



- [HOME](#)
- [ISSUES](#)
- [PROJECTS](#)
- [DROME NEWS](#)
- [DROME EVENTS](#)
- [DROME PROJECT SPACE](#)
- [DROME OPEN CALLS](#)
- [INSPIRED BY DROME](#)
- [IN THE VAN](#)
- [DROMELAND](#)
- [D-LICIOUS](#)
- [D-SIGN](#)
- [D-VISIONS](#)
- [FLASHBACK](#)
- [FRESH INK](#)
- [MEMENTO](#)
- [RING THE BELL](#)
- [SELECTED BY DROME](#)
- [SYNDROME](#)
- [SYNUSI@WHAT?](#)
- [TRACKLIST](#)
- [THEMATIC PILLS](#)
- [CATASTROPHE](#)
- [SUPERNATURAL](#)
- [CHILDHOOD](#)
- [OUTLAW](#)
- [DOUBLE](#)
- [BODY](#)
- [FOOD](#)
- [NOMADISM](#)
- [DROME ON PAPER](#)
- [TAGS](#)
- [EXHIBITIONS](#)
- [INTERVIEWS](#)
- [REVIEWS](#)
- [PHOTOGRAPHY](#)
- [DROME](#)
- [ROME](#)
- [FASHION](#)
- [VISUAL ART](#)
- [VIDEO](#)
- [ART](#)

YORAM ROTH :: INTERVIEW



Deliberate, timeless, reduced to essentials. That's how the German photographer **Yoram Roth** describes his style. On May 9th, he will exhibit his work at **MIA – Milan Image Art Fair** in Milan. He is one of the few artists able to use the language of fashion photography as a raw material. The glamorous aesthetic is just an element mixed with a narrative approach, aiming to create a story condensed in one shot and new interpretation of pictures. A method that is influenced by paintings, and that's why the *Hopper's Americans* project (2009) is an homage to Edward Hopper. Probably, what makes Yoram Roth's style so peculiar is the skill in portraying a model without being focused only on her beauty or pose, putting in that way the concept on the back burner. On the contrary, he always succeeds in curbing the fancy nuances, paying all the attention to the feelings created. It happens in *Struwelpeter*, the photographic recreation of a children story from 1846, as well as in *Hanjō*, the adaptation of Yukio Mishima's version of the 15th Century Noh play.

DROME: *You live and work in Berlin, a city that influenced a lot of artists, musicians, directors and so on. Can you tell me how Berlin affected your work?*

Yoram Roth: My images are staged and constructed, and they happen collaboratively. Berlin has a huge creative community, which makes it possible to create my images. There is a deep talent pool of people to draw from. The large movie industry here means there is a lot of set builders, stylists, and other creative contributors to work with. There are also endless actors and models who are willing to take chances. This is in part driven by the large artistic community. In a city where everyone is trying to achieve something new, something unique, something that has creative impact, the people in front of the camera are less likely to be governed by fear as they might be in New York or Paris these days. In the fashion and television centers around the world, a nude picture might ruin a lucrative contract, or a political statement is considered too *risqué*. The contrary is true in Berlin – the people want to create something provocative.

D: *Could you tell me which aspects of fashion photography you find more interesting?*

YR: I use both the mundane aspects of fashion photography, and the more ethereal. On the production side, I find myself working with models, hair & make-up teams, and lighting gear. That's all pretty straight forward. But I love to play with the ethereal nature of fashion imagery. We have come to accept fashion models as the ideals of beauty of our time. Usually those images are created to help sell a product, to make the viewer believe that wearing these glasses, that suit, those shoes will take us that closer to heavenly perfection. It's not unlike the depiction of saints in baroque painting. But when I use elements of fashion photography my goal is to draw the viewer in... but there is no product, no service that is being sold. It's confusing at first. We have learned to develop a visual filter in our time. No generation in human history has been visually confronted with as much imagery as we have. So the mind must dismiss it as quickly as possible. Coffee machine, got it. Buy a car. Go on holiday somewhere exotic. We do this all day long. But when you come across my images, you stop. And you're in the image. And you're not sure why... and then you need to understand the feelings I'm depicting. And that's where the image filter breaks down, which is why I use elements of fashion photography.

D: *Who are the photographers you admire the most?*

YR: My great role model is Gregory Crewdson, but I also admire the work of Izima Kauro.



D: *You paid a homage to the painter Edward Hopper. Besides the narrative approach, what do you think you have in common with him?*

YR: When I saw the Hopper retrospective at the Whitney two years ago (after finishing my homage) it struck me that Hopper didn't really care so much about the subjects in his image, their purpose was really to embody an emotion. Most of his characters are emotionless. The drama is suggested, not told. In photography the expressionless image is less successful, in part because of our different relationship to imagery from a world filled with product images. Nonetheless I placed as little emphasis on expression as purpose, and focused on the body rather than the face. I believe I share Hopper's desire for the image to be a catalyst to the story, rather than the story itself. On a simpler note, I am an adherent of color theory, and limited myself to a very specific palette of subdued colors in the series.

D: *How can a photo become a narrative one? How could you tell a story through the images?*

YR: It's not impossible to tell a story with one image, but it's ultimately not that interesting. I have studied a lot of art history, and much of the religious paintings coming out of the Renaissance right up to Neo-Classicism told simple stories. And although many of them are absolutely beautiful, they leave little room for personal interpretation. But that's exactly the point where an image becomes interesting. If you can study a picture, and piece together your own story, then an image becomes narrative beyond telling a story. The world is filled with beautiful decorative pictures, but they don't give you room to think for yourself.

D: *Your images are laden with details. So, what's the relationship between a picture and its details?*

YR: I try to place elements that serve the narrative that gets constructed by the viewer. In my *Hopper's Americans* series, I put media devices such as telephones and radios into almost every image, but also books. These provide the viewer with a context for the subject's experience. Is she waiting for a phone call? Did he just hear something important on the news? What was she reading? But these elements also provides a way out of the image that isn't physical. There's always a window or a door, but a radio goes elsewhere. As a narrative photographer, the elements must serve several purposes, much like a painter places objects in his frame. They have to have symbolic value, they have to contribute aesthetically, and they have to be contextual.

D: *On 9th May, you will exhibit at MIA – Milan Image Art Fair. Can you tell me your expectations and your fears about the show?*

YR: Milan is known for good taste, so of course I hope to be particularly well received and successful. I'm worried about getting lost between so many of the big names that are represented there, but I take pride in being a part of it.

text by **Gabriele Girolamini**
video courtesy of the artist
08.05.2013



web: <http://roth-photo.com>

