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Alec Soth

Advice for Young Artists

Sean Kelly, New York

March 7 – April 18, 2025

Opening reception: Thursday, March 6, 6 – 8pm

Sean Kelly is delighted to announce Alec Soth's fifth exhibition with the gallery, *Advice for Young Artists* which presents a curated selection of images from Soth's recently completed body of work of the same name. Photographed during visits he made to twenty-five undergraduate art programs across the country from 2022 to 2024, the resulting pictures, interior studies, still-lives, and self-portraits depict Soth engaging with his subject while also reflecting, obliquely, on his life as an artist. There will be a reception on Thursday, March 6, from 6-8 pm. The artist will be present.

Although the title might suggest otherwise, Soth's project is less about imparting his ideas to a younger generation and more about engaging with and learning from their creative energy. Instead of providing wisdom or guidance, he presents a fragmented and open-ended meditation on artmaking across different life stages, as well as the connections between photography, time, and aging. "I was just trying to be in the proximity of their energy," Soth reflects. The photographs that emerged out of his visits are deeply empathetic. In his portraits of students at work or in their studios, he not only captures them as subjects but also positions them as artists in their own right. There is an implicit connection between the artist in front of the camera and the artist behind it. This is demonstrated by the ruminative and playful self-portraits that occur throughout the project: Soth situates himself not as an outside observer, but amongst his subjects.

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Drawing inspiration from iconic American photographer Walker Evans's late Polaroids, Alec Soth's *Advice for Young Artists* marks a significant evolution in his practice, offering a fresh perspective two decades after the publication of his first book, *Sleeping by the Mississippi*, in 2004. Much like Evans, who visited universities in the 1970s and photographed extensively with a Polaroid camera, Soth embraces his encounters with students as a way to understand his work from a new perspective. As he describes it, "When I was at a school and totally focused on my work, I had the experience of age falling away." Embedded in the environment of an art school, Soth taps into the zeitgeist and rediscovers his practice anew. In *Advice for Young Artists* Soth allows an easy humor to enter his photographs and finds surprising juxtapositions, he adapts and reinvents his visual language in response to the dynamic energy of his subjects. In this way, the series marks a moment of innovation in the career of one America's foremost contemporary photographers.

Alec Soth lives and works in Minneapolis, Minnesota. His work is the subject of over twenty-five books and including his publications *NIAGARA* (2006), *Broken Manual* (2010), *Songbook* (2015), *I Know How Furiously Your Heart Is Beating* (2019), *A Pound of Pictures* (2022), and most recently *Advice for Young Artists* (2024). In 2008 Soth started his own publishing company, Little Brown Mushroom, which is based in Minnesota. Soth's work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at international museums including the Deichtorhallen Internationale Kunst und Fotografie, Hamburg; the National Media Museum, Bradford, UK; The Finnish Museum, Helsinki; the Detroit Institute of Arts, Michigan; El museo de Bogotá, Colombia; the Fotomuseum Winterthur, Switzerland; the Jeu de Paume, Paris; and the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis. His work is in the permanent collections of institutions including the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Brooklyn Museum of Art; the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, amongst many others.

For additional information on Alec Soth please visit skny.com

For press, please contact Adair Lentini at Adair@skny.com

For all other inquiries, please contact Thomas Kelly at Thomas@seankellyla.com

Image caption: Alec Soth, *Lauren's Books*, 2023, archival pigment print, paper: 45 x 55 inches, edition of 9 with 4 APs
© Alec Soth Courtesy: the artist and Sean Kelly, New York/Los Angeles

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Exhibition Programming



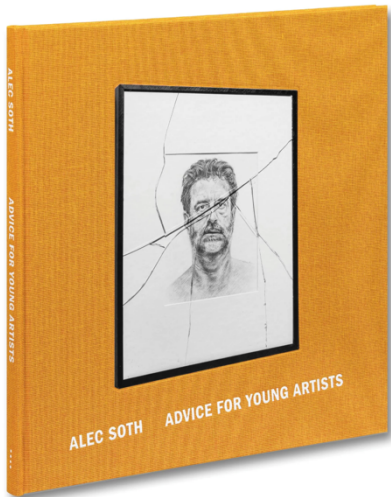
Alec Soth in conversation with Elisabeth Sherman

Saturday, March 8, 10:30 am
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On Saturday, March 8 Alec Soth will be in conversation with Elisabeth Sherman, Senior Curator and Director of Exhibitions and Collections at the International Center of Photography (ICP). They will lead a walk-through of the exhibition. Following the talk there will be a book signing of *Advice for Young Artists*.

Attendance is kindly requested, please email RSVP@skny.com

Publication



Advice for Young Artists
By Alec Soth
Published by MACK

The publication is available to purchase online and at the gallery for \$50

For additional information, please visit skny.com/publications