

## Delta in Blue

This photographic essay is my interpretation of the Arkansas Delta lands, predominantly the southeast Arkansas region in and surrounding Helena-West Helena, Arkansas. Driving the long and lonesome highways through the flat delta landscape, I am filled with questions and daydreams about the history behind the abandoned houses and the roadside advertisements of long forgotten enterprises. The changing seasons have moods that transform the landscape and I think about my depression era grandmothers and the childhoods of my parents growing up poor in the hardscrabble Ouachita Mountains of central Arkansas. The implications of my photographs are as subtle as the beauty of the delta landscape, they are a canvas for my thoughts about living a life close to the land, being poor, matriarchs, daddies, children, farming, cooking, the wound of slavery, religion, art, literature, music, the stuff of life.

The prints are cyanotypes, one of the earliest processes of photography. They are made when hand-coated, light sensitive paper is exposed to ultraviolet light. It is a process that is simple and direct in execution. I strive for perfection but embrace the imperfections that my process inevitably brings. The revelation of alchemy in the unique qualities of photography, fulfills my artistic vision. After enlarging my medium format negatives to the final print size and coating cotton rag paper with cyanotype chemistry, I move my process outdoors. On sunny summer days, I expose my prints. In the darkness of my garage I place my negatives over the sensitized paper in a handmade printing easel on top of a garden cart, I roll the cart out of the garage into the sun for exposure. The prints are developed in a large tray in my shady backyard with water from the garden hose. These simple tools and procedures reflect the ingenuity that I search for in the subjects of my photographs.

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