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Creative Process

# ALEC SOTH'S VENTURE INTO THE GREAT INDOORS

*As his photo series *I Know How Furiously Your Heart is Beating* goes on show at Foam in Amsterdam, Alec Soth discusses the intimacy of photographing people at home and how the project has taken on a new metaphorical meaning in these times*



Street photographers, documentarians, photojournalists – any image-maker working in these realms is attuned to drawing out the fascinating nuances of everyday life. For Magnum Photos's Alec Soth, as for most photographers

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working in this field, this typically means photographing passers-by, strangers, people simply going about their business.

“My normal process is to wander around, usually by car, accosting strangers and talking them into having their picture made,” he explains. He has been working in this way for much of his career, producing photographic observations of the American heartlands in acclaimed series ranging from his career-defining 2004 book [Sleeping by the Mississippi](#) to the exuberant [Songbook](#), published in 2015.

Yet in 2016, Soth experienced something of an epiphany while on a trip to Finland, and subsequently began to question his work. Weary of his work feeling transactional, even exploitative as he has himself has described it, Soth took a year-long hiatus from his profession to revise his practice. He marked his ‘return’ with his most intimate body of work yet, [I Know How Furiously Your Heart is Beating](#), published last year in book format by Mack and now on display in a solo exhibition at Foam in Amsterdam. Predominantly portraits, interspersed with the occasional still life, the series is both a quiet exploration of how our interior spaces are connected to our inner character, and the product of a radical overhaul of his approach to photography.

Wherever Soth was travelling, he would reach out to people he knew based there and ask for recommendations on who he could photograph while in that location. “I didn’t want it to have that project parameter of this location, this type of person and so on and so forth,” he says, doing away with the constraints of having a narrative and direction that have defined past projects.



*Top image: Sonya and Dombrovsky, Odessa, 2018. Here: Leopold, Warsaw, 2018. All images © Alec Soth / Magnum Photos*

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