



Sleeping by the Mississippi, Alec Soth

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Sleeping by the Mississippi by Alec Soth is one of the defining publications in the photobook era. First published by Steidl in 2004, it was Soth's first book, sold through three editions, and established him as one of the leading lights of contemporary photographic practice. This MACK edition launches to coincide with the first exhibition in London dedicated to the series at Beetles+Huxley gallery, and includes two new photographs that were not included in the previous versions of the book. Evolving from a series of road trips along the Mississippi River, *Sleeping by the Mississippi* captures America's iconic yet oft-neglected 'third coast'. Soth's richly descriptive, large-format colour photographs present an eclectic mix of individuals, landscapes, and interiors. Sensuous in detail and raw in subject, *Sleeping by the Mississippi* elicits a consistent mood of loneliness, longing, and reverie. 'In the book's 46 ruthlessly edited pictures', writes Anne Wilkes Tucker in the original essay published in the book, 'Soth alludes to illness, procreation, race, crime, learning, art, music, death, religion, redemption, politics, and cheap sex.' Like Robert Frank's classic *The Americans*, *Sleeping by the Mississippi* merges a documentary style with poetic sensibility. The Mississippi is less the subject of the book than its organizing structure. Not bound by a rigid concept or ideology, the series is created out of a quintessentially American spirit of wanderlust. Thirteen years since the book was first published, the artist's lyrical view has undoubtedly acquired a nuanced significance - one in which hope, fear, desire and regret coalesce in the evocative journey along this mythic river.

