



# Old Fields: Photography, Glamour, and Fantasy Landscape

*John R. Stilgoe*

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Glamour subverts convention. Models, images, and even landscapes can skew ordinary ways of seeing when viewed through the lens of photography, suggesting new worlds imbued with fantasy, mystery, sexuality, and tension.

In *Old Fields*, John Stilgoe—one of the most original observers of his time—offers a poetic and controversial exploration of the generations-long effort to portray glamour. Fusing three forces in contemporary American culture—amateur photography after 1880; the rise of glamour and fantasy; and the often-mysterious quality of landscape photographs—Stilgoe provides a wide-ranging yet concentrated take on the cultural legacy of our photographic history.

Through the medium of "shop theory"—the techniques, tools, and purpose-made equipment a maker uses to realize intent—Stilgoe looks at the role of Eastman Kodak in shaping the ways photographers purchased cameras and films, while also mapping the divisions that were created by European-made cameras. He then goes on to argue that with the proliferation of digital cameras, smart phones, and Instagram, young people's lack of knowledge about photographic technique is in direct correlation to their lack of knowledge of the history of glamour photography.

In his exploration of the rise of glamour and fantasy in contemporary American culture, Stilgoe offers a provocative and very personal look into his enduring fascination with, and the possibilities inherent in, creating one's own images.

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