

GREGORY THORP

American, born 1946, Rhode Island

Lives and works in New Haven, CT, and Ashland, MA

“When I stand on the lead barge, I experience an astonishing quiet. The head of a unit of fifteen coal barges plows the water’s surface, a full 1,000 feet from the throb of engines that shove it forward. The sky floats in the water and the two are ever-changing. This river is a passageway remote from other commerce. No riverbank billboards pitch a message toward the 30-day crews. No neon assaults me about what to eat or where to do taxes. The opportunity to make these pictures began in 1975 when I received a commission through the Solway Gallery from the Ohio River Company to make photographic art for their new office in the 580 Building. The subject was their operation on the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. To see what they did, I rode their vessels off and on for three years. Everything was a surprise, none more so than the effects of nature and the silence by this river. Eventually, opportunities came from other companies where I am fortunate to continue photography to this day.”

— Gregory Thorp, 2015

Within *By This River*, Thorp’s photographs reflect the openness, and at times, the abstracted beauty of the rivers he has documented. Spanning a number of years and various projects, this collection of images illustrates the aesthetics of inland waterways at an immediate and visceral level, one that harkens back to a simpler era, while reminding us of our current place and time.

Gregory Thorp has been called the foremost photographer of America’s inland waterways and the mariners who work on them. For nearly forty years he has been documenting the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, first as a photographer for the Ohio River Company, and later for other barge companies hired to move coal up and down the stretches of the river. Since the early 1970s, Thorp has been taking pictures of his obsessions: train stations, corn fields, cemetery markers, yellow school buses, and the rivers he has had the pleasure of riding. His work is familiar to Cincinnati audiences through his long-term association with Carl Solway Gallery, and his extensive documentation of the art and architecture of Union Terminal. Thorp is included in the collections of the Cincinnati Art Museum, Cincinnati Historical Society, and Strauss Troy Co., LPA (Cincinnati), among other private collections. His photographs have been published in numerous magazines including *Smithsonian*, *The New York Times Magazine*, *Modern Photography*, *Popular Photography*, *Camera 35*, *Cincinnati Magazine*, and *Ohio Magazine*. In 2006, he published *A Year of Corn: Photography by Gregory Thorp*, which won special recognition by the American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA).