

A living legend steps away from photography and then returns with ‘I Know How Furiously Your Heart is Beating’

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If you have been following the world of photography over the past 10-plus years, you no doubt have heard of and are familiar with the work of American photographer Alec Soth. A member of the prestigious Magnum Photos cooperative, Soth has published numerous monographs of photography and has exhibited far and wide to high acclaim.

Soth first came to prominence around 2004 after his work (also a book) “[Sleeping by the Mississippi](#)” caused waves of excitement among some of the industry’s most prominent gatekeepers at the prestigious Review Santa Fe in 2003, where it took the Santa Fe Prize (now called the Santa Fe Fellowship). He subsequently became a member of the aforementioned world-famous photo cooperative and published more books, including “[Niagara](#)” and “[Songbook](#).” Along the way, Soth cemented his place as one of the most important and widely acclaimed photographers working today.

In addition to publishing books and holding exhibitions of his work, Soth is also known for his engaging online presence through his Instagram handle [@littlebrownmushroom](#). He has also published work through an imprint (<http://www.littlebrownmushroom.com/shop/>) of the same name (everything at the site’s online store is sold out). Having said all of that, Soth tried to pull back from photography for a spell before his latest book, “[I Know How Furiously Your Heart is Beating](#)” came out this year. Elaborating on that point, Soth has said:

“After the publication of my last book about social life in America, [Songbook](#), and a retrospective of my four, large-scale American projects, [Gathered Leaves](#), I went through a long period of rethinking my creative process. For over a year I stopped traveling and photographing people. I barely took any pictures at all.

“When I returned to photography, I wanted to strip the medium down to its primary elements. Rather than trying to make some sort of epic narrative about America, I wanted to simply spend time looking at other people and, hopefully, briefly glimpse their interior life.

“In order to try and access these lives, I made all of the photographs in interior spaces. While these rooms often exist in far-flung places, it’s only to emphasize that these pictures aren’t about any place in particular. Whether a picture is made in Odessa or Minneapolis, my goal was the same: to simply spend time in the presence of another beating heart.”

The resulting work is a compilation of images that are, according to the publisher, “fundamentally about intimate encounters in private rooms.” The book coincides with a host of solo exhibitions at the following venues: Weinstein Hammons, Minneapolis; Sean Kelly Gallery, N.Y.; Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco; and Loock Gallery, Berlin.

The title of Soth’s latest book is taken from the poet Wallace Stevens’s short poem, “Gray Room.”

“[I Know How Furiously Your Heart is Beating](#)” by Alec Soth was published by MACK in March 2019.

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