

# SEAN KELLY

Laurent, Oliver. "Teaching Art and Photography Aboard an RV," *Time*, November 3, 2015.



## Magnum photographer Alec Soth is taking his educational work on the road



Soth Studio

Guest artist Pao Houa Her gives a slideshow of her photographs in the passenger seat of the Winnebago.

In 2011, five Magnum photographers and one writer boarded an RV for a two-week photographic road trip from Texas to California. The result was *Postcard From America*, a multi-platform interactive project, a photographic embrace of happenstance and improvisation. The success of the experiment spawned several spin-off events across the U.S., but it had a less celebrated by-product too: for the past four years, the RV has been parked, mostly unused, in photographer Alec Soth's driveway. "I have this big vehicle in my life that just sits there," he tells TIME.

Faced with this automotive encumbrance—as well as a wish to take a break from his successful publishing business Little Brown Mushroom—Soth has launched the Winnebago Workshop, aptly named after the RV's make. The idea will see teenaged artists team up with established mentors to produce visual stories using photography, video, drawing and writing, all in and around Soth's RV.

"We did a pilot run this summer," says Soth. "We took day trips. Each day, we threw a dart on a map and went to that spot."

The future of the project will be only slightly less spontaneous, as Soth seeks to plan a wide range of future events for the RV. He has taken to Kickstarter to finance the first official Winnebago Workshops, which will take place in the spring of 2016. Already, the campaign has raised the initial \$25,000 needed to launch Soth's plans, but the photographer will continue to appeal for funds to allow more students to benefit from the experience.

The idea has already grabbed the attention of organizations across the U.S., including the Museum of Modern Art in New York City, and it's already paying off for its creator too. "A few years ago, I had burnt out on photography and became kind of jaded myself," he explains. "I sort of forgot that initial excitement, that raw reason that made us interested in making art. I think it's healthy to be in touch with that original impulse."

Having a new project can help rekindle that passion, Soth says, and silence the voices of naysayers who feel that too many people are "on their cellphones taking pictures of their food." But he still doesn't want to get ahead of himself. "I don't want to buy a fleet of RVs," he says.

Alec Soth is a photographer based in Minnesota and represented by Magnum Photos.



While Alec Soth drives, guest author Andy Sturdevant discusses his work.



A “pop up” slideshow on the side of the RV



A student’s handpainted photographs displayed on the side of the RV during a “pop up” exhibition



Alec Soth working with a student in a Hmong-owned flower shop in St. Paul.