

SEANKELLY

"PDN Photo of the Day: The Great American Songbook," *Photo District News*, January 30, 2015.



PDN PHOTO
OF THE DAY

The Great American Songbook



"Near Kaaterskill Falls, New York," 2012. © Alec Soth/Courtesy Sean Kelly, New York



For his new project, "Songbook," a look at American communities, artist Alec Soth spent three years traveling state to state with writer Brad Zellar, working like a newspaper photographer on assignment, shooting only in black-and-white, and uploading and editing his images every night as if he had actual daily deadlines. While on the road, the pair worked on their self-published newspaper, *The LBM Dispatch*, and worked on a few assignments for *The New York Times* as well as a few other clients.

Soth's previous project, "Broken Manual," explored places where people go to escape society their daily lives, whereas "Songbook" is the exact opposite. The title of the project is a reference to *The Great American Songbook*, the canon of 20th century popular songs that are staples of American culture and society. "I tried to find moments when people are collecting, or coming together," Soth said in a recent talk

about the work. And “Songbook” refers to “the way we strive for individualism whilst also wanting community.”

By singling out the images in his exhibition and book, Soth has separated them from their original “newsworthiness.” In this process, Soth explains, a mundane photograph of a ribbon-cutting ceremony, an event any town newspaperman would have photographed “takes on a new meaning, especially when it’s stripped of it’s original context.”

An exhibition of more than 25 new images, as well a few issues of *The LBM Dispatch*, is currently on display at Sean Kelly gallery in New York. Beginning today, Soth is also taking over the gallery’s Instagram account. “Songbook” will open at Fraenkel Gallery in San Francisco on February 5, and in Soth’s hometown of Minneapolis at Weinstein Gallery on February 20. The first edition of *Songbook* (MACK, 2015) is sold out but a second edition is expected in March 2015.



"Home Suit Home, Kissimmee, Florida," 2012. © Alec Soth/Courtesy Sean Kelly, New York





"Execution, Huntsville Prison, Huntsville, Texas," 2013. © Alec Soth/Courtesy Sean Kelly, New York



"Crazy Legs Saloon, Watertown, New York," 2012. © Alec Soth/Courtesy Sean Kelly, New York





"Bree, Liberty Cheer All-Stars, Corsicana, Texas," 2013. © Alec Soth/Courtesy Sean Kelly, New York



"Bill Sandusky, Ohio," 2012. © Alec Soth/Courtesy Sean Kelly, New York

