

## **George F. Thompson Publishing, LLC**

217 Oak Ridge Circle  
Staunton, VA 24401-3511, U.S.A.

### **BOOK INFORMATION SHEET**

**Author:** Andrew Borowiec  
**Title:** *The New Heartland*  
**Subtitle:** *Looking for the American Dream*  
**Contributors:** Essays by David Giffels and Eric Paddock  
**Number and type of illustrations:** 67 color photographs by the author  
**Book pages:** 100  
**Trim size:** 11.875" x 9.875" landscape/horizontal  
**List price:** \$50.00 U.S. / \$75.00 U.S.  
**Discount:** trade / short  
**ISBN:** 978-1-938086-19-9 / 978-1-938086-20-5  
**Edition:** Hardcover (PLC) / Signed Hardcover (PLC) with slipcase  
**Distributor:** International Publishers Marketing  
**Bookstore categories:** Photography/ American Studies

#### **Description of the work:**

In many ways, Ohio is America's quintessential heartland state, for what happens in Ohio happens throughout the United States. Ohio has been a bellwether swing state for the winning candidate in every presidential election since 1944 except one. It's also the place where fast-food companies test-market new products and the place where chewing gum, Teflon, and the first cash register, vacuum cleaner, airplane, traffic signal, and gas-powered automobile were invented. Even the state's Division of Travel and Tourism has relied on "Ohio, the Heart of It All" as its popular motto since the Reagan years to attract visitors to the state.

Yet everything shifted after the 2004 presidential election, when political scientists and journalists looked more closely at the election results: Ohio was changing, just as America was changing. Big differences were noted between voters who lived in the cities and those who lived around the cities yet aligned with voters in rural areas. Andrew Borowiec, an eminent photographer based in Akron, took notice and headed out with his camera to take a closer look at the electoral map to be found on the ground.

And what he found was astonishing. The once rolling farmlands that used to surround the cities and define Middle America were already giving way to vast suburban housing developments of nearly identical, hastily built mini-mansions

with enormous garages and fancy yards. These were the new bedroom communities for long-distance commuters to the cities where there were jobs. And the traditional Main Streets of yore were rapidly being eclipsed by "lifestyle centers": shopping malls filled with national chains whose commercial architecture is a cacophonous blend of multiple periods and styles that somehow blend into a fanciful display in which every detail is reproduced out of extruded foam, all of it designed to evoke an imagined past era of luxurious consumerism. Distinctive architectural and landscape styles of the region had given way to a ubiquitous culture of global marketing in which J. Crew was a more familiar name than James Joyce. Homogenization and conformity had won over the American dream in the new heartland.

Andrew Borowiec's work follows in the tradition of other legendary interpreters of American land and life—among them J. B. Jackson, Walker Evans, Robert Frank, Robert Adams, and the other New Topographics photographers. He has used his keen eye and dedication to field work to give us a fresh, at times humorous, and ever razor-sharp view of what is going on in America today. There is a new heartland, a new American dream, and it can be found in the new residential and commercial landscapes of Ohio, and the rest of America, if we choose to open our eyes and take a look.

### **Blurbs:**

"Andrew Borowiec's photographs take stock of contemporary life in America's heartland and explore how the way people shape their surroundings expresses our prevailing social and environmental attitudes, perceptions, and values. The book is not simply a critique or an analysis of current American culture; the specificity of Borowiec's work reveals a sweet, simple, and irrefutable humanity that connects what we see with what we have experienced ourselves and insists that these pictures and the trends they describe belong, somehow, to all of us.

"*The New Heartland* recalls other landmark books in the history of photography. Robert Adams's *The New West* (1973) leaps to mind, because Borowiec's title echoes that of the earlier book and because both books wrestle with dichotomies: myth and reality, beauty and ugliness, gross social trends and real needs of ordinary people. Together, these two books demonstrate that the issues they address, however specific and local they may seem in the pictures, are as universal as they are persistent.

"The other books that seem to lurk in the background of *The New Heartland* are Walker Evans's great *American Photographs* (1938) and the four-volume *The Work of Atget* (1981–1985) by John Szarkowski and Maria Morris Hambourg. The strong affinity I see among Borowiec, Evans, and Atget has mostly to do with their faith that simple facts about how things look, stated clearly and economically in photographs, possess a unique poetic power. Borowiec contributes to this tradition of careful looking, with photographs of supreme intelligence and wit. *The New Heartland* gives us a fresh look at American culture that partakes in an important artistic tradition."

—Eric Paddock, Curator of Photography, Denver Art Museum, and author of *Belonging to the West*.

**About the Author:**

Andrew Borowiec has taught since 1984 at the University of Akron's Myers School of Art, where, in 2009, he was named Distinguished Professor of Art. He has also worked as a photojournalist, as the staff photographer for the International Center of Photography, and as Director of the University of Akron Press. He has received fellowships in photography from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, and Ohio Arts Council. In 2006, he was awarded the Cleveland Arts Prize. His photographs of America's changing social, industrial, and post-industrial landscapes have been exhibited around the world and are in the permanent collections of the Art Institute of Chicago, Cleveland Museum of Art, Library of Congress, Museum of Contemporary Photography, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Nelson Adkins Museum of Art, Princeton University Art Museum, and Smithsonian Museum of American Art, among others. His previous books include *Along the Ohio, Industrial Perspective: Photographs of the Gulf Coast*, and *Cleveland: The Flats, the Mill, and the Hills*.

**About the Contributors:**

David Giffels is the author, most recently, of *The Hard Way on Purpose: Essays and Dispatches from the Rust Belt*, whose other books include *All the Way Home: Building a Family in a Falling-Down House*, *Wheels of Fortune: The Story of Rubber in Akron*, and, with Jade Dellinger, *We Are DEVO!: Are We Not Men?*.

A long-time columnist for the *Akron Beacon Journal*, he is now an assistant professor of English at the University of Akron. His essays have appeared in books such as *The American Midwest* and *The Appalachians* and in *The New York Times Magazine* and *Wall Street Journal*. He was also a writer for the MTV series, *Beavis and Butt-Head*. His literary awards include the Cleveland Arts Prize for Literature, the Ohioana Book Award, and the Associated Press's "Best News Writer in Ohio" award.

Eric Paddock has been Curator of Photography at the Denver Art Museum since 2008, where he has organized solo exhibitions by Edward Ranney, Robert Benjamin, Garry Winogrand, Laura Letinsky, and Chuck Forsman, among others. From 1982 to 2008 he was Curator of Photography and Film at the Colorado Historical Society, where he curated more than two dozen exhibitions of seminal historical photographs. He is the author of *Belonging to the West*, and his photographs are held in the permanent collections of the Amon Carter Museum, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and Smithsonian American Art Museum.