

PRESS RELEASE

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REUBEN COX

THE WORK OF JOE WEBB

September 8th - October 16th, 2007

Opening reception: Saturday, September 8th, 6 - 8 p.m.

Bespoke Gallery is pleased to present *The Work of Joe Webb*, a series of gelatin silver prints and a series of gold-toned printing-out paper prints by Reuben Cox. A reception will be held on Saturday, September 8th from 6 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. This is Reuben Cox's third solo exhibit at Bespoke Gallery.

From the early 1920's until 1940, Joe Webb designed and built nearly three dozen log cabins in and around Highlands, North Carolina, a small mountain town on a plateau in the Southern Appalachians which also happens to be Reuben Cox's hometown.

Cox's thorough, hauntingly beautiful study of the Webb cabins highlights his project-based approach to documentary photography, and, in typically eclectic fashion, his magisterial portraits represent a significant departure from the subject matter of both of his previous Bespoke Gallery shows.

Cox was taught the basics of the archaic process of printing on printing-out paper by the photographers Judith Joy Ross and Lois Conner. He explains it thus:

"The negative is placed directly on the printing-out paper and the image is produced by exposing the paper to light and then toning it in a solution of gold chloride. There is no enlargement, so no loss of fidelity."

Printing-out paper, first sold in the 1880s and carried by Eastman Kodak until 1987, produces a long tonal scale and intricate shadow detail. Cox cites Eugene Atget, an early 20th century French photographer who used the same printing process, as a significant influence on the Joe Webb project.

Cox's photographs, printed in the style of the period when Joe Webb was building his cabins, seem to contemporize Webb's work. The photographs resonate with an evocative vitality, and celebrate the simple, uncontrived sculptural aesthetic of a master craftsman.

Born in Highlands, North Carolina in 1972, Reuben was educated at The North Carolina School for Science and Math and The Cooper Union in New York, NY. His work is included in collections of The Ogden Museum, The New Orleans Museum of Art, The Center for Documentary Studies, The Alice Austen House Museum, and Howard Stein's Cameraworks.

Cox's work has been included in numerous group shows and publications and he was a finalist for the Discovery Prize at the 2005 Rencontres Arles festival in Arles, France. In addition to Cox's solo exhibits What a Woman Wants at Bespoke Gallery in 2005 and The Scholar's Stones of Lethe Gardens in 2006, he had two solo shows in 2005: His X-Ray Dreams at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory in Cold Spring, NY and The 2003 Contract Bridge World Championships! at The Captain's Bookshelf in Asheville, NC.

The Work of Joe Webb, a book comprising Cox's biographic essay about Webb and his photographs of the cabins, will be published by the Center for American Places (www.americanplaces.org) in the summer of 2009.