artnet news

People

Parma Is Giving Patti Smith a Photography Show and a University Degree

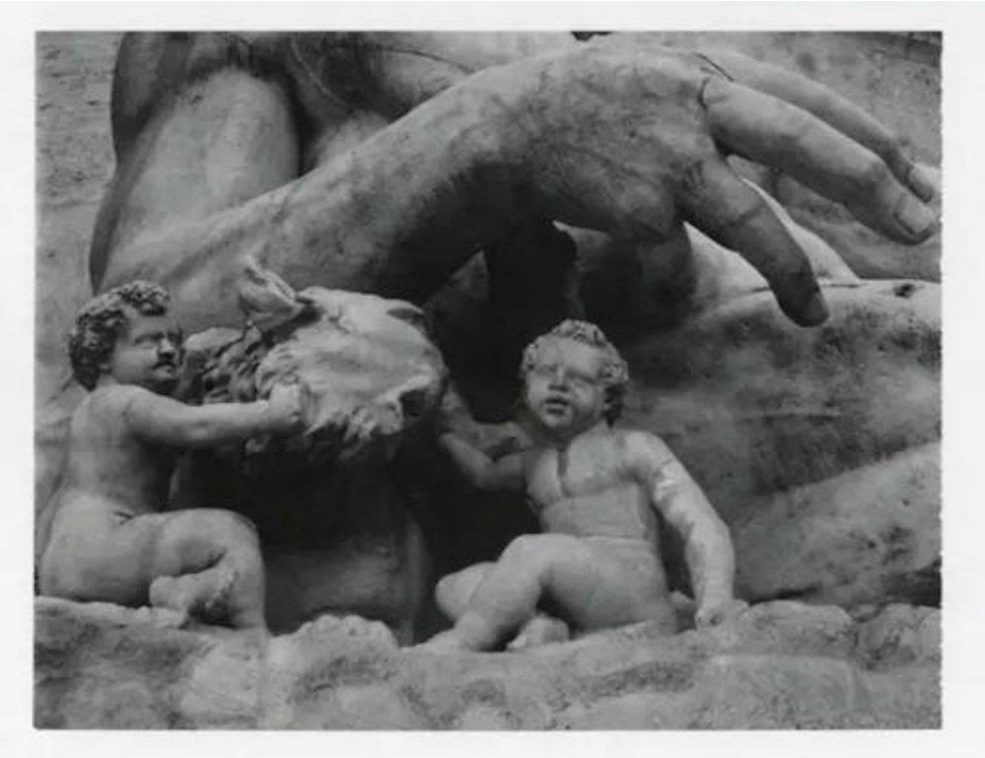
Smith's photos, taken on a vintage Polaroid camera, will be on view in an Italian castle.

Perwana Nazif, April 7, 2017

Patti Smith at Park Avenue Armory on March 31, 2015 in New York City. Photo by Dimitrios Kambouris/Getty Images.

It's a Patti Smith extravaganza in Parma, Italy next month, as the legendary singer, artist, writer, and portrait star (amongst other trades) will be performing, exhibiting photographs, and receiving honorary degree distinctions in the city in May.

Opening tomorrow, "Patti Smith – Higher Learning and the New York Scene" is a duo of photo exhibitions held at the Governor's palace in Piazza Garibaldi, organized by Milan's Photology Gallery, the city, and the University of Parma specifically for the university's bestowal of the honorary degree to the rockstar—the first honorary degree for the artist in Europe. (She already holds honorary doctorates from Rowan University in New Jersey and the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn.)



Patti Smith,
Winged Cherubim, San Severino Marche (2009). Courtesy Photology Gallery.

On May 3rd, Smith will receive an honorary degree in Classics and Modern Literature in person from the University of Parma. She is then slated to perform at the Teatro Regio organized by International Music in collaboration with the venue on May 4th, as part of her Italian "Grateful" Tour. The next day, Smith will make an appearance at an exhibition of her photography.

"Patti Smith – Higher Learning" consists of about 120 black and white photographs taken with a vintage Polaroid Land 250 during Smith's international travels, and runs from April 8 to July 16, 2017. The photographic works are very much influenced by Smith's second memoir, *M Train*, set in 70s-era New York.

Patti Smith,
Self Portrait (2003). Courtesy Photology Gallery.

The exhibition title “Higher Learning” comes from Smith’s 2002 album title of the same name. Included in the exhibition is the Patti Smith Library, with several literary and film works that have inspired the artist and musician extraordinaire. Some books and DVDs will also be on sale to the general public.

Photology is a gallery established in 1992, and the first gallery in Italy to specialize in photographic arts. The works, an acknowledgement of New York culture and Smith’s role in it, also coincide with “The NY Scene – art, culture and new avant-garde ’70s and ’80s,” another exhibition of photographic works as an homage to the American city.