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**Photographs from the Estate of Renowned Collector and Curator  
Joshua P. Smith Auctions at Rago's on May 19<sup>th</sup>**

**Lambertville, NJ** – On Saturday, May 19th, 2007 at 10:00 AM, the Rago Arts and Auction Center will proudly offer Photographs from the Estate of Joshua P. Smith. This is a no-reserve sale.

Joshua Smith was a passionate collector and well-known curator of contemporary photography. He was drawn to work that was formally, conceptually and emotionally challenging and endlessly curious about new developments in art.

Smith had great affinity for the experimental, forward-thinking photographers of the 1980s. His collection of these photos was shown at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American Art in "The Photography of Invention: American Pictures of the 1980s," which Smith also curated with Merry Foresta. A number of works by these artists are represented in this sale, including a delicate, manipulated image from Joan Foncuberta; one of James Casabere's object deconstructions; a triptych of vehicles on a city street from Jan Groover; and Oliver Boberg's "wasteland chic" reconstruction of a modernist streetfront. Other gifted photographers of this period that will be sold in the auction are Gwen Atkin and Allan Ludwig, Barbara Ess, Yuki Onodera, Zeke Berman and Lorie Novak.

Smith collected the work of a number of Photo Conceptualists. The sale includes an "indecipherable image" from Allan McCollum's "Perpetual Photos" series; one of John Baldessari's masterfully juxtaposed photocollages from his "Intersection" series; a stroboscopic photograph by Harold Edgerton; and a Robert Heinecken photogram, along with conceptual works from, among others, Thomas Ruff, Betty Hahn and Joe Mills.

Landscapes – urban, rural, interior, invented – materialize throughout Smith's collection and this sale. Notable among these are the Edward Weston's glorious "Juniper, Lake Tenaya;" Lee Friedlander's "Texas 22-06"; Richard Misrach's landmark work in color; a James Welling Maine landscape; and William Klein's "Atom Bomb Sky, New York." The sale also includes the extraordinary work of Abelardo Morrell, whose photographic explorations using camera obscura meld interior landscapes and the exterior world, as well as the industrialized landscapes of Michael Clegg and Martin Guttman.

A superb selection of portraiture is included in the sale, from Richard's Avedon's minimalist portraits of Cocteau, Twiggy and Henry Geldzahler to the fantastical tableaux of Joel-Peter Witkin. Also featured is a Manuel Alvarez Bravo portrait of his wife, the beautiful photographer Lola Alvarez Bravo; Marcus Leatherdale's New York's demi-monde celebrities and downtown denizens; Mario Cravo Neto's uncanny nude torsos; Keith Carter portraits of the people and animals of the East Texas; portraits of the glamorous and famous by Ralph Steiner, Arnold Newman, Leo Matiz, and William Klein; and two works by Nikki Lee, whose "snaphots" of herself in various guises were a great favorite of Smith's.

Smith was drawn to political and social commentary in many guises –Patrick Nagatani's animated and color-saturated photo-dramas; Larry Clark's tender and terrible image of a pregnant junkie giving herself a fix; Bruce Davidson's portrayals of the plight of poor and disenfranchised African-Americans are notable among these. Also here is work by Martin Parr, Joe Mills, and Lorna Simpson.

Many of the photographs selected by Smith for his collection depict rural and urban life. These include a number of images – sometimes comic, sometimes disturbing – by Garry Winograd, as well as work by Helen Levitt, Leon Levenstein, Louis Faurer, Gunther Forg, Dawoud Bey, Marc Riboud, Lois Conner, Elijah Gowan, Todd Webb, Post Wolcott, George Krause, Robert Bruce Langham IV, Nicholas Nixon and Kenneth McGowan and more from Lee Friedlander.

The surreal and fantastic wind through Smith's collection. The work of Joel-Peter Witkin, Ruth Thorne-Thomsen and Patrick Nagatani have been mentioned. Here, too, is the painterly eroticism of Jan Saudek; the tactility of Michel Francois; the surrealism of Jerry Uelsmann's composites; and distorted color positives of Arthur Fellig (Weegee).

Also noteworthy in the sale are Aaron Siskind's intimately proximate surface abstractions; still lifes from Donald Sultan and Laura Letinsky; works from contemporary Italian photographer Walter Neidermayer; work by photographers from Latin America and Eastern Europe, as well as Joann Callis, Teun Hocks, Peter Keetman, Leon Danny Lyon, John O'Reilly, Bill Owens, Olivia Parker, Leo Matiz, Rene Pena, Dirk Reinartz, Albert Renger-Patzsch, Ed Roseberry, Henry Holmes Smith, Boaz Tal, Else Thalemann, Georgi Zelma, and Piet Zwart.

"Joshua Smith was a collector with an extraordinary eye who bought work he believed in," says Meredith Hilferty, Director of Fine Art at Rago's, "He supported and encouraged dozens of artists, many at a point in their careers when they needed it most. His choices seemed to be always validated by the market. Yet this was nothing to him relative to the public acknowledgment of a work's artistic value. It's why he is remembered with great affection by so many. It has been a privilege to handle Joshua Smith's collection and come to know his friends and family."

Catalogues are available in print and online on or about May 10, 2007 and can be ordered at [ragoarts.com](http://ragoarts.com) or by calling 888-RAGOARTS.

Preview: Saturday, May 12 – Friday, May 18 from noon until 5pm and by appointment. Doors open at 9 a.m. on Saturday, May 19th.