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Looking for some life

The photographer Alec Soth drives through Minnesota in his minivan and records through the window what is left of everyday life. The result is images that show closeness and distance at the same time.

Photos and text: Alec Soth



UNITED STATES. St. Paul, Minnesota. March 23, 2020. The term "social distancing" is new to me; the idea behind it is not. Photography has always been a way for me to deal with this feeling of distance. Many of my favorite photos are intimate family photos, but I've never been able to share this part of my life with anyone. I am also unable to cook lasagna (or much else). To be honest, not much has changed in my everyday life lately. But I felt creatively paralyzed.

At first I couldn't imagine picking up a camera. I then remembered an African safari to which my parents had invited me a few years ago. At that time I was not interested in taking pictures like the other Land Cruiser tourists; I also didn't want to photograph my family. I simply put my camera away and used binoculars instead. And I fell in love with this view. It wasn't just the proximity of a lion's mane; it was the way it was cut out of the room. I could feel the animal's warmth and its distance at the same time. I ended up using my iPhone to take pictures through my binoculars.

In the past few days I've been driving around with binoculars. In Minnesota, where I live, the winters are tough. This year, the dizzying anticipation for the approaching spring has been replaced by the fear of the coming virus attack. I drove around in the protective cover of my minivan, looking for life through layers of glass. Everything felt both far away and so close at the same time.



"Yes, you can do something else"

Nicole Rinder lost her son four days after his birth. In the Corona diary, the undertaker tells what she has learned from this terrible experience and how to cope better with the current crisis.