

Harpers BAZAAR

Mosse, Richard and Kim, Dawn, “Bazaar World: In Fairy Tales,” *Harper’s Bazaar*, June 9, 2025.



Bazaar World: In Fairy Tales

The city center, swept up by history, and the outskirts, marked by brutal architecture where unrealized utopias continue to generate dreams. The citizens of Rome—from clergy to workers—captured at work during a pivotal moment: the passing of one pope, the election of another, and the Jubilee. A dialogue, through images and words, between two artists and life partners, journeying through a place of “forgotten possible futures”

DI VISUAL ESSAY E TEXT BY DAWN KIM AND RICHARD MOSSE. CURATED BY CHIARA BARDELLI NONINO AND EMANUELE AMIGHETTI | PUBBLICATO: 09/06/2025

Dawn Kim: Our time in Rome has been so special—it’s the year of the Jubilee, Pope Francis died, the first American pope was elected. And of course our daughter was born.

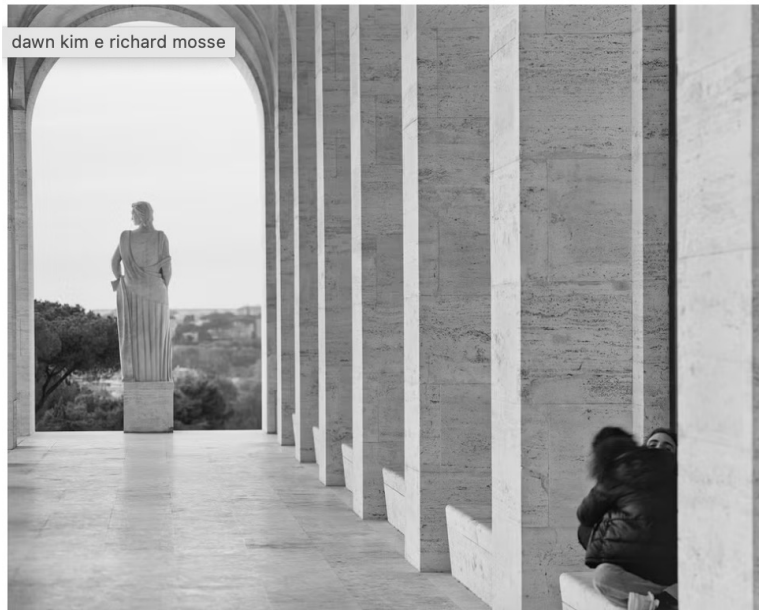
Richard Mosse: And we were living in the American Academy with a cohort of scholars and artists. What did you want to say in your pictures?

ALTMAN SIEGEL

1150 25TH ST. SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94107

tel: 415.576.9300 / fax: 415.373.4471

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DAWN KIM E RICHARD MOSSE

DK: I wanted to look at the city and all the work that it was doing for the Jubilee. I was interested in all the physical work that was happening for this spiritual occasion. I started to focus on the changes in the city's appearance and the divine transformation of each pilgrim who steps through the golden doors of St. Peter's Basilica.

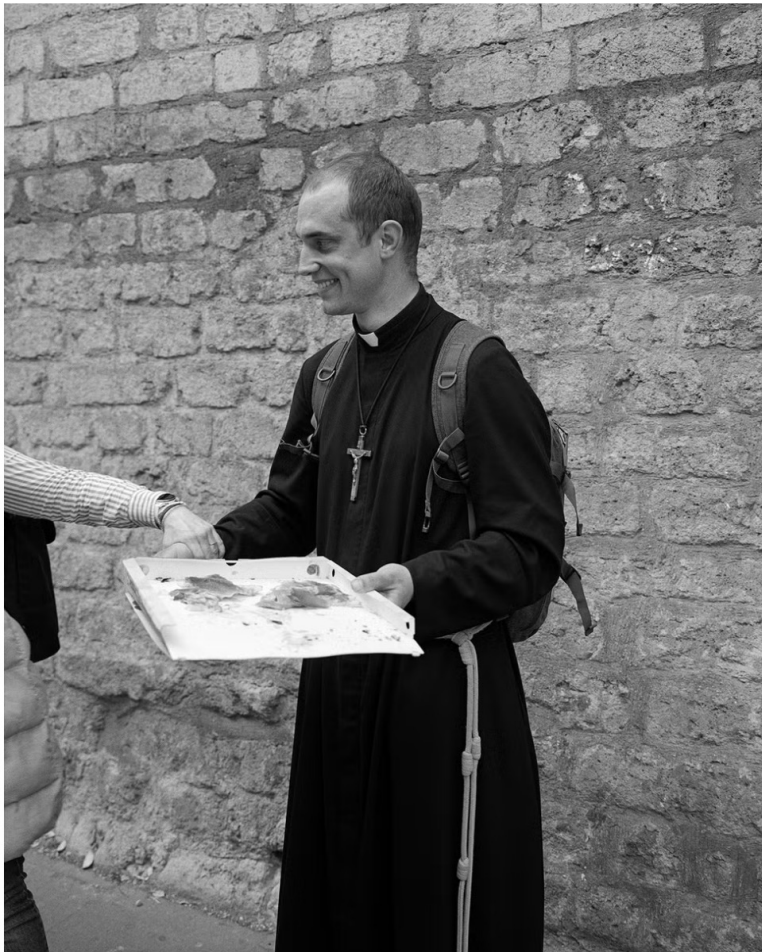
RM: So the city itself has its sins washed away. The soot is literally sprayed off.

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DK: Yeah exactly. It quickly became challenging because it's difficult to make hard hats and scaffolding look compelling, but it's enjoyable to look for it in Rome—the juxtaposition of steel on stone. I love the pairing of my photo of the graffiti being removed from the Lungotevere alongside your photo of the scaffold around the sculpture of the boy in EUR raising his arm in a Fascist salute. What gets erased and what gets preserved. Look at your pictures of Corviale—no one is going to scrub the graffiti off those walls any time soon. What were you looking for when you were making your pictures?

RM: Corviale is the exact opposite of Rome's historic center: a brutalist spectacle worthy of the darkest nightmares, where crime seems to lurk around every corner—and yet, it's where I found some of the most welcoming and genuine people, a true sense of community despite the harsh architecture. It felt like witnessing a city built on utopian dreams that never bore fruit—or if they did, they fell and rotted, enriching the soil. There are so many forgotten potential futures. EUR is another example: an architectural jewel of fascism that has found new life as Fendi's headquarters and as a haven for young people who come to skateboard and make out in the niches between neoclassical busts.

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Romans have a very different relationship with history—even its most difficult chapters—compared to other cultures, where the traces of a past that's too frightening or painful to confront are banned, buried, turned into taboos. Here, people seem able to move through and around these alternative narratives, rather than erase them. And so the past remains very much alive, allowing us, too, to inhabit all of Rome's incongruous stories.



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DK: Right. But that can look accidental, as if we're all just living our lives by default, in spite of our surroundings. That's why I chose to focus on labor, people's work, because it shows how deliberately the pasts you speak about are curated and cultivated by the city's workers, both in the public and private sectors. The past is willfully woven into the future by workers, right now, in the present. Work reveals the intentional forces at play in constructing

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tel: 415.576.9300 / *fax:* 415.373.4471

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this complex urban fabric, which gives the illusion that it was always here and could never have been anything else. Rome is anything but that.



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