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BOOK INFORMATION SHEET (12.19.18)

Author (as it should appear on the book): Andrew Borowiec

Title: *The New Heartland*

Subtitle: *Looking for the American Dream*

Contributors: essay by David Giffels

Partner: Published in association with The American Land Publishing Project

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Description of the work:

During the past thirty years, there has emerged throughout America a new kind of urban vision that blends residential/suburban development with large-scale commercial centers. Rolling farmland and country estates that used to surround towns and cities have given way to vast housing developments that feature nearly identical, hastily built mini-mansions with enormous garages and fancy yards. These are the new bedroom communities for middle-class Americans who commute to urban America where the jobs are.

For the first time, however, these residential enclaves are linked to big-box shopping complexes. Traditional Main Streets of yore have been eclipsed by malls known as “lifestyle centers” that are filled with national chains whose commercial architecture is a blend of multiple historic periods and styles that create a fanciful display but have no relation to regional traditions. Behind this imagined past era of luxurious consumerism is a ubiquitous culture based on global marketing in which homogenization and conformity have won over the American dream and created a new kind of American heartland.

Andrew Borowiec is the first photographer to provide a comprehensive vision of this new American landscape. He directs our attention toward how such development has evolved in his home state of Ohio, a longstanding bellwether for American tastes and values whose citizens have voted for every winning candidate in a presidential election, including Trump, but one since 1944. It's also the place where fast-food companies test-market new products and the place where chewing gum, Teflon, and the first airplane, cash register, gas-powered automobile, traffic signal, and vacuum cleaner were invented. Even the state's Division of Travel and Tourism has long relied on “Ohio, the Heart of It All” as its popular motto to attract visitors to the state.

Andrew Borowiec's work follows in the tradition of other legendary photographers who so keenly interpreted land and life in America—among them Walker Evans, Robert Frank, Robert Adams and the other New Topographics photographers. He has used his keen eye and extensive fieldwork to give us a fresh, humorous, and razor-sharp view of what is happening in America today. There is a new heartland, representing 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:

“Since the 1950s, suburbs have represented what adulthood is supposed to look like for Americans: a spacious house, enough green space to raise a family, and a refuge from the bustle of a nearby metropolis. But that might be changing as Americans are moving back to cities in a historical reverse of decades-old trends. . . . Just before the bubble burst in 2008, photographer Andrew Borowiec traveled to Ohio, the Midwestern heartland where national elections are determined and new fast-food products are tested, to capture this one-time American ideal—and the prefabricated bluegrass lawns and “lifestyle centers” (strip malls) it had become. Borowiec’s wry photos in his book, *The New Heartland: Looking for the American Dream*, offers one explanation for why a

generation soured on the old suburbs.”

—Politico

“Andrew Borowiec’s *The New Heartland* explores the uncharted terrain of an American landscape as it is being made and remade. Forty years after Robert Adams made photographic history by documenting the incessant march of development progress with square, black-and-white photographs of tract homes under construction and parking lots being paved, Borowiec brings color to his pictures of the manicured lawns, empty shopping centers, and plastic facades of an American Dream gone stale. Poignant, thought-provoking, and melancholic, *The New Heartland* vividly captures a defining moment of—what shall we call it?—the End of the American Century.”

—Steven Hoelscher, Professor of American Studies and Geography and Faculty Curator of Photography, Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin, and editor of *Reading Magnum: A Visual Archive of the Modern World*

“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 values. The specificity of Borowiec’s work reveals a sweet, irrefutable humanity that connects what we see with things we have experienced for ourselves and insists that these pictures and the trends they describe belong, somehow, to all of us.

“*The New Heartland* recalls other notable books in the history of photography: Robert Adams’s *The New West* (1973), Walker Evans’s *American Photographs* (1938), and the four-volume *The Work of Atget* (1981–1985) by John Szarkowski and Maria Morris Hambourg. These books wrestle with dichotomies of myth and reality, beauty and ugliness, gross social trends and the needs of ordinary people.

“The affinity among Borowiec, Adams, Evans, and Atget rests on those photographers’ shared faith that simple facts of how things look, when stated clearly and economically in photographs, possess unique poetic power. *The New Heartland* contributes to this tradition of careful looking with photographs of intelligence and wit.”

—Eric Paddock, Curator of Photography, Denver Art Museum, and author of *Robert Benjamin: Notes from a Quiet Life*

About the Author (use the jacket and catalog version from the Author’s Information form):

Andrew Borowiec is Distinguished Professor of Art Emeritus at the University of Akron who has received fellowships in photography from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, and Ohio Arts Council. For more than three decades, he has photographed America’s changing social, industrial, and post-industrial landscapes. His photographs 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-Atkins Museum of Art, Princeton University Art Museum, and Smithsonian Museum of American Art, among others. His other books of photography include *Wheeling, West Virginia* (Camera Infinita, 2018), *Cleveland: The Flats, the Mill, and the Hills* (Center for American Places at Columbia College Chicago, 2008), *Industrial Perspective: Photographs of the Gulf Coast* (Center for American Places, 2005), and *Along the Ohio* (John Hopkins University Press, in association with the Center for American Places, 2000).

About the Contributor:

David Giffels was a longtime columnist for *The Akron Beacon Journal* before joining the faculty of the University of Akron, where he is Associate Professor of English. His essays have appeared in *The Atlantic*, *Grantland*, *New York Times Magazine*, and *Wall Street Journal*, among many other publications, and he was a writer for the popular MTV series, *Beavis and Butt-Head*. Giffels's other books include the acclaimed *Furnishing Eternity: A Father, a Son, a Coffin, and a Measure of Life* (Scribner, 2018), *The Hard Way on Purpose: Essays and Dispatches from the Rust Belt* (Scribner, 2014), *All the Way Home: Building a Family in a Falling-Down House* (William Morrow/Harper Collins, 2008), *Are We Not Men? We Are Devo!* (SAF Publishing, 2003), with Jade Dellinger, and *Wheels of Fortune: The Story of Rubber in Akron* (University of Akron Press, 1998), with Steve Love.