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**New photography book from Richard Sexton explores
industrial landscape along the Mississippi River**

Book to accompany exhibition opening September 17, 2019, at THNOC's new exhibition center

July 24, 2019 | New Orleans, Louisiana — For hundreds of years the lower Mississippi River has supported a steady flow of human enterprise, but only within the last century has its landscape been so heavily industrialized by humans. On Sept. 17, 2019, The Historic New Orleans Collection will release “Enigmatic Stream: Industrial Landscapes of the Lower Mississippi River,” a new [book](#) and [exhibition](#) featuring the work of accomplished author and photographer Richard Sexton, capturing the influence of heavy industry between and along the river’s banks.

Through nearly 100 black-and-white photographs, Sexton documents a quintessentially American conundrum: how to take advantage of this region’s vast economic potential while still leaving room for life along its banks.

Sexton has long been known for his photographs of plantation sites along the river, places that represent an era of local history when cotton and sugar were the leading economic engines. The images from this new collection hail from the same geographic locations, but this time industry is the giant.

In “Enigmatic Stream,” Sexton presents sometimes jarring juxtapositions between innovation and decay, the commercial and the residential, and the manmade and the natural.

“Many of these sites resemble collaborations between Rube Goldberg and Dr. Frankenstein,” said Sexton. “We, the public, are intellectually aware of heavy industry’s presence and importance, are in awe of its power, and, yet, at the same time, fear and loathe its existence.”

Essays by Paul Schneider, author of numerous natural history books, and photographic historian John H. Lawrence offer background on the subject matter and techniques in Sexton’s images.

“Sexton’s photographs capture so well the majesty and audaciousness of humanity’s more corporate additions to the river landscape,” said Schneider. “They are awesome, in the 19th-century use of the word—equally tinged with both beauty and horror.”

Presented in conjunction with an exhibition of the same name, opening Sept. 17 at THNOC’s new exhibition center at 520 Royal St., “Enigmatic Stream” is the result of nearly 20 years of Sexton documenting this complicated industrial corridor. The project follows his earlier works capturing the decaying plantation sites of Louisiana River Road, often found alongside the same refineries.

“I am drawn to environments that are not destined to last, and whose final chapter may be soon written,” said Sexton. “For ‘Enigmatic Stream,’ I shot in black and white specifically to evoke the technological era—outdated, at this point—of these refineries, which were shot in the same format when they opened and at the time were celebrated and romanticized as feats of human ingenuity.”

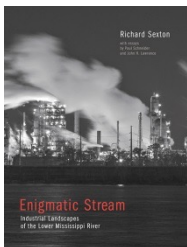
“Sexton’s images add another dimension to the many considerations—artistic, literary, academic—of the Mississippi River,” said Lawrence. “We have all seen the river and have a sense of it on some level, but for many his approach will present a wholly different river.”

“Enigmatic Stream” will be available for purchase beginning Sept. 17 for \$40 at The Shop at The Collection, independent bookstores and online retailers. Admission to the exhibition will be free, and the galleries are open to the public Tuesday–Saturday, 9:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m., and Sunday, 10:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

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About The Historic New Orleans Collection

Founded in 1966, The Historic New Orleans Collection is a museum, research center and publisher dedicated to the study and preservation of the history and culture of New Orleans and the Gulf South region. For more information, visit www.hnoc.org, call (504) 523-4662, or follow THNOC on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).



[“Enigmatic Stream: Industrial Landscapes of the Lower Mississippi River”](#)

**by Richard Sexton, with essays by Paul Schneider and John H. Lawrence
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softcover • 9" × 12½" • 144 pp. • 90 b/w images**

US \$40 • UK £30

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