

SHAKER MUSEUM | MOUNT LEBANON

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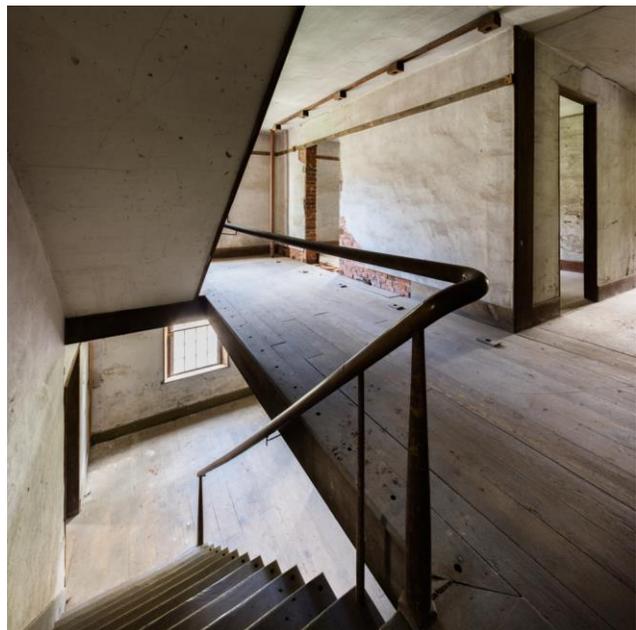
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Limited edition photographs by Benjamin Swett of Mount Lebanon Shaker Village on display at The Shaker Bar in Hudson; a portion of print sales to benefit Shaker Museum | Mount Lebanon

(October 26, 2016) Photographer Benjamin Swett, whose books include *New York City of Trees*, *The Hudson Valley: A Cultural Guide*, and *Route 22*, spent part of this past summer photographing the North Family buildings and landscape at Mount Lebanon.

On his initial visits, he found himself drawn by the way light moved and changed in the corridors, stairwells, and rooms of the building known as the Brethren's Workshop, and he began to explore the different effects of light on interior spaces.

"Studying these effects on the interiors brings one closer to the states of mind of these now-remote people, and spending time with the architecture puts the deliberate, practical, yet simultaneously spiritual and otherworldly mindset of the Shakers into an accessible perspective," Swett said.



North Family Brethren's Workshop, Mount Lebanon Shaker Village. October 3, 2016. Benjamin Swett. From the series Shadows of the Shakers. Archival pigment print. Edition of 15. Courtesy of BCB Art, Hudson, NY.

Mount Lebanon Shaker Village (1787-1947) was the first community fully organized and governed by a set of guiding Shaker theological, economic, and social principles. It served as the administrative and spiritual center of the Shaker world.

The Brethren's Workshop, pictured in Benjamin Swett's photographs, was built in 1829 and originally used by the Shaker sisters for washing, drying, and ironing the family clothes, and by the brothers for a variety of mechanical trades. The building is largely unchanged since the Shakers moved away in 1947 and is a premier example of the typical Shaker workshop. Many original details remain and the building is a study in original Shaker finishes and techniques.

Shaker Museum | Mount Lebanon's executive director Lacy Schutz said, "I first became aware of Swett's work when I was at the Museum of the City of New York and oversaw the accession of a portrait he made of a tree in Pelham Bay Park. He brings enormous sensitivity and concentration to his subjects and the photographs of the Brethren's Workshop are both haunting and visceral. You almost expect to catch a glimpse of a Shaker just disappearing around a corner."



North Family Brethren's Workshop, Mount Lebanon Shaker Village. September 24, 2016. Benjamin Swett. From the series Shadows of the Shakers. Archival pigment print. Edition of 15. Courtesy of BCB Art, Hudson, NY.

Selections of the photographs from this project are now on display at The Shaker Bar at 119 Warren Street in Hudson, New York. A public reception will take place Saturday, November 19 from 5:00 – 7:00. Limited edition prints of the photographs are available for sale and a portion of the proceeds will benefit Shaker Museum | Mount Lebanon. Prints are offered courtesy of BCB Art and can be purchased by contacting the gallery at 518-828-4539 or by visiting Shaker Museum | Mount Lebanon's online shop at <http://shakermi.org/collections/shadows-of-the-shakers>.

Benjamin Swett was a writer and photographer for the New York City Parks Department for 13 years before leaving to take up photography full-time in 2001. His photographs are included in the collection of the Museum of the City of New York and other public, corporate, and private collections.

Shaker Museum | Mount Lebanon stewards the historic site in New Lebanon, New York, which is open from June to October and offers tours, exhibitions, and public programs. The museum also has a campus in Old Chatham, New York, open year round by appointment, where the administrative offices, collections, library, and archives are housed. The museum's collection of over 56,000 Shaker items is the most comprehensive collection of its kind in the world. Please visit www.shakermml.org for more information.