

## **FINDING YOUR VISION: MCNY 2020**

**Alex Webb and Rebecca Norris Webb**

Museum of the City of New York (1220 Fifth Avenue)

Friday, April 24 - Sunday, April 26, 2020

**EARLY APPLICATIONS CLOSE:** Monday, February 17, 2020

Do you know where you're going next with your photography—or where it's taking you? This intensive weekend workshop will help photographers begin to understand their own distinct way of seeing the world. It also will help photographers figure out their next step photographically—from deepening their own unique vision, to the process of discovering and making a long-term project that they're passionate about. A workshop for serious amateurs and professionals alike, it will be taught by **Alex Webb** and **Rebecca Norris Webb**, a creative team who often edit projects and books together—including their recent Aperture book, *Brooklyn: The City Within*, with an accompanying exhibition that opens at the Museum on March 11. Included in the workshop will be an editing exercise, either a photographing or editing assignment, as well as an optional pre-workshop assignment.

This weekend workshop will begin with a public artists' talk on **Friday, April 24, at 6:00 pm**, which all participants are required to attend, and an optional pre-workshop assignment due on **Thursday, April 23, at 11:00 pm**. It will continue with reviews of each participant's work on Saturday morning, which will spark a larger discussion about various photographic issues, including the process of photographing spontaneously and intuitively, how to edit (select and sequence) photographs instinctively, how to work in cultures different from one's own, how images on the wall differ from images in a book, and how long-term projects can evolve into books and exhibitions. The first day of the workshop will end with a group-editing exercise and a photography or an editing assignment. Sunday will be dedicated to reviewing each participant's assignment, as well as a series of presentations about bookmaking and exhibitions. The workshop will end with gallery talk/walk through of the Webbs' exhibition at the Museum, *Brooklyn: The City Within*, an event that's also open to the public.

***NOTE: This workshop is for photographers who collaborate with the world, not for those who dramatically alter or change their images digitally.***

**To Apply:** We welcome passionate beginners and professionals, college students and seasoned photographers, photojournalists and fine art photographers—anyone who is 18 years old or older and is passionate about photography. The applications will be on a

first come/first serve basis, so signing up and paying the workshop fee guarantees your spot. If you have to cancel, all but a \$50 processing fee will be refunded, if we can fill your spot.

## WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

**Thursday, April 23, 11:00 pm: *Optional Pre-Workshop Assignment Due:***

“LIGHT OF NEW YORK” – If you choose to do this assignment, you may photograph in the New York City area for at least an hour any time the week before the workshop, and the deadline is **11:00 pm on Thursday evening, April 23** for emailing your selection of 1-3 small jpgs (2000 pixels longest side, 72dpi). Please email your final edit to Alex and Rebecca: [webbnorriswebb@gmail.com](mailto:webbnorriswebb@gmail.com), with LIGHT OF NEW YORK on the email’s subject line. You can find details about the assignment below.

**Friday: April 24, 6:00 – 7:30 pm**

**Brooklyn & Beyond: The Photographs of Alex Webb and Rebecca Norris Webb**

A Conversation with the Webbs followed by a Q&A and book signing of *Brooklyn: The City Within* (Aperture). **All workshop participants are required to attend because we will be covering material that we won’t cover in the classroom.** It is a public event, so please feel free to invite friends and family.

**Saturday: April 25, 2020**

**10:00 - 10:15 am:** Workshop Introduction

**10:15 - 12:30 pm:** Portfolio Reviews

**12:30 - 1:00 pm:** Q&A with Webbs

**1:00 - 2:00 pm:** Group Lunch at MCNY

**2:00 - 2:30 pm:** Editing and Sequencing Presentation

**2:30 - 3:30 pm:** Editing Exercise

**3:30 - 6:30 pm or later (Offsite):** Group 1: Working on Photography Assignment around NYC

**3:30 – 6:00 pm:** Group 2: Working on Editing and Sequencing Assignment

**Sunday: April 26, 2020**

**10:00 - 10:30 am:** Group 1 Give “A” and “B” edit to assistant; Group 2 lays out sequence on assigned table.

**10:30 - 12:00 pm:** Alex and Rebecca review the photographing assignments.

**12:00 -1:00 pm:** Presentation

**1:00 - 2:00 pm:** Group Lunch

**2:00 – 3:00 pm:** Alex and Rebecca review the editing/sequencing assignments.

**3:00 – 4:00 pm:** Presentation

**4:00 - 6:00 pm:** Gallery Talk/Walk Through of the *Brooklyn: The City Within* at MCNY, an event that's open to the public, so please feel free to invite family and friends.

**THE WORKSHOP OPTIONAL PRE-ASSIGNMENT: THE LIGHT OF NEW YORK**  
**(Due on Thursday, April 23, 11pm)**

THE LIGHT OF NEW YORK CITY: Before the workshop begins, please read one of the most famous poems about New York City, "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry" by Walt Whitman. Here's where you can read the entire poem online:

<http://www.bartleby.com/142/86.html>. Please particularly notice Whitman's many poetic references to the light of New York City, such as the following lines below:

*I, too, many and many a time cross'd the river, the sun half an hour high;  
I watched the Twelfth-month sea-gulls—I saw them high in the air,*

*floating with motionless wings, oscillating their bodies,  
I saw how the glistening yellow lit up parts of their bodies, and left the rest in strong shadow,  
I saw the slow-wheeling circles, and the gradual edging toward the south.*

*I too saw the reflection of the summer sky in the water,  
Had my eyes dazzled by the shimmering track of beams,  
Look'd at the fine centrifugal spokes of light around the shape of my head in the sun-lit water...*

After you arrive in New York—or anytime the week before the workshop for those who live in NYC or in the area—we'd like the subject of this assignment to be light itself. You are to photograph for at least one hour in a neighborhood, on a street, in a museum or restaurant or other interior, or perhaps on one of the city's many ferries. (Feel free to photograph close to home if you live in NYC or the region.) As you work, please think about the particular quality or tone of the light you're working in. Is it harsh or soft? Is it white or amber-colored? Is it hazy or clear? Is it dark or blue-tinted just before a storm? Is it mixed with the color of the streetlights at the end or beginning of the day?

You are welcome to photograph in black and white or color. Please select your favorite image or images (maximum of 3 images, sized 72 dpi and 2000 pixels on largest side, naming each image as follows FIRSTNAME\_1, FIRSTNAME\_2, FIRSTNAME\_3.) Please

write LIGHT OF NY on the email subject line, and email no more than three small jpgs to Alex and Rebecca by Thursday, April 23, 11pm: [webbnorriswebb@gmail.com](mailto:webbnorriswebb@gmail.com).

## **THE WORKSHOP ASSIGNMENT (Due on Sunday, April 26, at 10:00am)**

### **Photographing Assignment Option:**

If you are already photographing a long-term project in New York or the region, feel free to continue photographing on this project late Saturday afternoon between 3:30-6:30pm (or later), and/or first thing on Sunday morning before class at 10am. For others, you may want to choose a street or neighborhood to photograph either late Saturday afternoon or early Sunday morning before class, or something close to where you live, such as friends or your family or your neighborhood. You could choose to photograph in a local park, in a bar, in a museum, or in a mode of transportation. Whatever you choose to photograph is up to you. (The assistant will email everyone a list of events happening around NYC that Saturday, in case that may be of interest.) You will edit (select) your take on your laptop into an "A" and "B" edit (which will be explained in the workshop on Saturday), and put on a thumb drive or hard drive at 72dpi, 2000 on longest side, with your last name and number on files; you will give this thumb drive or portable hard drive to Evan on Sunday morning at 10am to download into the workshop computer, which we will re-edit together later as a group.

### **Editing Assignment Option:**

For those working on a long-term project—perhaps one that they hope one day will become a book and/or exhibition—they can choose this option. They are welcome to bring one project of up to 100 small prints each on Saturday morning (no larger than 4x6 inches or 5x7 inches), and the Webbs will tailor an editing assignment just for their project on Saturday afternoon, beginning at 3:30pm. If they wish, they can bring up to 100 additional images from their project on a laptop.

### **— — SUNDAY**

10-10:30am: Give "A" and "B" folders to the assistant on thumb drive or portable hard drive. Digital files should be 2000 pixels on longest side, 72 dpi. Each folder should have student's first name and Folder, such as "Alex.FolderA." Those who choose the editing assignment option, will lay out their sequence of little prints on the table assigned to them.

## WHAT TO BRING TO THE WORKSHOP THE FIRST DAY:

For the first day in the classroom at MCNY (Sat. April 25), participants should bring about **30-40 SMALL PRINTS (Please bring prints, NOT digital files.)** The prints don't have to be fine prints, they can be small, inexpensive work prints, roughly 4x6-inches or 5x7-inches, such as inkjet prints, or cheap machine prints made at your local drugstore. The main focus is the image, NOT the quality of the print. Those working in series of photographs should bring a selection of photographs from two or three series, or an excerpt from a long-term project. We are interested in each participant's individual vision, rather than whether he or she can work professionally or not. So bring the personal project or projects—the work that represents your passions, your obsessions—not the set of photographs done simply to satisfy an editor or art director. **NOTE:** For those who choose to do the editing assignment, they can bring up to an additional 70 small prints of the project that they are working on.

## WHAT OTHER THINGS YOU'LL NEED FOR THE WORKSHOP

Since we'll be working digitally, we request that everyone who chooses to do the photographing assignment please bring a **digital camera** to the workshop on Saturday, the first day, a **laptop** to edit on (which you can leave at your hotel or home; we won't need it at the Museum), and a **thumb drive or portable hard drive** to deliver your assignment to Evan on Sunday morning at 10am.

## WORKSHOP INSTRUCTORS BIOS

**Alex Webb** has published more than fifteen books, including *Brooklyn, The City Within* (Aperture, 2019, with Rebecca Norris Webb) and *La Calle: Photographs from Mexico* (Aperture, 2016), as well as a survey of his color work, *The Suffering of Light* (Aperture, 2011). Webb became a full member of Magnum Photos in 1979. His work has been shown widely, and he has received numerous awards, including a Guggenheim Fellowship in 2007. His photographs have appeared in the *New York Times Magazine*, *National Geographic*, and *GEO*, among other publications.

**Rebecca Norris Webb**, originally a poet, often explores the complicated relationship between people and the natural world in her seven books, including *The Glass Between Us* (2006), *Violet Isle: A Duet of Photographs from Cuba* (2009, with Alex Webb), and *My Dakota* (2012). A 2019 NEA grant recipient, she has exhibited at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and the Cleveland Museum of Art, among other museums. Her work has appeared in the *New Yorker*, *New York Times Magazine*, *National Geographic*, and *Le Monde*

*Magazine*. An exhibition of *Brooklyn: The City Within* will open at MCNY on Friday, March 13, 2020, and run through fall 2020.

## LINKS

Website: <https://www.webbnorriswebb.co>

Instagram: [https://www.instagram.com/webb\\_norriswebb/](https://www.instagram.com/webb_norriswebb/)