

Alec Soth's Archived Blog

December 11, 2006

Q: What is your sentence

Filed under: [career](#), [photographs \(mine\)](#), [the sentence](#) — alecsothblog @ 9:06 pm

In the discussion regarding my recent post on [the sentence](#) used to describe an artist, [Zoe](#) asked: "Alec, do you have a sentence in mind for yourself?" I don't. I just have a laundry list of things I don't want it to be. I'm reminded of a picture I took a long time ago:



This picture won a blue ribbon at the Minnesota State Fair Art Show! It was published in a book. I sold prints. I became worried. The picture is a one-liner. I don't want to be a one-liner photographer. I don't want to be 'that guy that took the picture of the cop and the clown.'

There are a lot of things I don't want my sentence to be. Unfortunately I don't have the clarity, or maturity, to say what I do want it to be.

11 Comments

1. Photography poet?

Comment by colin — December 12, 2006 @ [4:05 am](#)

2. how hard it's to find yourself!! and to be free to follow your heart...without thinking if it's correct...kurk markus told me working with him...stop looking phototographers or you will get crazy!!!...you should only look the dead ones...
im getting crazy to find me way...between personal and commercial!!! and here in Spain it's even more difficult!!!
great blog alec...i look it all mornings!!

Comment by ruben — December 12, 2006 @ [5:25 am](#)

3. It does come back to being comfortable in your own skin. Invariably, when in public, the second question people ask is "...and what do you do?" How we reply says a lot about where we are with regards to thinking about ourselves. Are you more comfortable when people call you a photographer or an artist? Dad? Dog walker? (Future) Soccer coach? Obviously one's chosen career is usually at the top of the list.
In reality most people are sooo much more than the "one-liner". Maybe a more accurate description is to say we're a forest of one-liners. Thousands of trees some with more branches than others. What most people see, is the tallest tree but sometimes not. Sometimes you only see a small beautiful grove where few people walk.

Comment by [Michael K-S](#) — December 12, 2006 @ [9:09 am](#)

4. Just noticed the question is What is your sentence? – mm, I've got you down as a photography poet, Alec – not me.

As for myself, dunno – domesticated slobdad? Yeah, that'll do.

Comment by colin — December 12, 2006 @ [10:32 am](#)

5. Perhaps the answer to the Sentence Dilemma is to adopt a portfolio of photographic nom de plumes. They are [common enough](#) in the literary and film world, but rare in photography. eg, June Newton working as Alice Springs to avoid the sentence 'Wife of 80s fashion photographer who shot models in strange poses'.

Comment by rob — December 12, 2006 @ [12:51 pm](#)

6. I don't know if this will be hearded or regretted, but I've always seen you as, "capturing the lamentable glory of (midwestern?) america."

i'd be proud of that sentance, in any rate.

Comment by Meica — December 12, 2006 @ [1:38 pm](#)

7. Alec, I feel you with the one-liner. I've been thinking about it and the scope of your work prevents a one photo definition, for sure. You're crazy to worry about that! On the contrary, I think you will get, "did you know (insert your one sentence description here) also did that photo of the cop and the clown?"

Your work also prevents a narrow description...I think Niagara knocked a regional description out of the running for playing a part in your long-term sentence. I'm looking forward to seeing how your sentence evolves. I'm pretty sure it will include at least one of these phrases: "large-format genius" "river culture" "a real good looking guy"

Comment by [Zoe Strauss](#) — December 13, 2006 @ [12:29 am](#)

8. These sentence descriptions aren't permanent, unless you do something singularly phenomenal and high profile (Neil Armstrong, Zapruder, Lorena Bobbitt). At 17 I got stuck with the sentence of "the kid who went to the north pole," which wasn't even accurate because I only went to northern Canada. I enjoyed the attention for awhile, but I eventually had to grow up and leave town to escape it. And I did. Now, if Colin above will share it, I'd also accept "domesticated slobdad".

Comment by [Michael F R](#) — December 13, 2006 @ [11:19 pm](#)

9. Alec Soth, photographer and face of Brawney.

Comment by [Rachelle Friesen](#) — December 14, 2006 @ [9:39 pm](#)

10. [one](http://thepage7.wordpress.com/2007/08/27/free-gay-hardcore/) [url=http://thepage7.wordpress.com/2007/08/27/free-gay-hardcore/]one[/url] [one](http://thepage2.wordpress.com/2007/08/27/123/) [url=http://thepage2.wordpress.com/2007/08/27/123/]one[/url] [one](http://thepage8.wordpress.com/2007/08/27/hardcore-video-teens/) [url=http://thepage8.wordpress.com/2007/08/27/hardcore-video-teens/]one[/url] [one](http://thepage5.wordpress.com/2007/08/27/free-xxx-video-2/) [url=http://thepage5.wordpress.com/2007/08/27/free-xxx-video-2/]one[/url] [one](http://thepage1.wordpress.com/2007/08/27/123/) [url=http://thepage1.wordpress.com/2007/08/27/123/]one[/url] [one](http://mir03.blogspot.com/) [url=http://mir03.blogspot.com/]one[/url] [one](http://thepage6.wordpress.com/2007/08/27/free-porn-video/) [url=http://thepage6.wordpress.com/2007/08/27/free-porn-video/]one[/url]

Comment by [upiter](#) — August 27, 2007 @ [3:58 am](#)

11. You have a nice body of work. I find it interesting that you are worried about being tagged as a certain type of photographer when you have so much variety in your work. Not to say that it is too sporadic, the diversity is refreshing. I really enjoy this piece because it is lighthearted and yet any underlying symbolism in the photo has the potential for a lot of interpretation, both humorous and serious.

Comment by [Laurel](#) — March 26, 2008 @ [2:36 am](#)