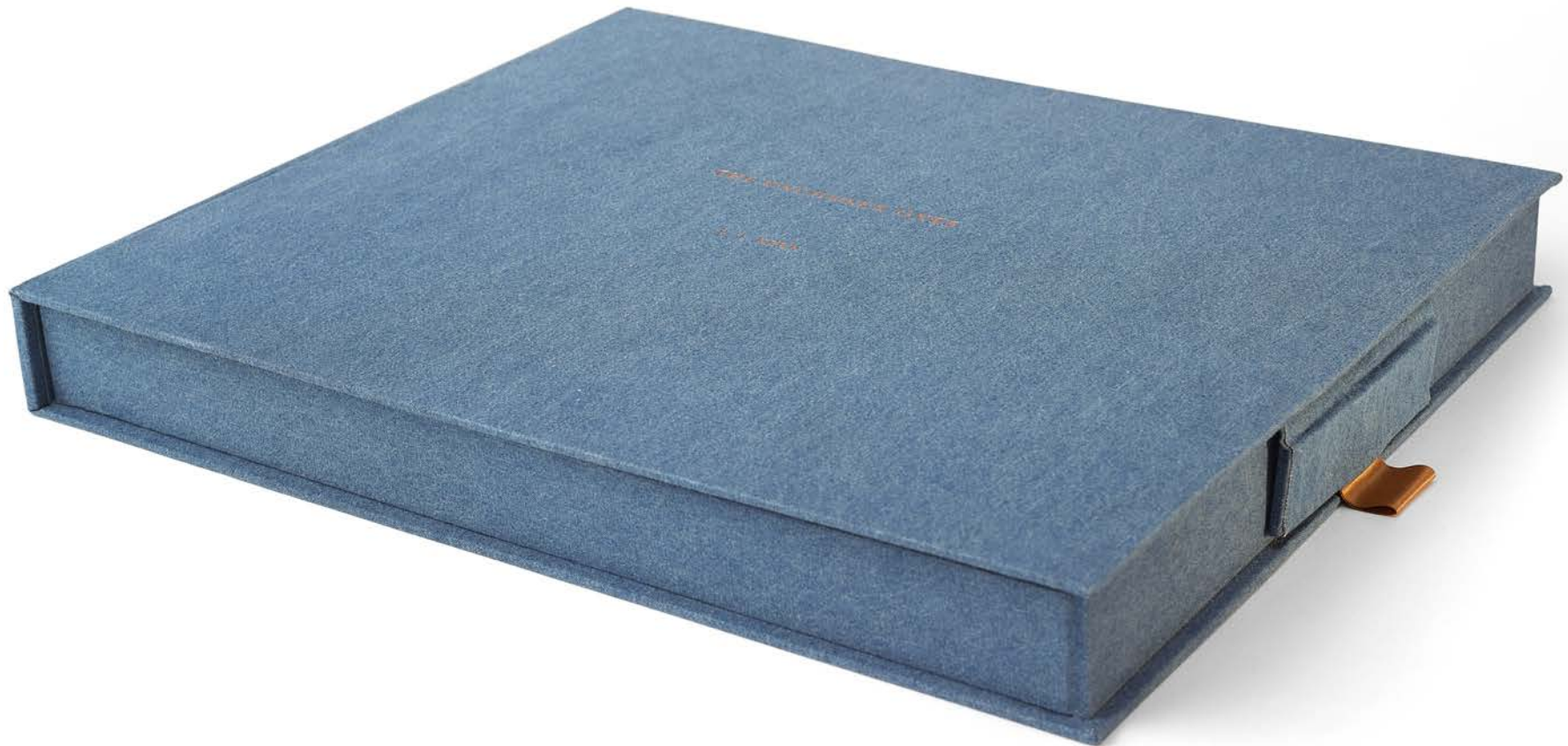


THE UNCHOSEN ONES:  
PORTRAITS OF AN AMERICAN PASTORAL  
R. J. Kern

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Deluxe Edition Portfolio  
PROSPECTUS



“The more time I spend with young people growing up on farms and the more I learn about their plans for their futures, the more enthusiastic I am to use the tools I understand, pixels and light, to carry their stories and experiences to a broader audience.”

— R. J. Kern

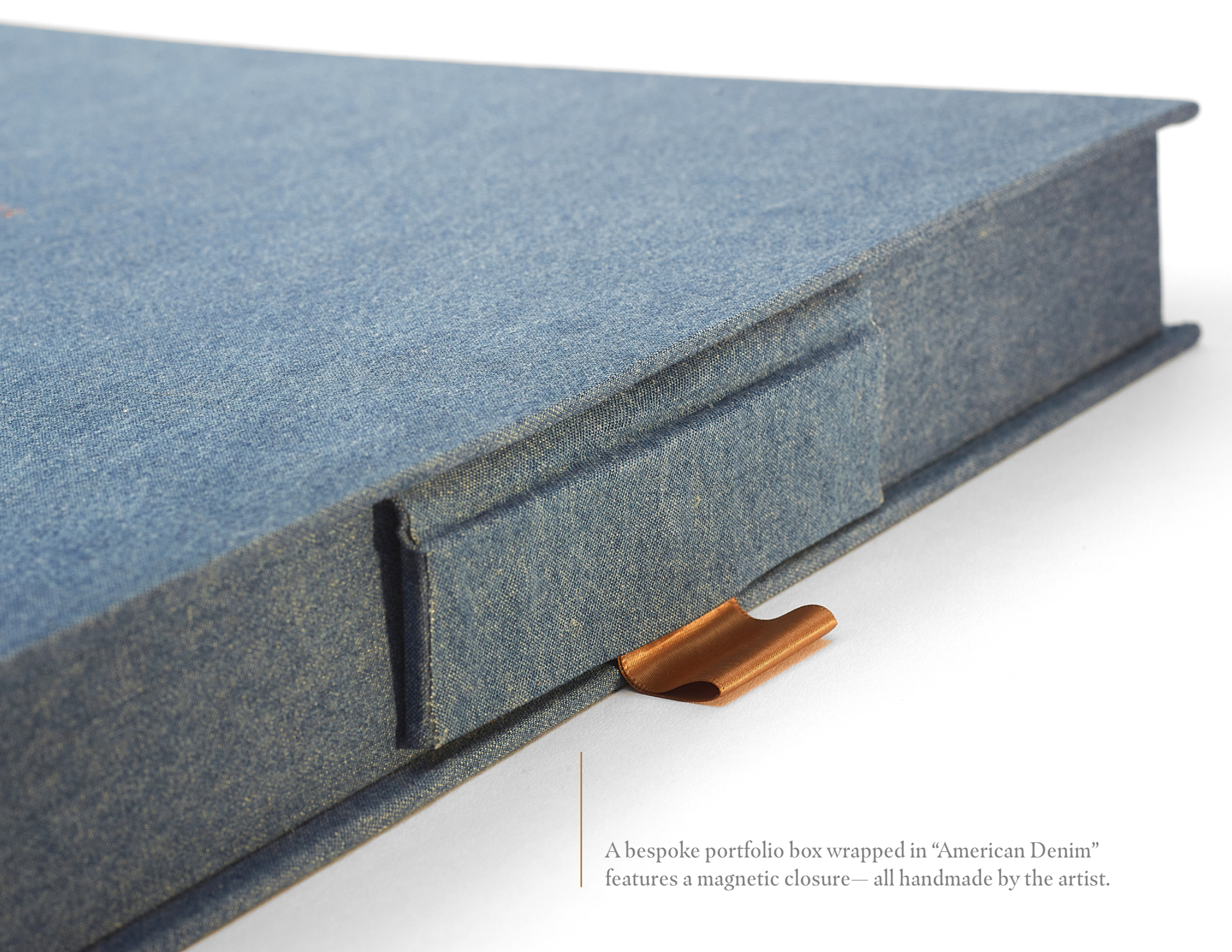
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The Deluxe Edition Portfolio includes twelve photographs and video interviews from *The Unchosen Ones: Portraits of an American Pastoral*. Designed specifically for university art museums and collections, this portfolio operates as an exhibition and educational tool.

The Deluxe Edition Portfolio debuted at the artist’s third solo exhibition with Burnet Fine Art & Advisory in Wayzata, Minnesota, May 21 - July 2, 2022. Edition of 12 + AP, sized 17 x 21 x 2 inches.







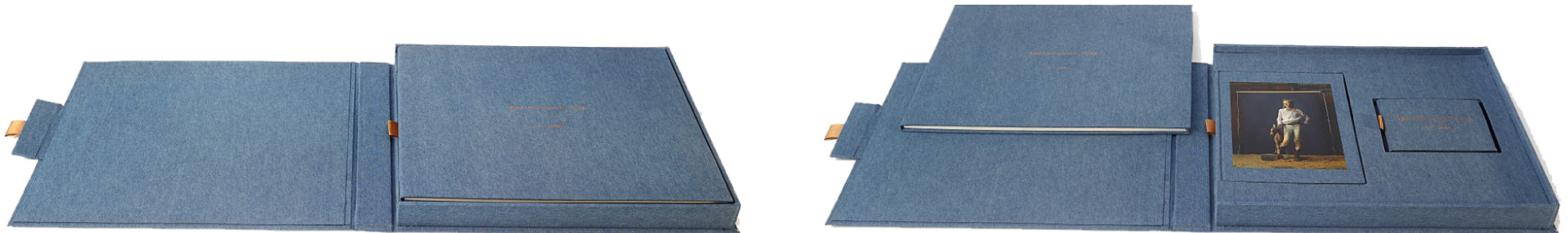
A bespoke portfolio box wrapped in “American Denim” features a magnetic closure— all handmade by the artist.



## CONTENTS

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- *The Unchosen Ones: Portraits of an American Pastoral* (MW Editions, 2021) “American Denim” cover with tipped in photograph front and back, embossed and foil stamping, signed by artist. Book Specifications: ISBN: 9781735762937, size 9 1/4 x 11 3/4", 136 pages, 111 color photographs.
- Twelve 16 x 20 inch photographs signed, titled, and numbered verso in archival ink by R. J. Kern, printed on Hahnemühle Photo Rag Ultra Smooth (305 gsm) paper with archival pigment inks by Ethan Jones. Ten prints chosen by the artist, the remaining two chosen from project at acquisition. Each print is drawn from an edition of 12 + AP. Print folio designed and created by the artist.
- Accordion book from archival materials handmade by the artist, featuring QR codes linking to the video documentary of the project, signed and numbered by the artist.



## PRINT SELECTIONS

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Ten prints chosen by the artist, the remaining two chosen at acquisition. Each print is drawn from an edition of 12 + AP. Each print is signed on print recto and is printed under the direct supervision of the artist on Hahnemühle paper which features a matte finish.







HANNAH  
PASTORAL STUDY, 2020



RYLEE AND NELLY  
CLAY COUNTY FAIR  
MINNESOTA, 2016



RYLEE AND NELLY  
CLAY COUNTY  
MINNESOTA, 2020



ERIC  
PASTORAL STUDY, 2020



LOUIS AND DUMB  
FREEBORN COUNTY FAIR  
MINNESOTA, 2016



LOUIS AND DUMB  
FREEBORN COUNTY  
MINNESOTA, 2020



DAVID  
PASTORAL STUDY, 2020



KOL AND ANNABELLE  
ANOKA COUNTY FAIR  
MINNESOTA, 2016



KOL AND ANNABELLE  
ANOKA COUNTY  
MINNESOTA, 2020



JOSILIN  
PASTORAL STUDY, 2020



## ACCORDION BOOK (recto)

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The accordion book features QR codes linking to the 2020 video documentary of the project which includes these videos hosted on Vimeo (click underlined text below to preview):

### TRAILER (1:14)

Video documentary teaser for the “The Unchosen Ones: Portraits of an American Pastoral”

### PROJECT OVERVIEW (2:22)

A brief interview with the artist, interviews with the participants and behind-the-scenes footage

### PROJECT OVERVIEW - Extended (5:56)

Includes interviews with the artist about his process and behind-the-scenes footage and stills from the principle photography. The artist answers the following questions: What inspired this project? How did you grow as an artist? How did you choose a subject and location? What did you learn from them and 4-H? Why the gray backdrop? How did you put the kids and animals at ease? What was the biggest challenge to the project?





## ACCORDION BOOK (verso)

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### EPISODE 1. Advice for Competitors (3:31)

Listen to 20 youth participants offering perspective and advice to other 4-H competitors.

### EPISODE 2. Life Skills (3:30)

20 youth share lessons learned and life skills from working with animals.

### EPISODE 3. George Floyd and Black Lives Matter Movement (2:13)

Participants share thoughts about the murder of George Floyd and the BLM movement.

### EPISODE 4: Covid-19, Family, and Hope (3:45)

Youth answer the questions: How has COVID impacted your relationship with your friends and family? What brings your hope during these times?

Note: A direct digital download is available at acquisition for all videos to be stored electronically and with permission granted for screening to audiences (1 GB size).

## CURATORIAL STATEMENTS

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*“The Unchosen Ones stands as a document of these subjects, and of specific hot summer afternoons in Minnesota; I don’t doubt that a hundred years from now, viewers of these photographs will marvel at their truth and greedily consume every fact and detail. This is what documentary photography is intended to do, but the best examples of it—as this work is—transcend the specificity of time and place. Kern has preserved decisive moments in photography that are also universal human moments. Youth is fleeting. Disappointment is inevitable. Kids grow up. Love endures. We carry on.”*

ALISON NORDSTROM Independent Scholar, Curator, and Writer, Cambridge, Massachusetts

*“I chose R. J. Kern as the first place winner, a series of posed portraits of children and their non-prize-winning goats. The question of what it means to be a victor certainly had new resonance this year, but for me the issues of winning or losing were far less pressing than the sensitivity of the portraits, both of the children and of the animals (two subjects notoriously difficult to photograph) and most essentially of their relationship to one another. The simple conceit of a uniform backdrop called attention to the act of photographing and also highlighted the differences in scale, attitude, and pose among the sitters, both human and hircine. I found the project beautifully seen and surprisingly tender.”*

COREY KELLER Curator of Photography, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art







## ABOUT THE ARTIST

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R. J. Kern (b. 1978) is an American artist whose work investigates ideas of home, ancestry, and a sense of place. His portraits focus on intimate, interdependent relationships of people, animals, and landscape as a means of exploring how ancestry shapes identity and how myth intertwines with personal history. His camera has led him from an inquiry into his lineage in the farming communities of Scandinavia and Ireland to the examination of similar communities near his home in Minnesota. Increasingly, his attention has been captured by the next generation of young people, who may or may not be the stewards of rural communities and economies in the future.

Inspired by master landscape painters of the 19th-century, Kern embraces the heightened expressivity of natural and artificial lighting techniques. To draw sharper connections between traditional and modern farming routines, he adopts both historical and current photographic processes. While illuminating the ephemeral beauty of youth, Kern probes the current realities of agrarian practices, aspiring to enhance awareness and interest in the changing face of American pastoral life.

Accolades include PDN's 30 2018, Critical Mass Top 50 in 2018 and 2021, CENTER 2017 Choice Award Winner (Curator's Choice, First Place), the 2017 Taylor Wessing Photographic Portrait Prize (Finalist), and three Artist Initiative Grants from the Minnesota State Arts Board (2016, 2018, 2020). He was the Commemorative Artist for the 2019 Minnesota State Fair.



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Kern's work has been presented in a number of publications, including a feature in *National Geographic* (November 2017). Kern published his first monograph with Kehrer Verlag titled, *The Sheep and the Goats*, awarded one of "The Most Beautiful German Books 2018" by Stiftung Buchkunst and awarded Bronze by the Deutscher Fotobuchpreis 2018-19. His second monograph, *The Unchosen Ones: Portraits of an American Pastoral* (MW Editions, 2021) was listed as a 2021 Top 10 Favorite Photobook by *What You Will Remember*.

Selected collections holding his work include: Center for Creative Photography (Tucson, AZ), Center for Photography at Woodstock (Woodstock, NY), Fidelity Corporate Art Collection (Boston, MA), Griffin Museum of Photography (Winchester, MA), Leepa-Rattner Museum of Art (Tarpon Springs, FL), General Mills Corporate Collection (Minneapolis, MN), Minneapolis Institute of Art (Minneapolis, MN), Plains Art Museum (Fargo, ND), Masur Museum of Art (Monroe, LA), Minnesota Historical Society (St. Paul, MN), Museum of Fine Arts (Houston, TX), and Museum of Fine Arts (St. Petersburg, FL).

He is represented by Burnet Fine Art & Advisory and Olson-Larsen Galleries.

## SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS FOR THIS PROJECT

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- 2024 Blanden Art Museum, Fort Dodge, IA
- 2023 University of Oklahoma Museum of Art, Stillwater, OK  
Elkhorn Valley Museum, Norfolk, NE  
Living History Farms, Urbandale, IA  
Arts Council of Wichita Falls, Wichita Falls, TX
- 2022 Burnet Fine Art & Advisory, Wayzata, MN
- 2020 Thomas-Reuters Gallery, Minneapolis-St Paul International Airport  
Watermark Art Center, Bemidji, MN
- 2019 Plains Art Museum, Fargo, ND
- 2018 The Griffin Museum of Photography, Winchester, MA  
Burnet Fine Art & Advisory, Wayzata, MN  
Klompching Gallery, Brooklyn, NY
- 2017 Yixian International Photography Festival, Anhui, China



## SELECTED AWARDS AND HONORS FOR THIS PROJECT

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First Place, CENTER Curator's Choice Award, juror Corey Keller, SF Museum of Modern Art, 2017

Second Place, *International Juried Exhibition*, juror Philip Brookman, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, 2017

Finalist, Taylor Wessing Photographic Portrait Prize 2017, National Portrait Gallery, London, England, 2017

Silver Medal, *The Royal Photographic Society's International Photography Exhibition 160*, London, England, 2017

Finalist, Renaissance Photography Prize, London, England, 2017

Critical Mass "Top 50", Photolucida, Portland, OR, 2018 and 2021

Award of Excellence, *Communication Arts Photo Annual*, 2018 and 2021

"Great State of Minnesota Award" by Minnesota Citizens for the Arts, 2018

Honorable Mention, *56th Annual Juried Competition Exhibition*, Masur Museum of Art, Juror Catherine Futter, 2019

First Place, San Francisco Bay International Photography Competition and Exhibition, 2019

Selected Winner, *American Photography 37*, 2021

Shortlisted, *The Royal Photographic Society's International Photography Exhibition 163*, 2021

Open Call Winner, Helsinki Photo Festival, 2021



## INSTALLATION VIEW

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The Deluxe Edition Portfolio of *The Unchosen Ones* debuted at the artist's third solo exhibition with Burnet Fine Art & Advisory in Wayzata, Minnesota, May 21 - July 2, 2022.



## HOW TO ACQUIRE

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Fine-art prints, artist books, and Collector's Editions are available for acquisition. Contact for details:

Jennifer Phelps, Director, Burnet Fine Art & Advisory, 775 Lake Street East, Wayzata, Minnesota 55391

info@burnetart.com | 952.473.8333

R. J. Kern has produced a museum-quality traveling exhibitions available for booking through 2027. He is interested in giving educational lectures, workshops, and helping to organize panel discussions in conjunction with the exhibition and book signings.

To schedule an exhibition, gallery talk, book signing, or educational gathering, please contact R. J. Kern directly.

Your support helps sustain on-going artist initiatives including community engagement through local exhibitions, artist talks, and sharing the messages of *The Unchosen Ones* to communities across the globe.

A handwritten signature in dark grey ink that reads "R.J. Kern". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each name being capitalized and prominent.

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