

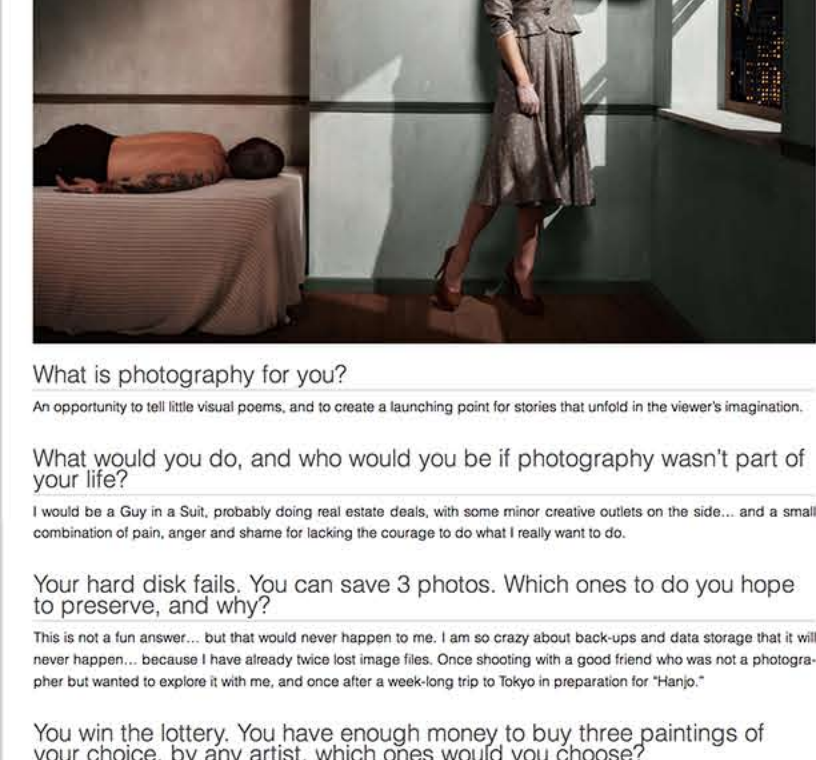


YORAM ROTH: INTERVIEW TO A MODERN ESTHETE [ENG]

Yoram Roth is a Berlin-based photographer. I love his work and for this reason I wanted to interview him. His photography is a constant reference to classical art but with the addition of a modern aesthetic.

Three Adjectives to Describe Yoram.
Focused, concept-driven, gregarious.

How would you describe your photography?
Pensive, deliberate, beautiful.



What is photography for you?
An opportunity to tell little visual poems, and to create a launching point for stories that unfold in the viewer's imagination.

What would you do, and who would you be if photography wasn't part of your life?
I would be a Guy in a Suit, probably doing real estate deals, with some minor creative outlets on the side... and a small combination of pain, anger and shame for lacking the courage to do what I really want to do.

Your hard disk fails. You can save 3 photos. Which ones do you hope to preserve, and why?
This is not a fun answer... but that would never happen to me. I am so crazy about back-ups and data storage that it will never happen... because I have already twice lost image files. Once shooting with a good friend who was not a photographer but wanted to explore it with me, and once after a week-long trip to Tokyo in preparation for "Hanjo."

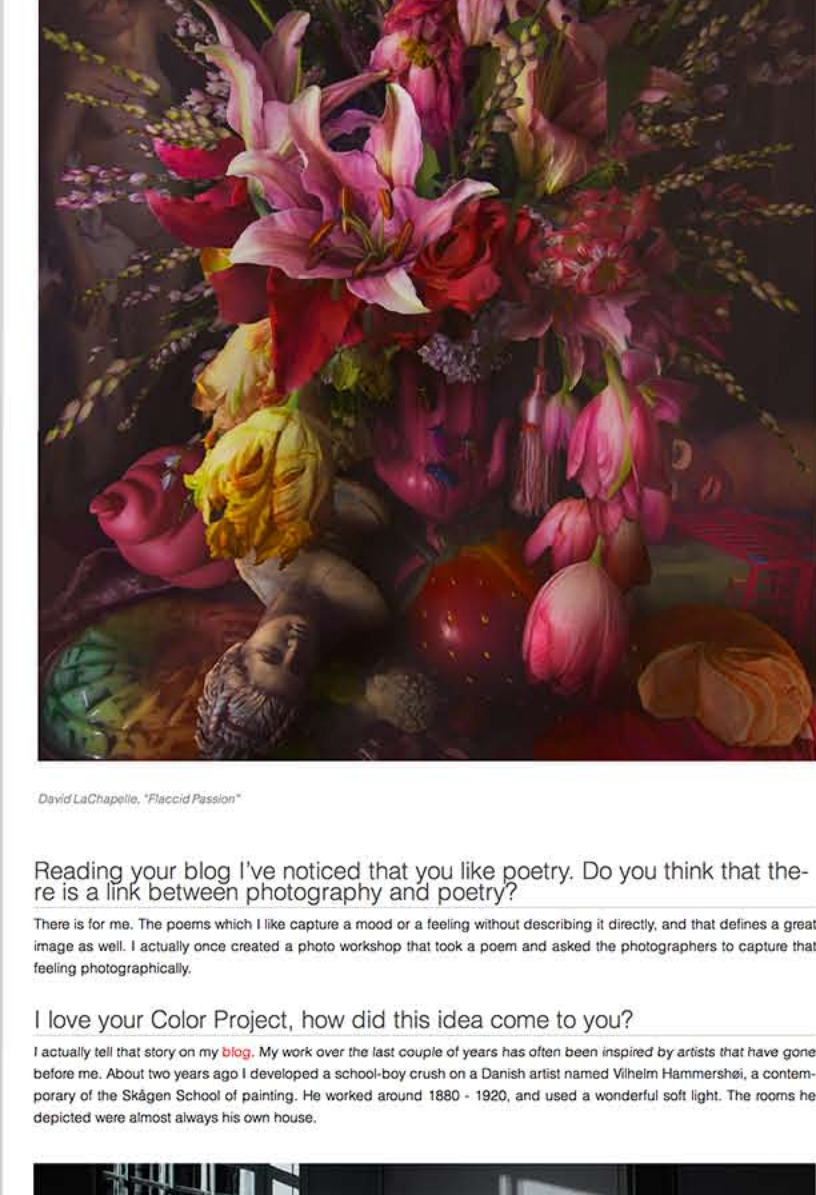
You win the lottery. You have enough money to buy three paintings of your choice, by any artist, which ones would you choose?
I would have never thought so, but when I stood in front of Jeff Wall's "Siphoning Fuel" I was moved to tears. The story that unfolded in my mind connected with every single part of my life, and I actually cried. I hope to own this piece some day, even though it is not connected in a conventional way. I would love to own Artemisia Gentileschi's second version of "Judith slaying Holofernes" which I saw at the Uffizi recently. I consider her the greatest of the Caravaggisti, and this painting is technically spectacular. I love the attention to detail, such as the beautiful bracelet. When you stand in front of it, you realize that there is blood spray sprinkled across the canvas, and you can imagine her finishing the painting by flicking red paint from her fingers on to the face of a painted man who in her mind deserved to die. I plan on owning a large print of David LaChapelle's "Flaccid Passion" from his Earth Laughs in Flowers series. It is extremely erotic, beautiful and elegant all at the same time. One thing all of these pieces have in common is that you don't realise how powerful they are until you are in front of them. On a web site, or in a book, they don't work, you need to see the real thing.



Jeff Wall, "Siphoning Fuel"



Artemisia Gentileschi, "Judith & Holofernes"



David LaChapelle, "Flaccid Passion"

Reading your blog I've noticed that you like poetry. Do you think that there is a link between photography and poetry?

There is for me. The poems which I like capture a mood or a feeling without describing it directly, and that defines a great image as well. I actually once created a photo workshop that took a poem and asked the photographers to capture that feeling photographically.

I love your Color Project, how did this idea come to you?

I actually tell that story on my blog. My work over the last couple of years has often been inspired by artists that have come before me. About two years ago I developed a school-boy crush on a Danish artist named Wilhelm Hammershøi, a contemporary of the Skågen School of painting. He worked around 1880 - 1920, and used a wonderful soft light. The rooms he depicted were almost always his own house.



I had just finished my Hopper's Americans but still loved the creative process of building set-rooms and telling stories within them. I decided to create a set that looked a lot like Hammershøi's house, and to shoot a project that used his soft light, different than I had been in my previous work.

The project failed almost immediately. I had a good model, but the clothes made it virtually impossible to tell the kind of stories I like. She was drowning in heavy fabrics, and they give little opportunity for physical nuance. Instead the images came out looking like something from the cover of a fancy candy box, something that Sartori or Quagliata would put on their biscuit tins. Worse, I had given my stylist very little guidance, and we ended up with looks that were way too exaggerated for the subdued images I wanted to create.



I got so mad at myself that I went to my studio at some point on a Saturday night, got out a very large bucket of grey/blue paint, and blasted Jay Division while repainting the whole set a solid color. I used a big fat bushy brush to slather the entire set, covering the walls, the decorative sconces, the chairs and tables all in a dark tone that reflected my mood. I was embarrassed, because the new project I had hoped for evaporated in front of me. I knew I should have focused on quieter images, more pensive poses.

Now I realize that it is not where I wanted to go creatively. I love the light. But I am so intrigued by the visual language of motion, which is utterly out of place in such a project. I admire Desiree Dolron's most recent work, but it is not the kind of images I wanted to create at that moment. They are too static. I wanted something with heavy motion.

What is the amount of work behind your projects?

There is a lot of pre-production, and it varies with each project. Everything begins with a set, and the way I want to light it. Next there is a series of mood boards, which almost always includes a sketched image. It allow the team to understand what the image will be. There is usually a team, and especially the stylist needs to understand what we want to do. I don't use fashion, that means we have to make a lot of the costumes ourselves, or combine the clothes with pieces which we get from the big costume prop houses here in Berlin. There is a LOT of theatre and film production in this city, so it makes it easy to find every kind of costume clothing, but also furniture and other props that I need to start a visual story. We also use a lot of fabrics. But the preparation also allows creative freedom. Once all the pieces are in place, and we know how we will technically execute it, we have made a creative playground in which we can simply create images. Although we usually start with shooting the image we sketched, we then just improvise, and those are often the best photos. Any model, no matter how good, benefits from having a starting place. It gives her a few poses to warm up with, and also makes the shoot comfortable.

You've worked on several projects, which one do you think is the most important and why?

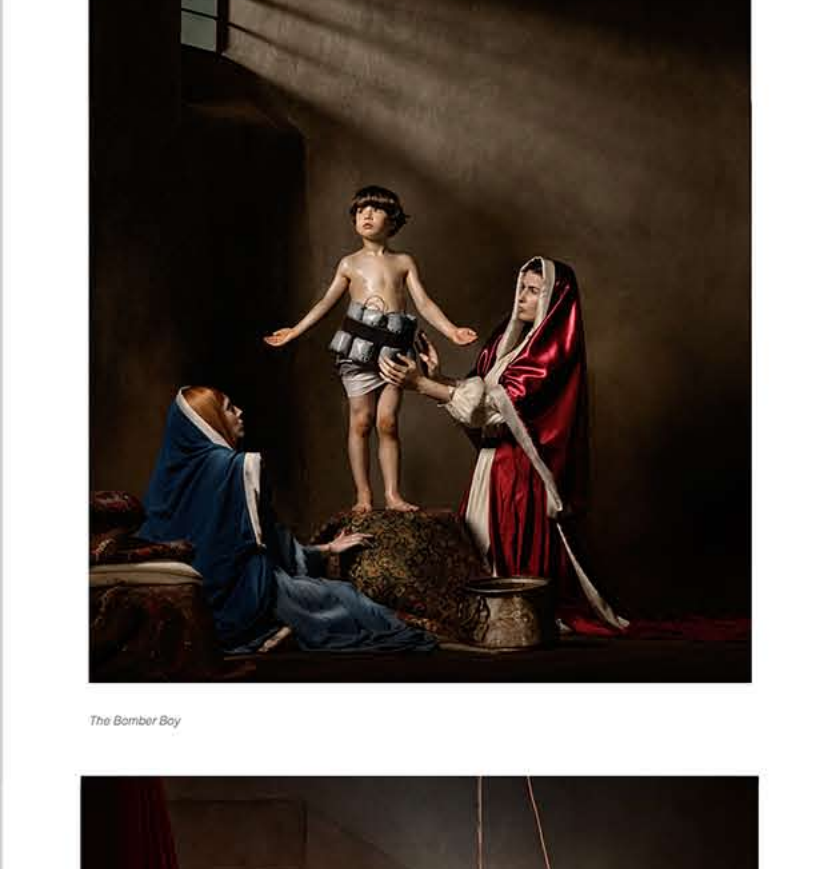
I know this sounds like every parent in the world, but I love all my "children" equally. Of course I am the most proud of the one getting attention at the moment, and right now that is my first series. I shot "Hopper's Americans" almost four years ago - before a lot of other photographers began copying Hopper, I would like to point out! At the time it meant a real life change for me, and it is reflected in the images I created.



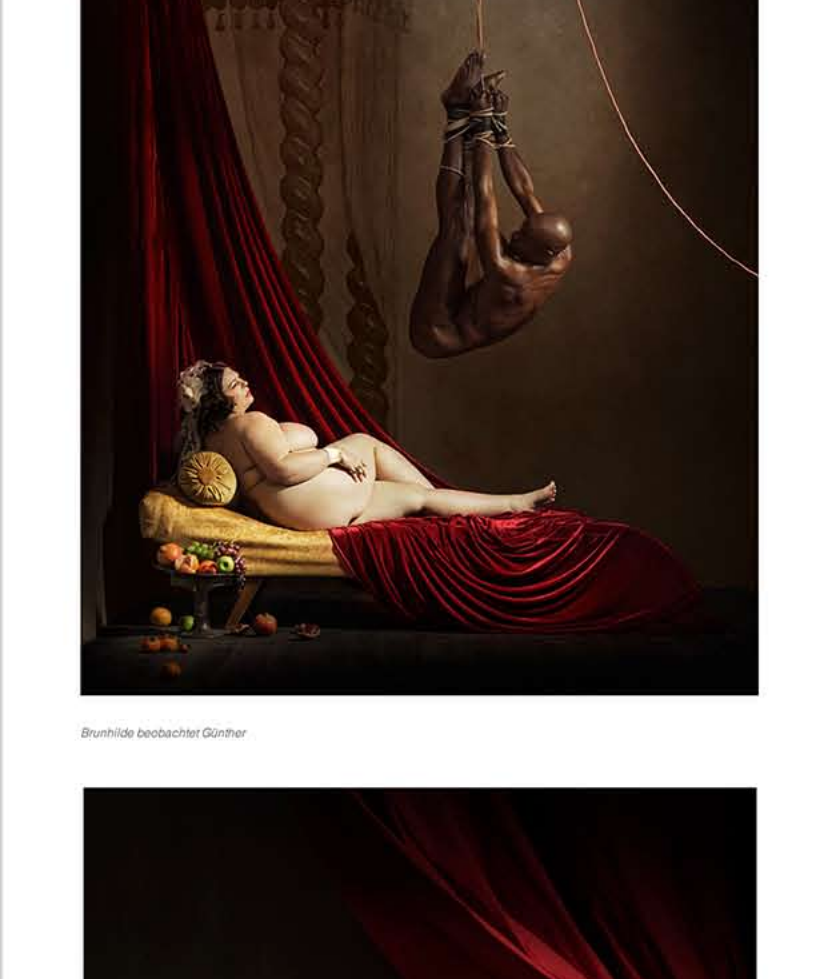
I didn't know what was coming next, whether it was a good or bad thing, and I felt like I was suspended. Those ended up being the strongest images, and they define that series. I am also extremely proud of "Hanjo" which I will get to introduce in at Tokyo Photo between September 27 - 30, 2013.

I know you are working on a new project called "The Sacred & The Profane." Do you want to show us something? What are your plans for the future?

Right now I am showing very little about that project. I am not really sure where it is going. It started as something very different, but its meaning to me has changed. For some time I was very focused on traditional Judeo-Christian religions, but I am less interested in that now. It has become more about the Feminine, and I'm not afraid to use the language of Beauty while pushing into topics that are not easy.



The Bomber Boy



Brunilde beebachter Gönther



The Waking Goddess (unfinished file)

- I. Yoram Roth [Website & Portfolio](#)
- II. Yoram Roth on [Facebook](#)
- III. Yoram Roth on [Tumblr](#)

Many thanks to Yoram for agreeing to do this interview.

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