

L'OEIL DE LA PHOTOGRAPHIE

THE EYE OF PHOTOGRAPHY



Mark Steinmetz, South

APRIL 11, 2017 - UNITED STATES , WRITTEN BY L'OEIL DE LA PHOTOGRAPHIE



Athens, GA (girl on hood of car), 1996. Mark Steinmetz

South, an exhibition of photographs by Mark Steinmetz currently on view at Yancey Richardson gallery in New York, is comprised of black-and-white photographs drawn from the artist's decades-long career photographing the southeastern United States, primarily in Georgia, Kentucky, Tennessee and Mississippi. Steinmetz's images are imbued with an intrinsically Southern tenderness, melancholy and longing that is universally resonant. With his lens, Steinmetz transcends traditional documentary photography, and depicts the human

condition with an allegorical sublimity. Steinmetz's subjects, at first ordinary and everyday, are captured with rawness and reverence. Summer lightning crackling above an abandoned highway, or a man holding a child outside of a gas station is elevated from idiosyncratic to the mythic. Rendered in stunning silver gelatin, each of his compositions is an open-ended question without forced narrative or singular emotional effect. Steinmetz rarely knows his subjects, and in some cases asks them to repeat a gesture he has seen them making. The resulting portraits invite the viewer deeper behind each captured glance and wistful stare. In Athens, GA, 1996, a young woman reclines on the hood of a car. Her circumstances are unclear, but she exudes a palpable desire to be somewhere or something else.