

## Holly Roberts

Since the late 1800s, artists have used paint to embellish photographs, adding rosy cheeks to a formal portrait or painting the sky of a majestic landscape. Throughout the years, photographers have tread the line between painting and photography, at times blending the two mediums to create a new dialogue. One of the most revered artists to paint on photographs is Holly Roberts, whose images force us to examine ourselves and our humanity.

Holly Roberts grew up and still resides in New Mexico, a region surrounded by desert. Known for its Native American heritage, New Mexico is a place where indigenous ideology and Western beliefs merge, creating a magical area filled with a sense of history and spirituality -- elements essential to Roberts and her work. In 1980, while living on a Zuni reservation in New Mexico, Roberts quietly painted on photographs she had taken of her husband, children, animals and friends. The results of her efforts was startling, as her work was embraced across the country for its innovative style and psychological dramas which confront the anguish, joy, challenges and complexities involved in daily life.

Roberts uses paint to define the photographic image, allowing the brush to guide her through a piece -- to move forward while still being led. A portrait of a mother and child can become a piece about ambiguity of feeling -- of being a mother, wife and artist and the responsibilities that define these roles. This sense of conflict can be seen in *Small Child With Wolf*, in which her daughters face appears within the body of a salivating wolf. Questions abound. Has the wolf swallowed her, is he protecting her or does she have the fierce temper of a wolf within her? Questions are at the core of Roberts work, allowing the viewer to exchange the personal identity of the subject for an archetype, wherein we all can reside.

Through her steady and unflinching gaze, brutal honesty and tempered toughness, Holly Roberts invites us to look inside ourselves to discover our own fears and truths.



Young Man Sitting Down

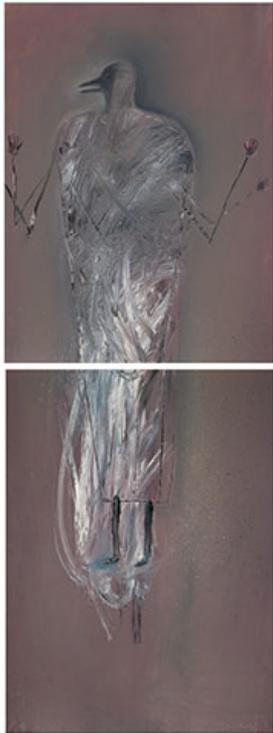
Oil on silver print  
72 x 36 inches





Woman with Spotted Horse

Oil on silver print  
22 x 36 inches



Bird with Man Dreaming

Oil on silver print  
28 x 11 inches