

GREGORY CREWDSON

THE BERKSHIRE EAGLE, April 4, 2026

Berkshire Landscapes

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50 crew members, one photo



PHOTOS BY STEPHANIE ZOLLSHAN — THE BERKSHIRE EAGLE

Art Director Mike Bedard spreads bursts of smoke in strategic locations just before the shutter clicks on the set of photographer Gregory Crewdson's photograph on Westminister Street in Pittsfield.

How Gregory Crewdson stages cinematic scenes in Pittsfield

By JENNIFER HUBERDEAU >> The Berkshire Eagle

The “magic hour” — the liminal space between day and night, during which Gregory Crewdson photographs — is about to happen.

“We’re 5 minutes out,” a stately voice announces over a wireless communication system to the 50 crew members stationed around the back of Hart’s Package & Variety Store, on Dalton Avenue, now a set for tonight’s shoot. Everything seems good to go on this massive set, where every last detail has been gone over numerous times, when a security light pops on. The light, triggered by a timer, cannot be shut off manually.

As the clock ticks down, two lighting crew members sprint across the set. Quickly, they wrap the light in black material and seal it with gaffer tape, eliminating the unwanted light source in under 2 minutes. Tonight’s models, siblings Viviana and Victor Lamphear, seamlessly move into their practiced, marked positions. The photo shoot will be done in about an hour, but has been in the works since early morning when Crewdson and his team, comprised primarily of Berkshire natives and residents, began setting up for this day, March 19 — Day 11 to the crew.

PHOTO TAKES SHAPE — “The crew call is at 8 a.m.,” Juliane Hiam, producer and studio manager, explains when I meet up with her four hours before the 6:30 p.m. shoot time, at one of the two Pittsfield houses being used by production staff. “We make one picture a day, so the setup is enormous.” This house, where stylist George Veale is coordinating wardrobe, hair and makeup, is owned by Hiam, who is also Crewdson’s part-

ner. The couple lives in Becket; the house, a family home where Hiam grew up, was available for the shoot.

A little further down the street, in a rented house, the production staff nicknamed Blue Porch, Producers Ellen Vander Widen and Alexa Green and Production Coordinator Nicole Overbaugh are busy overseeing tasks that keep the daily shoots running. “I kind of flow between the set and here in the office. I like to make sure everything is going along smoothly there, get it started and then come here,” says Green, a Pittsfield native whose family owns the Museum Facsimiles. “Each day is different. Today, there was some running around booking generators and condors (boom lifts); a lot of sourcing of things from the community. We also manage the catering, the transportation, basically getting everything to the set and where it needs to go. We also do the accounting and payroll.”

“We’re also booking housing and rental cars,” Overbaugh adds. Getting generators for the set has been a main focus for the day. “We get calls from the set, saying they need this or that; they need a heater for the day. We source it locally. We figure out how to make it work,” Green says. “Nicole is working on the call sheet for tomorrow. She’s putting the plan together for the next day, while I’m often working in the past, figuring out what actually happened on a specific day. Every day it’s a different picture, a dif-



Photographer Gregory Crewdson, center, checks the monitors with key members of his crew as twilight approaches for the creation of one of his famed, painting-like photographs in Pittsfield.

ferent location and a whole different set of logistics.” That includes scheduling lunch and dinner services, renting spaces for those meals, and coordinating transportation, which Green and Overbaugh liken to “throwing a party every day.”

“It’s like throwing 30 parties for 50 people,” Green adds. “It’s a million logistical details that include certain situations that affect the schedules, such as the weather. If it’s too windy to send people up in the condors for safety reasons, we have to rearrange the pictures, rearrange the schedules and then communicate with all the departments.”

Overbaugh, originally from Lanesborough, is working with Crewdson for the first time, having answered a call sent through the Berkshire Film and Media Collaborative.

“It’s been really special to be part of this. It’s been really nice to work on a project at home,” she says. “I’m usually

in Worcester, Boston or Providence. This is actually my first time on the ground at home.” Green, who has worked with Crewdson Studios since 2013, believes her original connection was made through her directory listing on the Berkshire Film and Media Collaborative website. “There was another producer before, who called me out of nowhere and asked if I was available,” she says. “So it was very similar.”

Like many of the longtime crew members, she doesn’t count years but rather the shoots she’s worked on — “Cathedral of the Pines,” “Eclipse of Moths,” “Evening’s Edge” and “Marc Jacobs,” a shoot for a 2024 issue of Vogue curated by the fashion designer.

ROOTS IN PITTSFIELD

Crewdson has been shooting in Pittsfield since 1967. In between his first and second years as a graduate student at Yale, he spent several weeks at Walmocah Park,

photographing, as he writes on his Substack, Crewdson Trail Log, “quintessentially American ritual of people attending the games — families arriving in their cars, teenage kids working the ticket booths and food stands as summer jobs, the announcers, the national anthem, the many innings, the kids wanting autographs from the players, and the beauty of the baseball game itself, the way it exists in its own time, and its relationship to the pastoral, and the settings to tell an unusual story. Walmocah Park was kind of ground zero for all of that coming together for him. He’s returned over and over and over again to the Pittsfield area since then.”

YEARS IN THE MAKING — “This all begins with me location scouting, about a year ago. I’m finding locations that can accommodate the story. And then the slow process of bringing the story to life begins,” Crewdson says. Crewdson, Page 2

field lights came on.” “He was photographing the ballfield, the games and the peripheral scene of the games,” Hiam said. “Then, he started wandering into the neighborhoods, around the perimeter of the ballfield.”

“It was the way the lights from the field were falling on these backyards — how, he felt, the light transformed these ordinary neighborhoods into something uncanny — it’s what inspired him to start using movie lights in ordinary settings to tell an unusual story. Walmocah Park was kind of ground zero for all of that coming together for him. He’s returned over and over and over again to the Pittsfield area since then.”

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Artistic Landscape



STEPHANIE ZOLLSHAN — THE BERKSHIRE EAGLE

Photographer Gregory Crewdson makes sure models are placed perfectly in the frame of the scene he has built on Westminister Street in Pittsfield for a twilight photograph.

Crewdson

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says when Hiam takes me to the shooting location, a parking lot behind Harte's.

"I've been to this particular spot probably over 100 times. I was really interested in the back of the store, the car place and these houses [across the street]," he says. "So it always, first and foremost, has to be a formally interesting picture. And then, I build a story around it. We brought in the telephone booth, created our own signs, brought in our prop cars. All these little details come together to create a bigger story."

Once a location is found, Crewdson and Hiam collaborate on a one-page description.

"It's more or less a screenplay, except there's no action and no dialogue. He does not want me to write anything in terms of what might be motivating what we are seeing, what is about to happen or what may have happened right before," Hiam says. "He purely wants me to describe what's in the frame of the picture."

If a scene has a man and a child, it could be a father and a son or daughter, but the script doesn't get specific. It's ambiguous.

"He's literally just photographing a moment," she explains. "It's important to him that it's open-ended, so the person who looks at the photo can impose their own story on it."

Crewdson, on set, explains: "I like a story that remains incomplete. It's like a question. That the viewer will ultimately bring their own story to it."

After the one-page descriptions are set, an artist, Jaf Farkas, sketches the scene.

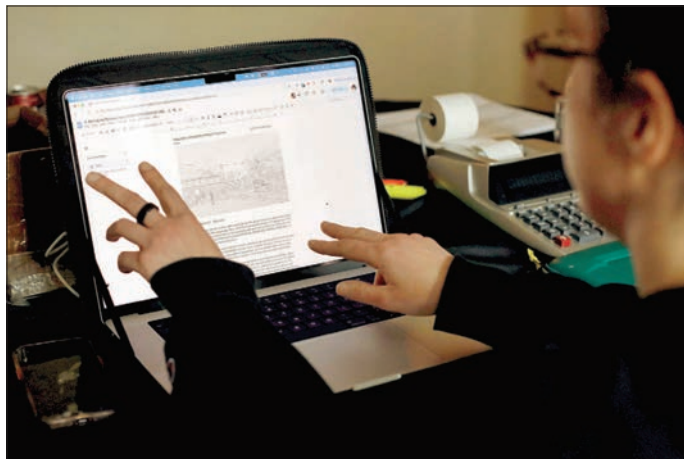
"And then we find the frame," Crewdson says. "So even, way before we're shooting, the elements of the pictures are there."

Shooting in March is new for Crewdson and his crew.

"The whole reason I'm shooting in March is that I didn't want any leaves on the trees. I love that winter-to-spring look. I like that austerity. But there have been challenges with the weather. Wind is not our friend [when it comes to] lifts and fog machines and stuff. The whole idea is these moments of beauty and mystery in everyday life," he said.

He views each location in each season as the mood of a scene changes with the season. "It was something about the leafless trees that was just so beautiful. First and foremost always about creating a beautiful image. And then, there's also a certain kind of sadness, as well. Those things come together; a lot of elements, though."

While the treatments are going on, producers are assembling the crew.



In the production house, Producer Alexa Green goes over a detailed rendering and storyline for March 19 photo shoot.

bling the crew. Among the first to set out are Nico Gargiulo and Tom Ciaburri, a past collaborator who just returned to the Berkshires. Gargiulo and Ciaburri, who each reside in Hinsdale, are responsible for reaching out to property owners, establishing relationships with neighbors and the municipality.

"[Gregory] reaches out to us and says, 'Here are the photos I'm thinking of. We've got some descriptions. We've got some concepts. Can you start talking to people and see if this is a possibility for us to bring our crew, our lights, all the people involved and make this happen? What would it take to make this happen?'" Ciaburri said.

Some people want to get paid. Others, they said, just want a small print of the final photograph.

"I think a lot of people, when we first approach them, are like, 'Who are you and what do you want from me?' But then, we explain to them that it's this really cool thing. It's an art project happening in Pittsfield. How often do you see cranes and lights outside of your windows? People get pumped," Gargiulo said. "They become part of the project. We've met so many amazing people while doing this job."

On the night of the shoot, Gargiulo and Ciaburri are the liaisons between the crew and the neighbors, making sure lights remain off in certain houses and that cars are moved from the street. A white Mercedes, across the street at the auto shop, can be moved from the shot, but not the property, and covered with a drop cloth — a deal struck with the owner.

SETTING THE SCENE

In the hours before the shoot is to take place, the scene behind Harte's is bustling with activity. Art Director Michael Bedard, of Pittsfield, is assuring all the props are in place.

"We brought in a pickup truck of snow today," he says, pointing out small piles around the perimeter of the building. Despite the day's frigid temperatures, which are in the low 20s, the property was devoid of snow when they arrived earlier in the day. A spat of warm days melted what had existed.

"Everything here is intentional. The pile of boxes is curated. The phone booth was brought in. The snow was spray-painted and dirtied," he says. Production Designer Jesika Farkas, an interior designer from Kingston, N.Y., sourced



Wardrobe stylist George Veale touches up model Viviana Lamphear's hair in between photos.

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STEPHANIE ZOLLSHAN — THE BERKSHIRE EAGLE

From left to right, Keegan Fuller, lighting technician, Brandon Taylor, Key Grip, Julian Tran, lighting technician and Brian Yost, Best Grip, perfect the placement and color of lights.

Crewdson

FROM PAGE 2
about 15 phone booths for the shoot. Bedard and Jesika Farakas are responsible for the overall look of the scene, the props and set dressings, even the vehicles.

"Cars from the 1980s are more and more difficult to source," he says. "The owners don't want to take them out at this time of year because of the road salt. And so many are being restored to their original luster. We're not looking for those. We want a lived-in and

weathered look."

His department also manufactures signs for the shoots, runs the fog machines through the shots to create the atmospheric backgrounds, and on this particular day, is busy dulling the parking lot lines so they won't reflect light or appear shiny.

TWILIGHT APPROACHES

"It's all about finding the magic moment where our lights work with the falling sun," Hiam says. "There's about 10 minutes where it's perfect. We shoot for 10 minutes before and 10 minutes after, just to make sure that

we get that that perfect shot."

The "magic hour" is imminent. Finishing touches are put in place, cranes rise and Crewdson gathers with his production leads under a tent — Director of Photography Richard Sands, who has been with Crewdson since 1988; Brandon Taylor, key grip; Dave McCabe, gaffer and head of lighting; and Zak Arctander, camera operator and post-production. Most of their communication is silent, long glances, nods — a language created and learned from decades of working together.

As if on cue, a city truck pulls up and begins shut-

ting off street lights — the glow would be too disruptive for the shot. The set begins to settle down. An assistant waits to pull a jacket off of Viviana Lamphear, who is wearing a sleeveless top for the shoot.

The security light pops on, then is covered. A call goes out that it's time to start. Teams run through with smoke, and the photos begin. An hour later, the models are released, final photos are taken and the shoot wraps.

FUTURE EXHIBITION
This evening's photo, one of 20 to 25 made during a five-week project, won't be on

view until at least 2027. The post-production process will take many months to complete. Crewdson's shots are composites, made from the many photos taken during a single shoot. "Everything is in focus," Hiam says. "The goal is not to have anyone think about the fact that they are looking at a photograph, so he doesn't want anything out of focus or something that would bring them out of it. He always says, I want them to fall into the world of the picture, so he doesn't want anything drawing attention away from that. I think that's why they feel so much like paintings."

The process, she says, takes a while because Crewdson painstakingly goes over each image.

"We make many, many prints. We'll hang them on the wall, and he will make notes on them. We do it over and over again. Gregory's a perfectionist about it. We make many, many, many prints before it's right."

And then, sometimes before the next exhibition, sometimes after, the process begins again.

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Julian Tran, lighting technician, top, and Tommy Sarvello, grip, lower, are positioned in the air on cranes as a photoshoot with renowned photographer Gregory Crewdson begins on Westminster Street and Dalton Avenue in Pittsfield.

Pittsfield City Jazz Festival

APRIL 17-25, 2026 • PITTSFIELD, MA

EVENTS THROUGHOUT DOWNTOWN PITTSFIELD

APRIL 17, 7-10PM
Jazz Jam
Hot Plate Brewing, 1 School St.

APRIL 18, 7:30PM SOLD OUT!
Georgia Heers
Singing the music of Billie Holiday
Mr. Finn's Cabaret, 36 Linden St.

APRIL 22, 7PM
Jazz Prodigy Concert with Xander Rosenblum, drums
Sponsored by the Friends of the Athenaeum
Berkshire Athenaeum, 1 Wendell Ave.

APRIL 24, 5-11PM
Jazz Crawl
Metaphor
The Lantern/BB's Hot Spot
Tito's Mexican Bar & Grill
WANDER Berkshires
Rare 297/Hotel on North

APRIL 25, 7PM
Veronica Swift, Grace Kelly, and the UConn Jazz Ensemble
Barrington Stage, 30 Union St.

For tickets, the Jazz Crawl schedule, and other details, visit BerkshiresJazz.org