



Soulmaker: The Times of Lewis Hine

By Alexander Nemerov



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Between 1908 and 1917, the American photographer and sociologist Lewis Hine (1874–1940) took some of the most memorable pictures of child workers ever made. Traveling around the United States while working for the National Child Labor Committee, he photographed children in textile mills, coal mines, and factories from Vermont and Massachusetts to Georgia, Tennessee, and Missouri. Using his camera as a tool of social activism, Hine had a major influence on the development of documentary photography. But many of his pictures transcend their original purpose. Concentrating on these photographs, Alexander Nemerov reveals the special eeriness of Hine's beautiful and disturbing work as never before. Richly illustrated, the book also includes arresting contemporary photographs by Jason Francisco of the places Hine documented.

Soulmaker is a striking new meditation on Hine's photographs. It explores how Hine's children lived in time, even how they might continue to live for all time. Thinking about what the mill would be like after he was gone, after the children were gone, Hine intuited what lives and dies in the second a photograph is made. His photographs seek the beauty, fragility, and terror of moments on earth.



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Editorial Review

Review

Finalist for the 2016 Marfield Prize, The National Award for Arts Writing, Arts Club of Washington

"This book by Alexander Nemerov . . . is a fascinating exploration of Hine's work during the period 1908 to 1917 when he was photographing child labour. But it goes beyond a documentation of the time, place and photographer to an analysis of the work through contemporary eyes and his own interpretation. This is a book to engage with on a level that isn't purely factual, taking you to another view of Hine's work."--

Elizabeth Roberts, *Black & White Photography*

From the Back Cover

"Quite clearly this is a book that knows its larger context, that seeks to step beyond Roland Barthes and take the discussion of documentary off to a different, and metaphysical level. In many ways *Soulmaker* is audacious; it is also brilliant, itself possessed of the fire that repeatedly flares on its pages."--**Molly Nesbit, Vassar College**

"A beautiful book by one of the most attuned critics of our time, *Soulmaker* demonstrates a mystical and powerfully truthful capacity to see the special illuminations of Lewis Hine's work. Nemerov is not afraid to say that the capacity *is* mystical, so it becomes a challenge for the contemporary reader to be taught how to see a photograph's different sense of time and space, the eeriness and also the tender particularity of the moment it makes for its subject and for us."--**Elisa Tamarkin, University of California, Berkeley**

About the Author

Alexander Nemerov is the Carl and Marilyn Thoma Provostial Professor in the Arts and Humanities at Stanford University. His books include *Silent Dialogues: Diane Arbus and Howard Nemerov*, *Wartime Kiss: Visions of the Moment in the 1940s* (Princeton), and *Acting in the Night: Macbeth and the Places of the Civil War*.

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