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PHOTOS: Cruising In the Vale of Cashmere



In the Vale of Cashmere, the latest book by photographer Thomas Roma, is dedicated to the memory of Roma's close friend, Carl Spinella, who used to frequent the wooded cruising grounds of Brooklyn's Prospect Park — known as the Vale of Cashmere — before dying of an AIDS-related illness in 1992. Begun in 2008, this series of 75 black-and-white portraits and landscapes is set in the same location, highlighting the black gay and bisexual men who now cruise the park for sexual partners. It also engages in larger conversations about race, class, sexuality and health issues, including the modern-day HIV crisis that continues to plague this community.

Henry Louis Gates, Jr., the director of African-American research at Harvard University, has said of Roma's work: "These brilliant photographs, capturing the dialectic between desire and disappointment, anxiety, and comfort, ultimately remind us of our own

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continuous rites of passage as human beings. Roma's photographs are truly saving graces." The book will be published by powerHouse Books in conjunction with the exhibition. "Thomas Roma: In the Vale of Cashmere" will be on view October 29 – December 19, 2015 at the Steven Kasher Gallery at 515 W. 26th St., New York, NY 10001.

