

# OpenStudio

A collection of art-making ideas by artists

## Alec Soth's Treasure Hunt: Photographing something specific

When I'm out photographing, I feel like a hunter. I'm attentive to the environment around me with a focus that I rarely have in everyday life. But this focus is dependent on my subject. Just as a hunter needs to know if she's looking for a specific type of prey, I like to look for a specific subject to photograph. My senses are overwhelmed if I'm shooting at anything and everything. But to make the process more challenging, I like to make a list of things to find. Even if I don't find exactly what I'm looking for, it gets me out the door and moving around the world. The process is like a treasure hunt.

Here's a list of ten things to look for (you can change the list if there are other things you'd rather look for).

- + Airplanes
- + Beetles
- + Cashiers
- + Dark corners
- + Fungus
- + Milk
- + Sleeping children
- + Tunnels
- + Webs
- + Yellow clothes

See how many items on your list you can photograph on a single outing. Extra points for combining subjects

**Media:**  
Photography

**Materials:**  

- + Camera (digital or analog, cell phone, whatever)
- + Computer, phone or other means of showing your pictures to others (e.g. website or photo prints)

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in one picture – I'd love to see a supermarket  
cashier in a yellow uniform selling milk!

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## Artist Biography: Alec Soth

Born in 1969 in Minneapolis, Minnesota  
Currently lives in the Twin Cities,  
Minnesota

Soth is a photographer and a member of Magnum Photos. His work is rooted in the distinctly American tradition of on-the-road photography developed by Walker Evans, Robert Frank, and Stephen Shore. From *Huckleberry Finn* to *Easy Rider*, there seems to be a uniquely American desire to travel and chronicle the adventures that consequently ensue. His photographs have been featured in numerous solo and group shows, including the *Whitney Biennial* (2004) and *São Paulo Biennial* (2004). In 2008, a large survey exhibition of Soth's work was exhibited at Jeu de Paume in Paris and Fotomuseum Winterthur in Switzerland. In 2010, the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis mounted a comprehensive exhibition with an accompanying catalogue entitled *From Here To There, Alec Soth's America*. Soth's first monograph, *Sleeping by the Mississippi*, was published by Steidl in 2004. Since then he has published *NIAGARA* (2006), *Fashion Magazine* (2007), *The Last Days of W* (2008), and *Broken Manual* (2010). In 2008, Soth started his own publishing company, Little Brown Mushroom. In 2013 Soth was commissioned by SFMOMA to produce a series of photographs of Silicon Valley that were featured in *Project Los Altos: SFMOMA in Silicon Valley*, an exhibition presented at multiple locations throughout downtown Los Altos.



Photo: Carrie Thompson