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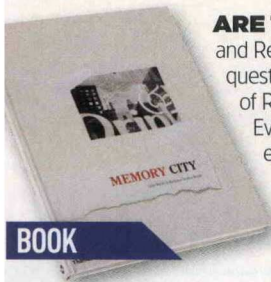
Books, exhibitions and websites

AP Review

The latest photography books, exhibitions and websites. By Jon Stapley

Memory City

Alex Webb and Rebecca Norris Webb. Thames & Hudson, £39.95, hardback, 172 pages, ISBN 978-0-500-54432-7



ARE THESE the last days of film? Alex and Rebecca Norris Webb consider this question in *Memory City* – an exploration of Rochester, NY, shot (mostly) on film.

Every choice made for the book seems elegiac: the decision to photograph Rochester, home of Eastman Kodak until its bankruptcy in 2012; Alex's use of his 'last rolls' of Kodachrome, which can now only

be processed in black & white; Rebecca's shots of ownerless formal dresses, and her seemingly endless supply of melancholy young women; and even the title.

Whatever your opinions – and the debate has long been obfuscated by people who confuse film's genuine merits with

poorly defined notions of 'pure' or 'proper' photography – you can appreciate that the book's pictures are really good. Alex Webb has an expert eye for framing a fleeting moment – often the thing that's 'happening' in an image is one of its smallest parts, dominated by the rest of the scene but without that moment the image would lose its power. It's a masterclass in observation and context. Rebecca's images are less 'real', with ghostly composites and images of simulacra – murals, pictures, dioramas.

Like film photography, the book is charming, one of a kind, and yes, at times a little clunky – I'm not sure the foldouts were necessary, and the quotes interspersed half-heartedly throughout feel like an afterthought. If we are living in the last days of film, then *Memory City* is a fitting epitaph.

