

Exhibition on view from February 17th to March 17th 2010 / Opening on February 17th from 5 pm.

CARLOTTA MAITLAND SMITH

A PORTRAIT OF PONZA IN THE BRONX

Whilst living in New York at the end of 2008 and beginning of 2009, Carlotta Maitland Smith took the opportunity to search out a community of Italian Americans that had emigrated to New York's Bronx area in the 1920's, but that had all originated from the island of Ponza off the west coast of Italy. Her interest in this community had arisen not only from her maternal Italian roots but, more specifically, from the large amount of her life that she had spent in Ponza itself. She never expected to find herself walking into homes and restaurants, both in the Bronx and further afield, that would be covered in paintings of Ponza and statues of the island's patron saint, San Silverio. Although Carlotta was only able to meet with a comparatively small portion of this community in such a short time, she found that there are many more people from Ponza based over in New York now than there are still on the island itself. And yet, despite distance and time, they remain a solid and dedicated group of people. Carlotta was, above all else, fascinated to find herself to be documenting a clear example of immigrant cultures world-wide that, mixed with others, are changing fast. She had stumbled upon a pivotal moment in time that balances between the dedication and commitment of the elderly first generations desperately trying to cling on to their roots and pass down cultural values to grand-children, and the younger generations who mostly feel that their Italian links are too far removed to be part of their lives today.

Carlotta Maitland Smith is a freelance photographer based in Europe, specializing in documentary and environmental portraiture. She studied photography at both SPEOS (Paris International Photographic Institute) and ICP (International Centre of Photography, New York), and has a joint-honours degree in languages from University College London. With a quenchless curiosity to learn about people from other backgrounds and walks of life, Carlotta has travelled extensively, photographing several communities around the world.

Galerie Spéos

7 rue Jules Vallès, 75011 Paris
01 40 09 18 58
www.speos.fr

