction from this process certain ephemeral models. The book which I saw on a table in a Berkeley, California bookstore is by René Thom. It is called "Structural Stability and Morphogenesis." It was not a book I could read as I lacked the mathematical background, but as one reviewer said the book consisted of a blend of straightforwardness and dream-poetry (which insofar as I can read the dream-poetry appeals to my idea of reality.)
In Waddington's foreword p. xv [Thom is quoted:] "... We perceive beings, objects, things to which we give names. These beings or things are forms or structures endowed with a degree of stability; they take up some part of space and last for some period of time." They have boundaries; a boundary implies a discontinuity; and the mathematics used in almost all science so far is based on the differential calculus, which presupposes continuity. This is the lacuna Thom is attempting to fill." On p. xvi: Waddington writes: "... sudden transitions and sharp boundaries between one tissue and another are examples of Thomian castastrophies."

If you get this book in the mathematics library somewhere, just look at the plates following page 162, unless you adore mathematical equations. I don't. When I saw the book I sensed a potential as I had when I first saw The New Vision. I probably will not live sufficiently long to realize from this book what The New Vision eventually meant to me. That's how it goes.

These articles dealing with image issues are to be distinguished from his articles on pedagogy, and politics within the photography and art communities.


Smith's concept of representation in photography is also presented in "Some Guideposts to the Appreciation of Photography" first published in Smith's Related Papers on Classification and Appreciation of Photographs and Photographers in 1963 and reprinted in Henry Holmes Smith: Selected Critical Articles, 1977, pp. 12-19. This article is discussed later in this chapter.

Ibid.

The reader is referred back to chapter 3, to Henry Holmes Smith, "Museum Taste and the Taste of Our Time," Aperture 10:2 (1962), pp. 52-55; and to "The Wasp Esthetic
and the Vanishing Photograph," TS, December 10, 1962. A copy of this TS is with the HHS Papers.

29Henry Holmes Smith, "Representation in Photography."

30Ibid.


33Ibid.

34At the 1979 National Conference of the Society for Photographic Education, during a question and answer session following Smith's keynote address, he angered some people in the audience by repeating essentially the charge he made in this article; that unthinking, unexamined approaches are detrimental and that those who call themselves professionals and teachers must open themselves to ideas as well as to technology, to discipline as well as to emotionalism, to insight as well as to oversight. It appeared that most of those angered did not understand his basic premise. His own frustration with this problem lead to an exchange on both sides that bordered on the vitriolic.


36Ibid.

37Ibid., p. 11.

38Ibid.

39See footnote 26 for citation.

See footnote 17.


This "dictum" which Smith was discussing in 1967 was still in evidence in the 1978 exhibition and book, Mirrors and Windows: American Photography since 1960. Both projects were organized by the Museum of Modern Art's John Szarkowski.


46 Henry Holmes Smith, "The Photographer's 'Subject,'" Henry Holmes Smith: Selected Critical Articles, p. 27.

47 Ibid., p. 29.


49 Ibid., p. 32.

A GUIDING LIGHT: HENRY HOLMES SMITH AS EDUCATOR

Henry was sitting over here with this very broad definition of what photography was. And he kept teaching from that point of view.

Henry kept it [the Bauhaus definition of photography] alive. He was like a medieval monk in a monastery keeping this body of knowledge going until the world was ready for it.

He built the foundation for modern photography.

And his own students caused it to happen.

From an interview with Jack Welpott.¹

Henry Holmes Smith was there in the beginning. He was the first photography instructor at the New Bauhaus in Chicago in 1937. He helped to inaugurate a new era in photographic education in the United States.

From the invention of the medium until well into the twentieth century photographic education was essentially technical education. Alfred Stieglitz's studies in the 1880s with Professor Vogel in Germany were centered around technical work. That Stieglitz turned the technical knowledge to aesthetic ends reveals part of his foresight,
not part of the intent of his educational process.

One might mark the year 1937 as the beginning of photographic education, in an institutional setting in the United States, concerned primarily with design and expressive possibilities. In that year Moholy-Nagy opened the short-lived New Bauhaus which was subsequently reorganized and re-named the Institute of Design, and at Ohio University emerging from a camera club was an "enthusiasm ... so contagious that ... a course in photography was added to the curriculum of the College of Fine Arts."^2

Photographic education in the United States, in a formal university or college setting, is largely a post World War II phenomena. The first Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in the country in photography was awarded in July 1943 by Ohio University, Athens, Ohio, with the first Master of Fine Arts degree in photography being given in 1946 by the same institution.^3

In attempting to discuss Smith, the teacher, one is confronted with the elusive problem of how Smith performed in the classroom, how he related to his students, what his pedagogical methods were and one is confronted with documents—his published papers, unpublished notes and correspondence. It is, of course, easier to sort through the documents than to examine a man's behavior. The documents provide us with a wealth of ideas and allow us to put them in perspective. From interviews with several of Smith's
former students, from published notes of appreciation, from letters, from student evaluations, and from discussions with Smith it has been possible to draw a picture of Smith the teacher.

There has always been a strong interrelationship between Smith's writings, his imagery, and his concerns as an educator. His ideas, as set forth in articles, which were developed largely out of pedagogical concerns or which were directly aimed at photographic educators, are discussed in this chapter rather than the one devoted to his writings. This is a somewhat arbitrary but useful separation.

Smith was educated to be a teacher of art. His curriculum while a student at Illinois State Normal University was art education and his degree from The Ohio State University was a B.Sc. in Education with an emphasis in art. Yet, he did not find the concepts regarding education and art which were presented to him as a student to be very useful. He felt his teachers generally taught by rote and did not deal with issues of real substance. When he discovered The New Vision by Moholy-Nagy in 1933 he realized he had found something that for him was both extremely useful and important.4

The year 1933 seems to have been a pivotal year in Smith's life. In that year he taught photography for the
first time, discovered Moholy-Nagy, and published his first articles related to photography and arts education. The course he taught was an informal one given for design students at The Ohio State University. He gave this course, which Smith says lasted four or five sessions and was not terribly good, largely because the structure of the university did not permit the design students, who were in the college of the arts, to take the formal photography courses, which were in the college of engineering. In fact when Smith came to Ohio State in the fall of 1932 he approached the photography instructors about taking the course himself. He was not able to, because he was in the wrong college, but was able to obtain the textbook and copies of the exams for his own study. This was the first time Smith had any exposure to formal photographic instruction.

His writings, at this time, stressed ideas which could be put to use in an art classroom. The articles dealt with making inexpensive cameras and with making stencils with one possible application listed as the production of "shadow pictures." This idea represents a form of cameraless photographic image which Smith returned to briefly in his own work in the 1950s (Figures 38 and 39). It is also an idea visually related to Bruguiere's photographs of illuminated cut paper (Figure 20) and would seem, too, to be related to the simple light modulation devices which
played such a large role in Smith's teaching at the New Bauhaus and during the early years of his tenure at Indiana University.

From the end of 1933 until Smith came to the New Bauhaus in 1937 he was not engaged in teaching nor in writing about educational issues. Much of his time was divided between his editorial job for the American Ceramic Society and his investigation into the mechanics of color photographic printmaking.

The chain of events which ended in Smith's being hired to help design the photography laboratory and to teach the photography courses at the New Bauhaus began in the Spring of 1937 when Smith responded to an ad for a "dark room man" for the portrait studio of Laurence Guetthoff in the Marshall Field store in Chicago. Smith moved, from his parents home in Bloomington, Illinois, where he had established a small photo-finishing business in their basement, to Chicago. While working primarily as a printer for Guetthoff, Smith was given by him a copy of the Penrose Annual which included Moholy-Nagy's article "Paths to the Unleashed Colour Camera." Smith read, at about the same time, an advertisement for a lecture Moholy-Nagy was to give in Chicago. After attending the lecture and having read the article Smith wrote to Moholy-Nagy asking him if he realized there was an extension of the ideas presented in his article. Smith's idea meant that
not only could one explore color in photography from a
symbolic point of view rather than a naturalistic one, as
Moholy-Nagy was advocating, but one could explore color
through monochromatic materials, and, at least theoreti-
cally, one could use an unlimited number of transfers.

Smith says that his printing in color, at this time,
had moved beyond the possibilities Moholy-Nagy had con-
sidered. Smith by this time was making dye prints with
six, eight, and ten transfers. This was generally not
done at that time because "natural" color, which is what
was generally desired, only required three transfers. And
it was definitely not in the literature of the time.

Smith feels it was this idea which prompted Moholy-
Nagy to visit him at the portrait studio. Smith described
this visit:

I got called out of [the darkroom]. And some-
body came in and said, "Somebody wants to see
you." So I . . . went out, and there was Moholy.
Well, I almost fell down. That's all. I mean,
it's like your dream comes true but you keep
on living, you know. And he was saying "Smees,
please." He always called me "Smees." And it
was nice, very nice.10

According to a document which described what the course
content at the New Bauhaus for the 1938-1939 academic year
would have been had the school not closed, Smith was listed
as Technician of Photography Studio while Mr. "George"
(Gyorgy) Kepes was listed as being in charge of Drawing and
Photography.11 The role Smith played in the photography
program seems to have become clouded over the years. Since Kepes was listed in this document as Head of the Photography area some people have assumed Smith to have been a technician in the sense of maintaining the darkroom facilities. The confusion has arisen because in the structure of the school Kepes would have been officially Smith's superior. However, during the one year of the school's operation the documentation would seem to support Smith's assertions that he taught the photography courses and in fact that he taught the first photography course at the New Bauhaus. It seems that Kepes had not arrived by the opening date of the school. Therefore, even if he were supposed to have taught the photography course he could not have. From a file of letters and other documents, mostly personal notes housed with the Henry Holmes Smith Papers at the Center for Creative Photography at the University of Arizona, it can be ascertained that much of the course design was Smith's, that much of the original equipment used was Smith's, that Moholy-Nagy considered Smith to be a valued member of his staff, that Moholy-Nagy felt Smith had important ideas relating to educational issues and that several of the students were appreciative of the instruction Smith gave them and appreciative of the exchange of ideas between them.

In a letter from Grace B. Seelig, one of the students at the New Bauhaus, to Smith which was addressed to "Dear
Homer" one finds, ". . . I had spent almost all of my money for film . . . Hope there is something good so you can be proud of one of your bad students." One finds, too, a sketch for a proposed darkroom installation in Smith's hand dated October 1937, a document titled "Questions Concerning the Darkrooms" and several pages of notes to be used in class and a document which discussed the years photography work and which carries first Smith's and then Kepes's names. While the relative degree of input each man had in regard to the teaching of photography may be a matter for some dispute it is clear that Smith was integrally involved in the teaching of photography at the New Bauhaus. From his notes some of his concerns and his ideas become apparent. In one document one finds a series of pretest questions designed to ascertain his students' knowledge of photographic chemistry and technique.

One finds that before she/he was to be introduced to camera operation the student would have been exposed to the making of photographs, a discussion of the history of photography, a discussion of light and introduced to the problem of light modulation devices. And in a document stating course objectives for teaching elementary photography one finds in addition to the teaching of camera use, the use of films, and the processing of films that Smith listed as objectives, "To teach the technique of color
photography" and "Making the Photogram" both in black and white and in color.\textsuperscript{15}

When he went to Indiana University in 1947 he also designed a pretest questionnaire, but this later one was more sophisticated and dealt with issues of aesthetics, science, and history, too. The questionnaire, "What Are Your Ideas about Photography?",\textsuperscript{16} reveals much about Smith: that he had a deep interest in and knowledge of color at a time when color was not fashionable in the "art" world of photography; that he believed photography to be related to art; that he believed that the nonobjective photograph is also nonabstract; and that he had a deep interest in the history of art, science and photography.

The idea of teaching color photography to a group of beginning students is an idea that only recently has been picked up in photographic education. Reasons for this include the expense of the materials, the general feeling that a student should master the fundamentals of photography, i.e., black and white before pursuing color and most importantly the fact that until recently the photographic tastemakers excluded "color" photography which was generally considered decorative rather than emotive, from "serious" photography. If it was not "serious" then why should it have been taught? Since Smith and Moholy-Nagy not only did not ascribe to this viewpoint but actively endorsed color photography it should not be surprising to find mention of
it in Smith's proposed curriculum. Partly due to a lack of equipment and to the political chaos within the school, color was not pursued a great deal. However, when Smith began teaching at Indiana University he introduced dye-transfer print making to his students. In the Indiana University Art Museum archives one can see some examples of this student work from the late 1940s. Some of these pieces represent a body of work which clearly has the influence of Smith stamped upon it. In this respect these pieces are highly unusual because the work of Smith's students tends to be highly individualistic rather than imitative.

Smith has been repeatedly asked why, when most of the well known photography instructors of his generation, Aaron Siskind, Harry Callahan, and Minor White, produced students in which the influence, at least in work done while a student and for a time thereafter was clearly derivative of the teacher, his own students work was not. He has stated:

I went to considerable lengths to try to find out what would strengthen each one of those students as a person. I wasn't able to do it with all of them, but I spent a lot of time on it. And some of them recognize it and acknowledge it; some of them don't and that's fate. But when you do that, you don't wind up with homogenization, you don't wind up necessarily atomizing the people either. They grow around their own center. And that's the one place where I would have disagreed ultimately... with Moholy. I think the individual's more important than the culture in a culture like ours.
What Smith left unsaid is that as the years passed and as his program at Indiana University grew from a handful of students in the late 1940s to well over one hundred in the 1960s and 1970s that he was less and less able to give students the kind of individual attention his philosophy demanded. One of the complaints about Smith, which seems to be at least as much a problem created by a program which grew in student but not faculty numbers, has to do with his not giving students, particularly undergraduate students, enough attention.

This problem reflects both the overload of students Smith had to deal with and his own uncompromising attitude about how one should teach. In this difficult situation students who actively sought Smith out and who could handle his blunt criticism possibly could gain something from him. Those who did not seek him out and were not secure enough to have their values questioned found Smith difficult to have as an instructor.19

The curriculum Smith used in his courses at the New Bauhaus, according to him, was proposed by him to Moholy-Nagy. It should not be surprising that since Smith had already been greatly influenced by Moholy-Nagy's writings that his approach to teaching photography was related to that influence. Speaking of how the course content came about Smith said:
I proposed [the course] . . . He, of course, contributed. And he saw that certain things were done, like start with photograms and . . . with printing out paper. And I wouldn't have done that. But I did it. It wasn't that I didn't want to do it, it's just it wouldn't have occurred to me to start that way. . . . But I put the light modulator in, which he was very enthusiastic about . . . it was based on Bruguiere. I didn't show them anything. I said, "... take a piece of paper and turn it into a three-dimensional object that reflects light in varying amounts." That's the assignment.20

The manner in which Smith presented this problem reveals a lot about his approach to education. He had no interest in hand holding nontinking students. He was concerned with putting the student in a situation where a problem must be carefully thought through before even a tentative solution can be worked out. He was concerned with the intellectual development of the student. He purposely gave assignments where the procedure needed to reach a solution had to be discovered by the student. And he gave assignments where the student had to explore the materials in a pure sense before exploring them in an applied sense. Typically photography instructors frequently ask students to photograph some kind of object or objects, for example make a landscape photograph. Smith favored the approach of asking the student to deal with properties, to make photographs, for example, of volume, texture, and shape. Jack Welpott has observed that this approach caused Smith to appear enigmatic to many students.21 He implied that
it was this rigorously intellectual examination of properties which many students resisted because of the naive assumption held to by so many in our culture, and inculcated by the popular photography magazines where one important aim is to help manufacturers sell more equipment, that photography is easy. What is easy is the making of an image. With the ever increasingly sophisticated equipment anyone can make a photograph. What requires education, what Smith has spent his lifetime addressing, is the problem of learning how to use photography to communicate.

The actual making of images as artist and as teacher was only part of what interested Smith. He felt that students needed to understand the history of the medium they were using and felt that the student needed to be able to express ideas about images verbally as well as visually. Smith began to develop materials for presentation in class which did not deal with imagemaking but rather with image understanding. Shortly after he arrived at Indiana University he set out to research and put together a course in the history of photography. Part of the motivation for doing this was somewhat selfish, as discussed in the biographical section, yet the underlying reason for developing this course was not to get out of doing work for the audio-visual department, but to examine the work of photographers in an historical and cultural context in order to better understand how the medium has developed from a technological
point of view, an aesthetic point of view, and a cultural point of view.

To develop the materials for this course he received a small grant in 1948 from Indiana University and, along with his wife, he traveled to Chicago, Philadelphia, New York City and Washington, D.C. to see important collectors, curators and collections of photographs. During the summer of 1949 he did research on the history of photography at George Eastman House, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and at the Library of Congress. In addition to developing lecture material he was able to obtain from Paul Vanderbilt, curator of Prints and Photographs at the Library of Congress, a group of "rare nineteenth century photographs from Brady onward, and rare platinum prints from Photo-secession photographers for the first important historical photography show at Indiana University."22

This course seems to be the first one that was taught as a formal course in an art department in an American university.23 It is still a subject area which is struggling to find a home in American universities. Like the making of photographic images it has been taught in many departments from many points of view. Thirty years after Smith inaugurated the teaching of the History of Photography the University of Arizona began the first actual Ph.D. program in the History of Photography. The last several years has also seen the History of Art people
beginning to make room for it within that discipline. But photography is too ubiquitous to fit comfortably into the History of Art mold. Because Smith understood the ubiquitous nature of photography he reached out toward other disciplines.

By the early 1970s Smith, his colleague Reginald Heron, and his former student Robert Forth, tried to establish a special "Institute for the Advanced Studies in Photographic Arts and Sciences," and with his colleague Reginald Heron in 1971, he tried to start at Indiana University an interdisciplinary graduate program in photographic studies which was not geared toward the "'unemployable' exhibiting photographer."24

In a copy marked first draft, the purpose of the Institute for Advanced Studies is stated as:

intended to fill a long-existent gap in the professional services available to photographers, photographic instructors, advanced students and individuals and concerns interested in the manufacture and distribution of photographic materials, supplies and processes.

It is incorporated as a non-profit educational institution, unaffiliated with any other institution, but cooperating with all interested individuals and institutions in the advancement of photography in its scientific, artistic and technical areas.25

They propose that the institute will provide evaluation services in relation to materials and equipment. That it will provide reviews of literature for the field, help to obtain autobiographies of important photographers whose
biographies are "not otherwise well published,...report on private collections of photographs as located and assessed," act as a clearing house for special courses, for seminars and for visiting faculty.26

This vision of a loosely organized professional group goes back to the late 1950s and is what Smith originally hoped the Society for Photographic Education (SPE)27 would be. From the challenge Smith made to the Society in his 1979 keynote address it is evident that the Society has not lived up to his original hopes.28 And given the fact that his proposal for an Independent Institute was not made until several years after the SPE came into existence it would seem to demonstrate that he had felt the organization has not lived up to his hopes for many years. Perhaps, one needs to ask whether the SPE or any independent institute could have lived up to Smith's hopes taking into consideration the financial problems of remaining totally independent of industrial and institutional patronage for support and the problems involved in securing the long term commitment to scholarly and creative free exchange. Smith's hopes for the SPE and for his Institute seem to have been thwarted by the difficulty of translating utopian ideals into the work-a-day world of social reality.

What is interesting, nonetheless, is that many of these ideas suggested in this document and in other Smith documents have been picked up by people, it is true on a
more ad hoc basis than Smith would have liked, and developed. One may look at the activities and publications of the Visual Studies Workshop in Rochester, New York, Exposure, the publication of the SPE, the conferences of the SPE, the distribution system established by Light Impressions from Rochester, New York, the Oral History Project in Photography and the Collections Indexing Project both headed by James McQuaid and both centered at The International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House in Rochester, New York to gain a true sense of how many of the ideas brought to the surface in Smith's workshops, writings, and public utterances have begun to make their way into the photographic community. What Smith needed in order to pull all of these ideas together was a patron who could have financed his vision while remaining independent of the operation of the institute. But he has never been able to find the kind of patron he needed to make the venture come to life. It has remained for Nathan Lyons, who it would seem has drawn on some of Smith's ideas, to develop the Visual Studies Workshop, an organization which does many of the things Smith's hoped for institute would have.

Smith's desire to expand his program at Indiana University to a truly inter-disciplinary one did not come to fruition, either. Smith argues this was because of the administration's total indifference to the photography
program. Whether that is the total reason or whether other financial and political concerns came into play is difficult, of course, to clearly ascertain.

What one can examine is the idea Smith put forth. The idea takes into account the truly ubiquitous nature of the medium of photography. It is based, said Smith, partly on the wide ranging scope of photography as discussed by Adrian Ter Lowu during the 1940s. Smith's perception of Ter Lowu's notions is that photography's scope is so broad that it is almost beyond understanding. Perhaps this is one reason why photographic education has tended to be atomized within universities. There are few separate Departments of Photography. Rather photography is typically found in art departments, art education departments, journalism departments, engineering departments, agricultural schools and so on.

What Smith was proposing was to bring these many facets together so that photography could be studied as a discipline rather than as an adjunct subject.

He wrote that the program could lead to one or a combination of several professional areas such as:

1. Museum Photography
2. Field Photography for Archaeological Expeditions
3. Attribution and curatorial photography (either for museum, educational institution or as a private business)
4. Expressive and exhibition photography
5. College or Secondary School Teaching
6. Applied Creative Photography (in advertising or industry)  

And he stated that the kind of student he was looking for had:

1. demonstrated competence in contemporary black and white and color photography processes
2. demonstrated ability to remain in the top fourth of the class in academic studies
3. broad cultural interest with emphasis on the visual arts
4. more than passing attention paid to the history of art
5. intense interest in one or more of the study areas listed in the previous paragraph
6. demonstrated ability to work with concentration and intensity in areas of primary interest
7. exceptionally high energy levels for both practical and intellectual pursuits.

And he stated that the program was "intended to be highly professional preparation for the production of important and original work in the late twentieth century."  

What this document reveals is both Smith's understanding that photographic education, having moved from largely technical education prior to the 1940s, needed to expand beyond the notions of a pure art education devoid of social uses.

This notion requires that the educational process become more inter-disciplinary in structure. And it can be seen to be related to the Bauhaus educational ideas where art, science and technology are interdependent elements to be used to benefit the larger culture. Where Smith diverges from this Bauhaus concept is in his insistence on tailoring the program to each specific student's
specific goals. And this idea of inter-disciplinary photographic education is one, too, which the critic A. D. Coleman suggested in his 1974 article "My Camera in the Olive Grove" is the direction that photographic education must take if it is to remain culturally vibrant.33

Smith's broad based, open attitude concerning what photography is all about helped to create an atmosphere, at least with his students, which allowed for divergent points of view, both visually and verbally to be explored and nurtured. This openness was inculcated in his students, many of whom have gone on to become prominent educators and photographers themselves, and through his students has entered the larger culture, almost like osmosis.34

That he approached photography from an open point of view, accepting modes of work, indeed pioneering modes of photographic work, which are still considered to be only tangentially related to the medium is clear. That he was truly committed to a liberal education seems evident too. His former student Robert Forth has said:

He welcomed students from all departments . . . at a critique, the imagery and discussions were usually diverse, compared to what I had experienced at an art school. This liberal education was being accomplished by the use of a truly commonplace medium—photography—and thus was the medium elevated; self respect for the student's other interest was supported rather than negated.35

This idea seems to be further supported by Jerry Uelsmann who commented about his own education in a letter written
to Smith not too long after he finished his graduate education under Smith. His comments reveal some bits and pieces of Smith's attitude and style and most certainly reveal Uelsmann's perception of Smith's effect upon him.

A passage from a letter of 30 December 1960 signed by "your student, Jerry" reads:

...now that I am away, I am aware that your program was much more structured than I had ever thought it to be while I was involved with it. The structuring and direction may be subtle, it is definitely. I can recall many incidents, which at the time appeared to be a passing comment, an emotional outburst, a whisper [sic], a gesture, an uninvolved conversation on a non-photographic subject, etc. Every once in a while I'll be doing something, teaching a class, going to the toilet, talking to someone, etc., like the lifting of [a] veil or some damn thing I'll realize the implication of one of these small events from my immediate past. Forgive me if I am unable to express this in writing because it is basically an experience. Sometimes I sit down and spend an hour over one of these damn things. I then sit down and smile to myself for an hour over one of these damn things. I sit down and wonder what it is. I sit down and wonder how my "Smith-years" would have been different without your "Smith-years". I sit down and wonder how my "Smith-years" would have been different without your "Smith-years". I sit down and wonder how my "Smith-years" would have been different without your "Smith-years". I sit down and wonder how my "Smith-years" would have been different without your "Smith-years". In terms of ideas, attitudes, and experiences...
That these little time capsules still explode in Uelmann is an indication in Smith's terms of his own success as an educator. He has commented that a "good teacher leaves in [the student] little time capsules which pop off during a lifetime." 38

That Henry Smith brought his influence from Moholy-Nagy and the New Bauhaus to his teaching there is little doubt. Robert Forth, one of Smith's more prominent students states that the method employed by Smith with beginners was "the Bauhaus ritual." 39 But Smith drew from other sources in his teaching, too; literary criticism seems to be his most important source. Smith was concerned with students being able to verbalize about their images, perhaps because he realized that what he was really training was an audience for pictures more than picture makers. He once stated:

It would be better by far, if schools such as ours created a pernickety audience than for us to turn out more exhibiting photographers—an audience that won't put up with badly printed, badly taken, badly thought out and lying photographs. 40

Smith believes that photography is a language, and he conducted his classes with the intent of developing the language skills of his students. In addition to the photographic problems related to understanding the plastic controls of the medium Smith made his students look at images, write about images, learn the history of the
medium as well as make images. He stated: "One cannot teach a language from a position based mainly on applied technology," which historically had been the primary approach of photographic education. "To reach an art's history or aesthetics from this viewpoint is laughable. Only in photography has it been tolerated. Yet ignorance cuts both ways and here the teacher must bleed." 41

Believing that photography was a language meant that it had a structure, a syntax which could be analyzed and dissected. Much of Smith's teaching dealt with a search for the tools to unravel this syntactical structure. He went to literary criticism in search of models and gave to photography a technique, somewhat naive and not wholly satisfactory of reading a photograph. It was based upon I. A. Richards' technique for reading a poem as outlined in his book *Practical Criticism*. 42

His interest in photographic criticism led to the "reading photograph" experiments of the 1950s. It was Smith who proposed that a dialogue on this subject begin in his article "Photographs and Public" in *Aperture*. 43 And it was Smith who gave a demonstration of this method in the same article. It was Smith who encouraged his students to write about photography. And it was Smith who published in 1963 an interesting document which contains essays by him and his students on *Related Papers on Classification and Appreciation of Photographs* and
Photographers. In this document are articles related to developing a terminology for photography, "Models for Critics," etc. The intellectual depth of this document reflects on the uniqueness of Smith's concerns and his demands on his students. Photographic education has not had a widespread reputation as a vigorously intellectual field. Smith has worked long and hard not just to teach how to make an image, but also what one can gain from exploring the medium from a critical, philosophical and historical point of view.

Smith's concerns as an educator may perhaps be best seen through an examination of two intensive summer workshops he organized at Indiana University. The first, held during the summer of 1956, was devoted to photographic interpretation. The second, held during the summer of 1962, was devoted to methods of photographic instruction. Both of these workshops have become almost legend. They represent two of the pivotal events of the last quarter century within the history of photography. Both workshops brought together some of the most important educators and photographers of the mid-twentieth century. Participating in the first workshop were such people as Minor White, Aaron Siskind, Eugene Meatyard, Ralph Hattersley, Jack Welpott, Yoichi Okamoto and Van Deren Coke. Photographers such as Harry Callahan, Brett Weston and Dorothea Lange although not in attendance, sent examples of their photographic
work for use by the workshop participants.

In a letter to Minor White written during the early planning stages of the workshop, Smith revealed his understanding of the importance of the project. He wrote on April 29, 1955, more than a year prior to the workshop that:

I hold high hopes for this program, and expect if it gets the staff it deserves and the support it can expect from those intelligently interested in photography, it may take its place with the significant contributions of this decade.46

Given the group of people who attended and the dialogue which continued within the field after this event ended, Smith seems to have had a pretty fair sense of the actual importance of this event. For several years Aperture was to print articles on issues sparked by the debate from this workshop. And as recently as 1977 articles have appeared which discuss ideas first publically addressed at this workshop.47

Smith described to Dr. C. William Horrell of Southern Illinois University what he felt was the underlying philosophy of the workshop.

The philosophy back of the workshop is essentially that photographers have a right to know what is going on in their images. To be humbled, if they have assumed too much and to be encouraged if they have doubted too much. In order to do this, photographers need to study their images much more earnestly and carefully than is the custom.48
The format of the workshop was intensive. It met six days a week with three daily sessions. Participants were involved from 8 a.m. until 9:30 p.m. It was designed to draw professionals from outside the university, and that it did splendidly, as well as to be open to students on a for credit basis. In a document titled "A Proposed Workshop in Photography," Smith listed six people he hoped to be able to select from for his staff. These people were: Wilson Hicks, Minor White, Paul Vanderbilt, Roy Stryker, Aaron Siskind, and James Agee. Although only White and Siskind attended the workshop the list reveals that Smith was seeking not just photographers, but people who were accustomed to working with photographers and photographic images as writers, editors, critics, and curators. Hicks, long involved in the field of photojournalism, had written in 1953 part one of "Photographs and Public." Smith wrote part two. These two pieces which appeared in *Aperture*, represent the beginning of the contemporary published dialogue on interpreting the photographic image. Paul Vanderbilt, originally a documentary photographer, was the Curator of Prints and Photographs at the Library of Congress and later held a similar position with the Wisconsin Historical Society. He represented a viewpoint which stressed the importance of the photograph as cultural-historical document rather than as fine art. Roy Stryker directed the Farm Security Administration's mammoth
photography project which documented rural America. It is largely his editorial judgment and his selection of photographers such as W. Russell Lee, Walker Evans, Dorothea Lange, Marion Post Walcott, Arthur Rothstein, and Ben Shahn that has formed our current impression of "Thirties America." And James Agee, novelist, film critic, and collaborator with Walker Evans on Let Us Now Praise Famous Men represented a person who had a brilliant sense of understanding the photographic image along with an equally brilliant literary ability to express his understanding.

As important an event as the 1956 Workshop turned out to be, one can only speculate as to what a remarkable cultural event it would have been had Smith been able to get all six of these people to be on his staff.

The workshop by design was to draw together many of the best people involved in photography. The dialogue created was hoped to be, and certainly was, much more intense than what went on in Smith's regular classes. Yet the content of the workshop seems to have been derived from Smith's regular courses. In his proposal for the workshop he listed the following as the kinds of issues to be discussed.

1. The fact photograph as a creative problem.
2. The fiction photograph as a means of conveying fact.
3. Analysis of photographs produced in [the] workshop.
4. Verbal supplements to photographs.
5. Evaluation of the photographs' effectiveness in communicating the photographer's ideas.
6. Technical assignments arising from workshop assignments.
7. Exercises in reading photographs.

Some of these issues for Smith can be found in his course notes dating as far back as his New Bauhaus days. Many of these issues formed the basis for articles he had written and would write in the future. Appearing in *Aperture* in 1957 was Smith's report on his workshop. In that article he discussed the relationship of his regular teaching to his hopes for the workshop.

The photography instruction at Indiana may be characterized by a combination of learning the techniques basic to camera picture making followed by study of what photographs "say" and when and how they "say" it. Basic to this second program is the study of pictures by other photographers. Study of the photograph by the student who made it has seldom been found as rewarding, as eye-opening, as stimulating, as the study of photographs made by others, whether another student, though preferably by a mature photographer of reputation. One frequently hears the comment, "I never thought photographs could say that!"

This combination of "picture-making and picture-reading" has led, at Indiana, to considerable investigation of the nature of the camera-picture image and its effect on one who looks at it. Some of the questions regarding basic communication with photographs have been repeatedly faced by students in undergraduate and graduate classes and seminars. Hence the Workshop was an attempt to reach exceptionally interested persons with whom these studies might be furthered.

In addition to the dialogue generated by the workshop there are letters by some of the participants which discuss
the value of the experience in both a personal and a more general way. Ralph Hattersley, from the Rochester Institute of Technology, wrote that the workshop gave him the courage to devote time to "delving into the questions pertaining to photography as language." He further stated that the workshop made him realize that there were other professionals with similar concerns about "photolanguage." The workshop served to end some of his frustrating sense of isolation.55

And Yoichi R. Okamoto, who at the time was the Acting Chief, Visual Materials Branch, Press Service of the United States Information Agency and later was the personal photographer for President Johnson, wrote to Herman Wells, President of Indiana University. Among other things Okamoto said:

Unfortunately, at present an abyss and even antipathy divide the smaller creative schools from most of the working practitioners. I have seen Henry Smith's workshop help bridge this division and so hasten the day when photographic visual communication will come to full maturity.56

The dedication to bringing photography to "full maturity" has been an on going one with Smith. His writings indicate this. And his efforts both in the classroom and in the larger public domain indicate this too. His concern for a dialogue amongst teachers of photography began to give shape to an idea for a second workshop. His
workshop on Photographic Instruction was held in the summer of 1962 at Indiana University.

In the announcement for a "Conference and Workshop on Photography Instruction" Smith cited as his purpose the opportunity "to put to the practical test certain theoretical positions held by major teachers in the field." 57

This 1962 conference was unlike the 1956 one in that the earlier one was more purely an intellectual investigation of ideas and concepts and this later one also carried a specific moral charge to the profession. In calling for a "conference and workshop . . . to hasten the improvement of photography instruction" Smith made the following statements.

Teachers, above all stand between the student and all opinion managers who insolently do damage to the medium. These managers, from all walks of life sophisticated and glib, are utterly lacking in important human motivation. Photography under their patronage is set to piddling tasks. Such disrespect invites irrational attacks on this half-understood language.

I believe that our primary community is the community of living photographers, masters, teachers, and students. If we do not join together, no one will join us in our major purpose. This purpose is basically to protect photography from further serious impairment. 58

It is clear that Smith was operating out of a moral position and suggesting a need for action to fill what he perceived to be a moral vacuum. That vacuum began to be filled with a conference on photographic instruction held
later in 1962 at George Eastman House. For out of this later meeting came the steering committee of an "Organization, still unnamed" composed of Smith, Clarence White, Jr., Art Sinsabaugh, Sol Mednick and Nathan Lyons. This fledgling organization would become known as the Society for Photographic Education. And Smith would be on its board of directors for the first decade of its existence.

Over the years his ideas became more finely tuned, more clearly focused. He constantly argued for a widening of possibilities in making images, in teaching photography and in verbalizing about images. In an essay entitled "Photography at College" written for an exhibition of photographs by graduate students of several schools Smith discussed two approaches to teaching. With the first approach the teacher guides the student along one of the tested paths of the masters. Smith observed that this was a valuable route, because "it puts the student in competition with the masters of unquestioned greatness . . . ." but not the only route.

A second way has several branching offshoots and the college teacher may legitimately explore its relevance for his students. The imagery of such work is likely to be associated in the public mind with the mistakes open to photographers, not with the traditional precision and beauty of depiction found in the monochrome prints of the early masters. The methods permit the exploration of color photography with far less domination by technology and consequently more freedom for the human impulse. It offers the possibility of a dialog on equal terms between the photograph and other contemporary art
forms. It may use or abandon the camera as the occasion requires. The general result is perhaps on the order of what one might have expected of nuclear physics research in 1890. Yet one must begin. 63

This second approach, which he advocates being taught side by side with the first, not only widens the photographic possibilities, it is the argument for the acceptance of his own visual work. Perhaps his imagery has needed a generation of students influenced by his philosophy of education in order to be fully understood. For his own imagery represents the perfection in twentieth century terms of those things which were considered mistakes in nineteenth century terms. His imagery, which violated the conception of what nineteenth century man conceived to be photographic unity, i.e., fidelity to nature, emerges after a generation of his teaching, as the seedbed of possibilities for a new generation. 64 What this seedbed needs to flourish is a culture which both fertilizes and stands back enough to allow growth. Smith's dissemination of his ideas on education has provided the nourishment which not only opened the doors for others to broaden their horizons but also has paved the path so that his own work can now be evaluated in a less hostile, more accepting and embracing environment of intellectual and emotional understanding.

It would seem that Smith, while pursuing three seemingly divergent paths of teacher, writer and imagemaker,
has consistently philosophically doubled back in such a way that when he makes a case in one area of endeavor it indicates his activity in another area. Smith, although frequently appearing to some to lack focus, and frequently appearing to stop short of complete development of an idea, can be seen in actuality to have been nurturing the audience which he sorely missed and which he finally is beginning to have in his twilight years.

Smith, in 1961, wrote that:

Students of the top-ranking teachers of photography today are coming into notice and their influence is now felt in colleges, universities, and institutes where they conduct classes. This, alone, marks a major advance in the teaching of the art.65

This statement implies that it takes a generation for advancement to take place and that it will be another generation or two before photographic education is broad based enough to have a systematic impact upon the educational process. From the handful of first generation teachers emerged several dozen good teachers. From the several dozen good teachers, several score will emerge. And so it will go until the initial influence of the first generation is diluted through time, to be re-constructed by the historian, so that those in photography again have a sense of their roots.66 When this occurs the contributions of Henry Holmes Smith, as writer, educator, and
imagemaker, will be better understood. When this occurs the dialogue of differences Smith stimulated will have reached a new plateau.
NOTES

1 From an Oral History Interview with Jack Welpott conducted by Howard Bossen, July 26, 1978, Columbus, Ohio. A copy of this interview may be found with the HHS Oral History at IMP/GEH.


3 Ibid., p. 92. Probably the person to receive this degree was R. M. Baruch, who is the only person listed in Photography: Source and Resource, by Lewis, McQuaid and Tait, Turnip Press, 1973, as receiving a M.F.A. from Ohio University in 1946, p. 162. From the beginning the Ohio University program required a thesis project. Baruch's is listed as Edward Weston: The Man, the Artist and the Photographer.

4 In an unpublished typescript titled, "My Year with Moholy-Nagy: A Brief Memoir," Smith wrote:
Most accurately though I think my preparation for the event in which I participated was the wretched art training of my high school, college and art school years (from about 1925 through 1933) at nameless schools in the Middle West. How such experience is survived or worked out is still a puzzle to me, p. 1.

My teachers' typically American, life-crunching, puritanical, demeaning, formula-ridden program prepared me for the exaltation of Moholy-Nagy's first book in English, [The New Vision]. p. 3. A copy of this document is with the HHS Papers.

5 Oral History Interview, March 1978, reel 3, track 1. Also at this time at Ohio State Frank Haskett taught photography as well as a Mr. Davis. The course offerings were very technical and probably were not concerned with aesthetics very much. The Ohio State catalog from 1933 lists the following course offerings. Photography 611, Engineering Photography 650, Scientific Photography 725 and Advanced Photography 750. Much of Smith's efforts beginning in the early 1930s were directed at broadening photographic education beyond the confines of technical education.

6 Henry Holmes Smith, "How Shall We Use Montage?", Design Magazine, December 1933, Vol. 35, No. 6, pp. 21, 27 --quote from p. 21.

Henry Holmes Smith, "Photopatterns' Composed from


There is a copy of a letter from Laurence Guetthoff to Smith dated July 15, 1937 which asks Smith to stop and see Guetthoff about the job. This letter is with HHS Papers.

In an unpublished typescript titled "My Year with Moholy-Nagy: A Brief Memoir," Smith wrote:

Hardly had I got settled into this hard work [his work in the Marshall Field portrait studio] than the Chicago papers announced Moholy's arrival in Chicago and plan for a school called "The New Bauhaus." For me this was a dream come true. Consciously or unconsciously my life centered on this enterprise and this man.

The course of the late summer culminated in my writing a letter to Moholy, responding to his writing on the future of color photography and describing some theories about it which he had not mentioned in his Penrose Annual article.

His answer was a personal visit to me at the darkroom where I was employed, asking me to help him plan the photography installation and also teach the elementary course. p. 5.

A copy of this document is with the HHS Papers.

Oral History Interview, March 1978, reel 3, track 1.

Ibid., reel 3, track 1.

From a mimeographed document titled:
EXHIBITION
Work from the Preliminary Course, 1937-1938
The New Bauhaus
American School of Design
1905 Prairie Avenue, Chicago, Illinois
Founded in 1937 by the Association of Arts and Industries

This ten page document describes the content of the workshops at the New Bauhaus and lists the staff for the following year. A copy may be found with the HHS Papers.
John Grimes in a lecture given on the late Arthur Siegel at the National Conference of the Society for Photographic Education, April 1979, Ft. Worth, Texas, alluded to Siegel's statements that Smith was merely a technician at The New Bauhaus. Smith says that when Siegel came to the New Bauhaus as a student that he probably knew more about photography than Smith did at the time and that the two men immediately had a personality clash, which lasted essentially until the end of Siegel's life. Since Siegel returned to the Institute of Design (the reconstituted New Bauhaus) as an instructor and later as the head of the photography program it would seem plausible that this personality conflict could be at the heart of Siegel's faulty memory of Smith's actual role as reported through John Grimes. The above problem, of course, points out one of the problems involved in Oral History research.

In particular the reader is referred to the following documents in addition to the one cited in the previous footnote all of which are with the HHS Papers. Henry Holmes Smith, "My Year with Moholy-Nagy: A Brief Memoir," unpublished typescript, 9 pp.

Typescripts headed:
1) "Order of Procedure" 1 page
2) "Books" 1 page
3) "What is Photography?" 1 page
4) "Suggestive outline for teaching elementary photography" 1 page
5) "Questions Concerning the Darkrooms" 1 page
6) "Photographic Emulsions" 1 page
7) "An Analysis of Elementary Photography," dated October 13, 1937, 1 page
8) "Concerning Questions Asked in the Photography Class October 28, 1937" 3 pages
9) Photoworkshop Schedule for November 4, 1937 1 page
10) Basic Photography 1 page
11) Plan for the Photo Studio, Second Semester 2 pages
12) The Beginning Photography Class February 17, 1938 1 page

Signed Henry Holmes Smith, Gyorgy Kepes

There is a sketch of the proposed darkroom by Smith and there are assorted letters from Smith to Moholy-Nagy,
from Moholy-Nagy to Smith as well as letters to others associated with the New Bauhaus.

14. This letter is dated September 27 and begins "Dear Homer." It can be found with the HHS Papers.

15. This is from "Suggestive Outline for Teaching Elementary Photography," which was mentioned in footnote 12, this chapter.

16. Henry Holmes Smith, "What Are Your Ideas About Photography?: A Questionnaire," prepared to determine level of students in first class at Indiana University, Fall, 1947, 4 pages, unpublished. A copy of this document is with the HHS Papers.

17. In the Indiana University Art Museum archives are a selection of student works saved by Smith over the years. They are examples of some early works by Jerry Uelsmann, Betty Hahn, Robert Fichter; Jack Welpott and many others.


19. In many interviews with past students this issue was raised. Perhaps the clearest discussion of this is in the Jack Welpott interview, July 26, 1978, Columbus, Ohio. A copy of this interview is with the HHS Oral History at IMP/GEH.


21. Oral History Interview with Jack Welpott, conducted by Howard Bossen, July 26, 1978, Columbus, Ohio. A copy of this interview is with the HHS Oral History at IMP/GEH.

22. From the Chronology in Henry Holmes Smith's Art: Fifty Years in Retrospect, p. 45.

23. There is a letter from Beaumont Newhall to Smith which is quoted in footnote 26 in Chapter 2. This letter congratulates Smith for his "path breaking."

24. From an unpublished typescript marked First draft, titled: "Indiana University Department of Fine Arts Announces an Exceptional Opportunity for Advanced Study in Photography," 2 pages. A copy of this document is with the HHS Papers.
A copy of this document titled: "Institute for Advanced Studies in Photographic Arts and Sciences," is with the HHS Papers. This document lists: Robert F. Forth as Director, Reginald Heron as Director of Research, Henry H. Smith as Executive Secretary. Three page typescript, marked First draft.

Ibid.

From Notes from private discussions with Smith held on 4 December 1978, Granville, Ohio.

In a typescript of "What Have the Old To Tell the Young?" written in April 1979 and based upon his keynote address to the National Conference of the Society for Photographic Education, Smith wrote:
In the talk at Forth Worth I asserted that the Society must eventually establish an Institute for Advanced Studies in this field if it is ever to be a professional society. I sensed hostility to this suggestion and I may be wrong about this goal. I know well enough some of the risks entailed in such a maneuver; the same ones surrounded by the formation of the society itself.

What I have hoped for since the formation of this society was a possibility of the gathering of small groups of like-minded individuals ... with intensely focused interest in a general problem yet to be solved. The problem would be of sufficient interest that it would override the individual egos and permit concentration on the problem. p. 10.

From notes from private discussions held with Smith 4 December 1978, Granville, Ohio.

See Footnote 24.

Ibid.

Ibid.


This conclusion is partly based upon interviews with his former students. The reader is referred to the following Oral History Interviews copies of which are with the HHS Oral History at the IMP/GEH:
Betty Hahn and Robert Fichter, April 1979
Jack Welpott 1978
Robert Snider 1978
Conrad Pressma 1978
This conclusion is also based upon statements made in letters to Smith by former students. Many of these letters may be found with the HHS Papers.

35 From "An Appreciation" by Robert Forth in Henry Holmes Smith's Art: Fifty Years in Retrospect.

36 From a letter by Uelsmann housed with the HHS Papers.

37 From notes from a personal telephone conversation with Jerry Uelsmann, 23 April 1979.

38 From notes from a public discussion with Smith held at the Columbus Museum of Art, Columbus, Ohio, 5 December 1978.


41 Henry Holmes Smith, "The Workshop Idea in Photography," Aperture, Vol. 9, No. 4, 1961, p. 170. Smith's piece which runs from page 169 through 171 is part of a group of articles all under the title "The Workshop Idea in Photography." The entire collection runs from page 143 through 171 and includes essays by Ruth Bernhard, Ansel Adams, Nathan Lyons, Minor White and Smith. Of the five essays Smith's is the only one concerned with the teaching of teachers, the others are primarily imagemaking workshops.


44 Related Papers on Classification and Appreciation of Photographs and Photographers includes articles by Smith, John Mills, Robert Forth, Wayne Lemmon, Gayle Smalley, Betty Hahn and Margaret Weiss. This mimeo press publication contains "Some Guideposts to Appreciation of
Photography," 5 pp., "Models for Critics," 4 pp., and "Toward a Terminology for Photography," 1 1/2 pp. by Smith. It also contains his comments on a paper by Wayne Lemmon and a "Paraphrase and some glosses of Lemmon Paper," 2 pp. This was a publication of Smith's Photographers Exhibition Service. A copy is in the archives of the IMP/GEH.

45 Jack Welpott commented on this issue as it pertained to the acceptance of Smith's own imagery in an Oral History Interview, July 26, 1978. A copy of this interview is with the HHS Oral History at IMP/GEH.

46 A copy of this letter is with the HHS Papers.

47 Of particular interest to the reader are:
  John Ward, The Criticism of Photography as Art: The Photographs of Jerry Uelsmann (Gainesville, Florida: University of Florida Press, 1970), and
  Terry Barrett, "Reading As a Method of Photographic Criticism," Exposure 15:4, December 1977, pp. 3-5. Ward uses the reading photographs discussions of Smith, Minor White and others as background to a system he proposes. And Barrett's article is an attempt to examine what "Reading is, identify its shortcomings, and to suggest improvements...," p. 4.

48 A copy of this letter is with the HHS Papers.

49 A copy of this one page document is with the HHS Papers.

50 For a discussion of documentary photography and its relationship to what was occurring in America in the 1930s the reader should see: William Stott, Documentary Expression and Thirties America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973)

51 This is the same document as referred to in footnote 49.

52 See footnote 13 in this chapter for a listing of the New Bauhaus material housed with the HHS Papers. The two most pertinent ones here are: "Order of Procedure" which clearly indicates Smith's intention of presenting the history of photography to the students and "The Beginning Photography Class, February 17, 1938." In these documents one finds Smith mentioning history which is one means through which one begins to learn how to respond to the medium.
See the following articles by Smith which appeared in *Aperture:*


Also see:


This list is not exhaustive, rather it is merely representative.


A copy of this letter dated 6/27/56 is with the HHS Papers.

A copy of this letter dated July 11, 1956 is with the HHS Papers.

This announcement for this conference took two forms. The first was a mimeographed announcement, presumably sent to a selected mailing list. A copy of this document is with the Henry Holmes Smith Papers. The second form was through his essay in "The Workshop Idea in Photography." (See footnote number 41 for a full citation.)

Henry Holmes Smith, "The Workshop Idea in Photography," p. 170. The order of quotes is reversed from Smith's text. (See footnote 41 for a full citation.)
From the Chronology section of Henry Holmes Smith's Art: Fifty Years in Retrospect, p. 15.

Henry Holmes Smith, "Photography at College," in a catalog for Graduate Photography: Institute of Design, Indiana University, University of Iowa, University of California at Los Angeles. An exhibition held by Purdue University, December 1-31, 1966 by the Department of Creative Arts, Division of Art and Design Memorial Center Gallery. This exhibition was organized by Vernon Cheek. In addition to Smith's essay there is a short untitled essay by Cheek and eleven photographic prints.

Ibid.

Ibid.

This argument has been more fully developed in Chapters 4 and 5.


My conclusion here was bolstered by comments Jack Welpott made in our interview July 26, 1978. He said: As far as I am concerned there is no more influential person in Twentieth Century photography anywhere. A lot of folks are walking around heavily influenced by him and they do not even know it. For example, the students here at this school [Ohio State University] have been influenced because I was influenced by Henry. I taught Clyde [Dilley]. Clyde is doing it to these students, so there are all these grandchildren walking around who may not even know his name, but who are being influenced by his ideas. A copy of this interview is with the HHS Oral History at IMP/GEH.
CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

Henry Holmes Smith's name is well-known in photographic circles. He is greatly respected as a writer about photography and as a photographic educator. It is through Smith that the philosophical ideas of Moholy-Nagy about light and color in photography have filtered into the mainstream of American photography. Smith took the philosophical ideas of Moholy-Nagy about the potentials of color photography, put them into practice, and extended those ideas beyond the limits Moholy-Nagy foresaw.

Finding the relationships between Smith's writing and Moholy-Nagy's philosophy is not as apparent as in the images, but there are some significant ones. Elements of Moholy-Nagy's philosophy do appear in Smith's writing. The general areas of similarity are related to color, light, education and an openness to visual exploration of all kinds without a moralistic rejection of aesthetic possibilities; a problem common to many critics when they are confronted by work they either do not understand or which contradicts their pet theories.
Moholy-Nagy wrote in *The New Vision* that: "... in education it is necessary to make an attempt at discrimination and definition, especially where none has been established." Although it does not appear that Moholy-Nagy worked on methods of critical inquiry, especially methods as a pedagogical tool, it does appear that this idea is a root idea which Smith clearly believes in; for it is this idea which is the impulse to critical activity. Smith's work in developing methods of critical inquiry, his work in developing a critical terminology for photography and his own criticism illustrate how deeply he felt the importance of Moholy-Nagy's statement.

Smith has written of the need for developing an educated audience. A similar idea is expressed in *The New Vision* when Moholy-Nagy wrote:

More important—one might say the essential condition—for the success of the Bauhaus idea is the education of our contemporaries outside the Institute. It is the public which must come to understand and to aid in furthering the work of designers, if their creativeness is to yield the best results for the community.

The relationship of Moholy-Nagy's philosophy to Smith's writing appears to be largely one of the student reaching out to the teacher, internalizing what the teacher has to offer, and then extending those root ideas well beyond the limits perceived as possible by the teacher. Henry Holmes Smith's photographs and writings stand as a
testament to the extension of many of the philosophical positions espoused by Moholy-Nagy.

Smith's writings about the problems of developing a vocabulary for the discussion of photography and his writings about ways to get at meaning within photographs have a direct and important relationship to the furthering of how photographs mean. His writings are of utmost importance to the education of all who are concerned with photographic communication regardless of whether that communication falls into a sub-category of art or photojournalism or scientific document. His article "Photographs and Public" from 1953 sparked a dialogue within photographic criticism about methods concerned with getting at meaning in photography which in 1979 still has not run its course.

His writings about the potentials of photography and his writings about specific photographers lay out his philosophical position and present arguments for the importance of his work in a covert way while discussing the work of others in an overt way.

Smith as educator and as an imagemaker has influenced major photographers. He was the teacher of Jerry Uelsmann and Betty Hahn. From Smith have come new ways of making photographs, analyzing, and thinking about them. Smith's students Uelsmann and Hahn became involved with various combination printing processes under his tutelage. Yet
they rather than Smith, himself, have been credited with profoundly changing the acceptability of different modes of photographic expression. The popular notion is that people like Uelsmann and Hahn have radically changed the nature of modern photography. In fact, Henry Holmes Smith is to this day much more radical and experimental than they are.

He has kept, as Jack Welpott observed, the Bauhaus ideas of his mentor Moholy-Nagy alive and has transmitted those ideas through his students to a culture somewhat more ready to accept them than forty years ago. He developed many tools available to teacher and critic for the analysis of photographic imagery. He developed a graduate program in photography of national importance and trained several prominent photographers and photography teachers. He was a founding member of the Society for Photographic Education. He was a pioneer in the development of photography instruction in studio courses, and especially in historical and critical studies. He is a visionary in his call for inter-disciplinary photographic education and in his call for an Institute of Advanced Studies in Photographic Arts and Sciences.

He has forged a new direction in photographic imagery through his extension of the nonobjective "shadow picture" concepts of Bruguiere, Man Ray, Christian Schad and Moholy-Nagy combined with the integration of his concepts of synthetic color. He has demonstrated that the photograph
can be approached in a serial fashion similar to the approach Josef Albers took in painting and printmaking. His "Liquid-and-Light" images from the past thirty years make it possible to move the level of discourse in photography to a new level.

Yet, despite this, Smith has had his work rejected not only by those who perceived it as weak or only peripherally related to the medium, but also by some who have felt it was too advanced to be understood by the general public. Ruth Bernhard, a photographer and educator wrote to Smith in April 1961 requesting that he pick a few of his "most significant prints" for a book project of hers called Creative Photography. She says that she has "directed this request to Ansel Adams, Wynn Bullock and the other well-known photographers like yourself. . . ."\textsuperscript{3} From a letter to Smith from his former student Jerry Uelsmann, Bernhard evidently asked him, too, for some work.\textsuperscript{4} From a second letter to Smith from Bernhard dated February 1962, it would seem that when she wrote the first letter she did not have first hand knowledge of Smith's images and that she had assumed that since she was aware of Smith's prominence as a writer and teacher that he was at that time prominent as an imagemaker too, which was not true. She wrote:

After much consideration I have decided not to include your work in my book. . . . I believe your approach and technique is, at present, way above the heads of the most sophisticated reader.
Please let me know when your work is exhibited or published. I would like to see more, more, more!5

Joseph Heller, creator of the term Catch-22, would be amused by the predicament Smith found himself in with his imagery. Rejected by some as having no merit, rejected by others as being too advanced, Smith's imagery has only in the last few years begun to be seen with any regularity. Perhaps it is the fate of those people who are truly ahead of their time to be ignored or ridiculed until their culture catches up. It is hoped that in some small way it is gratifying to Smith that the culture is beginning to be receptive to his imagery; that unlike some visionaries, his work will be understood before he has departed; that he will be around a while to enjoy his own legacy and to bask in the light of recognition so long denied him by a culture too narrowly focused to comprehend his achievements.

Smith's images free photography from notions of nineteenth century realism. His sensibilities are directly related to twentieth century concerns in which the psychological properties of man, along with the physical world are a part of nature. Internal vision is as legitimate to explore as external vision and, most importantly, just as real.

Unlike photographers whose notion of the limits of the photographic medium are bound up in nineteenth century
concepts of realism, Henry Holmes Smith is concerned with neither neutrality nor object recognition. He does not explore the external world of objects. He works with the behavior of light, not as a means of delineating objects but as a material in itself to be manipulated and molded in order to explore a more internal world concerned with emotions and with an evocation of the universal. Smith is concerned with the liberation of the spirit and the expansion of consciousness of visual, emotional, and psychological possibilities.

Asking the right question is a very difficult thing. Yet it would seem that many of the questions Smith has been asking for fifty years have been the right ones. His guiding principles are simple: human beings are capable of an infinite variety of expressive activities; the definition of photography is based upon light, the modulation of light and light sensitive material. Consequently, photographs may take on many forms, may ask many questions, may reveal many truths. The search for truth in photography requires that one be open to accept the infinity of possibilities as valid expressions of human beings.

Perhaps more than any other person, in at least the middle portion of twentieth century, Smith has been leading that search. In opening himself to the vast potentials of human expression, he helped to open the doors for his students. And largely between the openness of himself and
his students a pandora's box of expressive potential has been opened to an entire culture. Finally, in the twilight of his life, the dialogue of differences Smith spent a lifetime working toward is beginning to emerge. It is to be hoped that Smith's audience though fit will not for much longer be few.
NOTES


2 Ibid., p. 11.

3 Ruth Bernhard, Letter to Henry Holmes Smith, April 1961. A copy of this letter may be found with the HHS Papers.

4 Jerry Uelmann, Letter to Henry Holmes Smith, 12 November 1961. A copy of this letter may be found with the HHS Papers.

5 Ruth Bernhard, Letter to Henry Holmes Smith, February 1, 1962. A copy of this letter may be found with the HHS Papers. It is somewhat surprising that Ruth Bernhard adopted this attitude, particularly in light of similarities her position seems to have in relation to Smith's position. She wrote:

   Of all the arts, music is the most abstract; yet it meets with the least resistance. The surest method of helping students to see and to accept that which is unfamiliar to them is to have them listen to music. The transition from music to "abstract" photography follows naturally. Sooner or later students become aware that in studying abstract photographs they are really dealing with accurate renderings of the visual world. That is, they are working with reality and extensions into dimensions of reality hitherto unsuspected--and labeled "abstract" only because unfamiliar.

July 15, 1979

Dear Edward:

This letter conveys permission for you to use quotations from my papers and writings both published and unpublished in excerpts of sufficient length to clarify or emphasize points you make concerning my work and my development in your dissertation now in draft stage in your doctoral study program at The Ohio State University.

It is understood between you and me that when you have completed your work with them copies of all such papers as may be in your possession will be returned to me or the Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona 85719, as I finally direct. You have, as well, permission to use necessary quotations from the material in the Oral History Project, International Museum of Photography, Rochester, New York, relating to me and my work. Any further use of this material beyond the immediate dissertation must be examined and discussed by you and me before further publication may be undertaken. This includes quotations in lectures and related papers before professional groups.

Best wishes for your successful completion of the project.

Henry Holmes Smith

Henry Holmes Smith
Dear Howard:

This letter conveys permission to reproduce works of art, cartoons and photographs by me for use as illustrations in your doctoral dissertation on my life and work, now reaching completion in draft stage for presentation as partial fulfillment of the requirements toward your degree at The Ohio State University.

I urge that every precaution be taken to protect the artist's rights in these pictures by appropriate inclusion of notice of copyright in the artist's name and, further, the mention on each illustration that they are from the Henry Holmes Smith Archives, Indiana University Art Museum, Bloomington, Indiana 47401.

I recommend use of a more easily recognized abbreviation than the one you suggest in your letter. In fact, my contract with the Museum stipulates that the full name of the Museum and Archive by used on each piece reproduced. I hope you can accede to this stipulation.

Best wishes for continued progress with your project.

Sincerely yours,

Henry Holmes Smith

Henry Holmes Smith

Henry Holmes Smith

Box 3741
Incline Village NV 89450
August 3, 1979

Howard Bossem
203 North Plum Street or 225 Collingwood
Granville, Ohio 43023 East Lansing, Michigan 48823

Dear Howard:

This letter conveys permission to reproduce works of art, cartoons and photographs by me for use as illustrations in your doctoral dissertation on my life and work, now reaching completion in draft stage for presentation as partial fulfillment of the requirements toward your degree at The Ohio State University.

I urge that every precaution be taken to protect the artist's rights in these pictures by appropriate inclusion of notice of copyright in the artist's name and, further, the mention on each illustration that they are from the Henry Holmes Smith Archives, Indiana University Art Museum, Bloomington, Indiana 47401.

I recommend use of a more easily recognized abbreviation than the one you suggest in your letter. In fact, my contract with the Museum stipulates that the full name of the Museum and Archive by used on each piece reproduced. I hope you can accede to this stipulation.

Best wishes for continued progress with your project.

Sincerely yours,

Henry Holmes Smith
To: Howard Bossen

The Oral History Project of the Museum seeks to cooperate with serious scholars of similar goals. Because Howard Bossen's work with Henry Holmes Smith coincided with our concerns, we have been able to work with him in any way possible.

All materials created by this Project are only used when their use has been permitted by a release agreement. Any and all materials furnished to Howard Bossen or loaned to him for research purposes are either generally open to researchers or specifically released for his use. He is aware of the restrictions, if any, on the material and has agreed to abide by them.

If there are any further questions regarding this please contact me.

James J. McQuaid
Director,
Oral History Project
August 12, 1979

Dear Howard Bossem,

Just a brief note to let you know that you have my permission to quote me in your dissertation on Henry Holmes Calhoun. I appreciate you sending copies of the quotes in context for my approval. I approve. Recognition of Henry's importance is long over due and I look forward to the eventual publication of your Thesis.

Friendly thoughts,

[Signature]

Jerry N. Uelsmann

5701 Southwest Seventeenth Drive

Gainesville, Florida 32608
July 30, 1979

Mr. Howard Bossen
School of Journalism
Linton Hall
Michigan State University
East Lansing, Michigan 48824

Dear Mr. Bossen:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Minor White/Henry Holmes Smith correspondence. You have our permission to quote Minor's letters in your dissertation on Smith. Should you publish the work at a later time, we would appreciate your writing again for publication permission. There is no fee involved, simply the use of a proper acknowledgment to the Minor White Archive.

Very pleased to know this work is being done on Henry.

Sincerely,

Peter C. Bunnell
Curator of Photography
and Minor White Archive

PCB/kdd
July 27th, 1979

Howard Bossen
School of Journalism
Linton Hall
Michigan State University
East Lansing, Michigan
48824

Dear Mr. Bossen,

By this letter you have permission for the reproduction in five print copies and one microfilm copy of the photograph by William Eggleston reproduced in Mirrors and Windows, page 132.

Reproduction fees for this purpose are waived.

If the reproduction is in black and white, it should state that the original is in color.

Credit should be given as follows:

Photograph by William Eggleston is reproduced by courtesy of Caldecot Chubb, New York.

Sincerely yours,

Caldecot Chubb.
6/3/79

Dear Howard,

Please feel free to reproduce the Wilisla-Nagy Photogram (Fig. 41.) in the purpose of your PhD dissertation only. No fee required. Good luck on your research and dissertation.

Sincerely,

William J. Carson
July 5, 1979

Mr. Howard Bossem
116 East College
Greenville, Ohio 45336

Dear Mr. Bossem:

In answer to your letter of June 15th regarding permission to reproduce the drawing by Henry Holmes Smith, on page 48 of our issue of November 10, 1928, in your Ph.D. dissertation:

Permission for the requested use is hereby granted upon the following conditions:

1. That the drawing and caption* is reproduced in full and unchanged;

2. That the following notice is printed immediately below the caption:

   Drawing by H. H. Smith; ©1928
   1956 The New Yorker Magazine, Inc.

3. That the permission is non-exclusive and limited to the use of the drawing in five copies and a microfilm library copy of your dissertation.

We enclose a xerox copy of the drawing.

Sincerely yours,

Linda Hill
Reprint Department

*"My God! Thick ankles!"
June 20, 1979

Mr. Howard Bossen
116 E. College
Granville, Ohio 43020

Dear Mr. Bossen:

I am writing on behalf of Charles Traub, present director of LIGHT, regarding your letter about reproduction permission for Aaron Siskind's images.

If these photographs will be reproduced only for your dissertation, as you indicate, we can of course waive the reproduction fee, usually $1.50 per print. However, should you require copy prints, there is a charge of $15.00 per print.

Please let me know how you progress and if you need further help.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Maudie Schuyler
Asst. to the Director
Dear Howard Bosen,

I have been away and your letter of July 21 has just revealed itself to me.

You have my permission to quote me in your dissertation. I hope your work will help to bring good things to Henry. His importance cannot be overstated. If possible I would like to see the finished work.

Thanks for your interest and good luck.

In friendship,

Jack Welpott

2011 Precita Ave.
San Francisco, Ca.
94110
Dear Mr. Bossan,

Thank you for your letter dated 3 July. Due to Hans Peter Ranier's holidays and the change of his e-mail address, our reply is delayed.

We grant you the permission to use the plates mentioned in your letter and the quotations of the text attached out of our book for the purpose mentioned and we agree to waive the normal fee.

Please mention in the acknowledgement author, title, publisher and publishing year of the American edition and our company being the original publisher.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Monika & Otto
Picture Editor
George Eastman House

15 August 1979

Howard Bosson
School of Journalism
Linton Hall
Michigan State Univ.
East Lansing, MI 48824

Dear Howard Bosson:

Permission is hereby granted to reproduce, as part of your Ph.D. dissertation on Henry Holmes Smith, material in the collection of the George Eastman House, as requested in your letter of July, 1979.

It is understood that this is not a commercial venture and that Xerox University Microfilms will publish this as a "restricted dissertation."

Sincerely,

Suzanne E. Pastor
Coordinator, Print Service
BIBLIOGRAPHY

All items housed with the Henry Holmes Smith Papers at the Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona are coded HHS Papers. As my research was being conducted Henry Smith made arrangements for his personal papers to become a part of the research archive at the Center for Creative Photography. Since this occurred during the course of my working on the dissertation and after I had accumulated much of my research material I do not have catalog numbers for any of these materials.

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Interviews conducted as part of The Oral History Project in Photography are housed with the Henry Holmes Smith Oral History materials at the International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House, Rochester, New York.

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