

SEANKELLY

Crowder, Nicholas. "Lost and found connections in Alec Soth's American 'Songbook,'" *The Washington Post*, January 8, 2015.

The Washington Post

Lost and found connections in Alec Soth's American 'Songbook'



Dance N Style. Sandusky, Ohio. (Alec Soth, 2015/Courtesy MACK)



Sue. Sierra Sky Park. Fresno, Calif. (Alec Soth, 2015/Courtesy MACK)

For the better part of his career, Alec Soth — one of this generation’s greatest contemporary photographers — has chronicled the solitary experience of Americans through portraits and still landscapes, seamlessly blending the worlds of fine art and documentary. For his latest book release “Songbook” (MACK, January 2015), Soth traded the solo human experience for one of human connectivity, seeking to find out what connects us and how we stay that way within the proliferation of virtual social media.

Soth records moments of human interaction like a reporter on assignment, trekking across the country from New York to Silicon Valley and recording a visual correspondence to the viewer that seems to scratch away at a surface, trying to unbury that the concept of human connectedness that has become hidden in plain sight.

In the midst of trailing stories for major news outlet and publications across the country, Soth somehow still found the time to shoot for and acquire photo stories for the LBM Dispatch, a self-described “irregularly published newspaper of the North American ramblings” formed after an impromptu idea in 2011 to document real communities in the age of technology. The work in “Songbook” is essentially a collection of those images — mementos of dances, pageants, social clubs and shared moments — from his two-year journey in between assignments taken from 2012 to 2014. The photographs are at times funny and wry, displaying a mix of irony, dark humor and longing in a vein similar to two other famous Minnesota boys, the Cohen brothers, often evoking a cinematic quality to everyday Americana.

A selection of photographs from “Songbook” will be on display Jan. 29 at the Sean Kelley Gallery in New York. “Songbook” by Alec Soth is published by MACK in January 2015.



Near Gainesville, Georgia. (Alec Soth, 2015/Courtesy MACK)



Marie. Saratoga Race Course. Saratoga Springs, New York. (Alec Soth, 2015/MACK)



Lil' Jay J and the Spiritual Boys. Rochester, New York. (Alec Soth, 2015/MACK)



Miss Model contestants. Cleveland, Ohio. (Alec Soth, 2015/MACK)



Near Kaaterskill Falls, New York. (Alec Soth, 2015/MACK)