

## AL SOL ARTIST STATEMENT

Before I knew it, I was imagining a way to be a photographer. I was imagining a kind of abstract focus that had not yet come into focus. Restlessness and curiosity led me to travel to places far enough away from my immediate world to have an open field. There's a magnetism that led me to those places, to imagine what I wanted to do with my camera.

I went to villages that reminded me of my grandmothers' villages, whether I knew it or not, and once there observed the sun coming up, and where people were going. I found people to be with, to live with, to photograph over lengths of time, weeks or years.

This is how I found what I imagined I would do with my camera - travel and find people I could be close to. There's the shift from my urban-suburban world to an opposite pared-down world, there's the pieces fitting together, there's a structure of community and daily life.

There's a somewhat intuitive series of decisions and still I'm letting things pull me along. I'm going along with the momentum of people's lives. Things fall into place. That's how AL SOL was made.

Then there is fear, anticipation, trial and error, sweat, jitters, getting familiar with unfamiliarity. But these are a few elements of looking for a way to work, live, and make things. I am always sorry when it is time to leave.

You could say the book is a record of a person reconstructing memory from the sum of its parts. Or a person constructing the possibility of a future. AL SOL is the outcome of plans and experiments that started at the moment I first realized I had to have a camera.

Stella Johnson. 2009