



NEW RELEASE

Janet Holmes *Nest* Rescued Chickens at Home

Texts by Michelle Carrera, Maddie Cartwright, Janet Holmes, Janelle Lynch, Julia Magnus, Ashley Snyder, Rocky Schwartz, and Kathy Stevens

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Tender portraits of chickens and their rescuers in the USA, Canada, UK and Norway

How do we decide which animals are family and which are food? Why are we surprised to see a rooster gazing out the kitchen window or a hen helping with homework? After all, chickens are present in many homes, as flesh and eggs, but not as individuals with personalities of their own.

In early 2017, photographer Janet Holmes met a hen suffering from reproductive illness at the Wild Bird Fund in New York City, where she volunteered as a caregiver. During her search to find a permanent home for the hen after she was discharged from the Fund's clinic, Janet Holmes discovered a network of people who turn their homes into sanctuaries for rescued chickens. She decided to make portraits of the chickens and their rescuers to honour both the birds who had suffered so much before their rescue and the people who invested so much love, time, and money caring for them.

In addition to Janet Holmes's photographs, *Nest* includes short memoirs from five of the rescuers she photographed, who describe the exhilaration, grief and hope they have experienced rescuing, and living with, chickens. Kathy Stevens, founder of Catskill Animal Sanctuary, and Janelle Lynch, educator and finalist for the Prix Pictet in 2019, have contributed essays.

Janet Holmes completed the International Center of Photography's part-time Continuing Education Track Program in 2015. Since then, Janet has received international recognition for her images, which have been exhibited in the USA, Canada and Europe. Portraits from this project received the People's Choice Award in United Photo Industries nine-city outdoor exhibition The Fence: 2018.

»I've always loved animals, but for many years I was afraid to get involved with rescuing them because I didn't think I could handle the heartbreak. I was almost fifty when I finally acknowledged that animals needed me more than I needed to be comfortable. And so I began volunteering with rescue groups as a caregiver and photographer.«

– from the introduction by Janet Holmes

»Similar to those of her animal activist peers — photographers including Jo-Anne McArthur, Mary Shannon Johnstone, and Martin Usborne — Holmes' images are imbued with appreciation and the belief that animals are here with us, not for us. Her perspective is informed by a devotion to basic rights — the sensibility that led her first to the field of law. Before she begins photographing, she invites the animals to be with her on their own terms. She acknowledges that an animal cannot consent to be photographed, so she attunes herself to their behavior. If an animal indicates discomfort, Holmes won't photograph them.

(...)

*Artful, amusing, and tender, Holmes' portraits are a tribute to the caregivers and birds, as well as to those who met other, much less fortunate fates. In *Nest: Rescued Chickens at Home*, she, like the other authors whose books stand in my library, extends an invitation to viewers to reconsider their perception of and relation to animals — one that I gratefully accept.«*

– from the essay by Janelle Lynch

www.janetholmesphoto.com

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