

Workshop
Get Real! (Open your eyes!)

Nicholas Nixon

The Fine Line of Portraiture



Renowned for his black and white portraiture and social photography, Nicholas Nixon has been photographing people for more than 40 years. Whether making photographs of his own family members, the sick, the poor, or the vulnerable, his approach is always the same: closeness and time, intimacy and respect.

“I find that most people who are willing to have their picture taken, if they say yes, then I need to convince them that it’s safe. If they say a really strong no, that’s that. Some people say no but mean, ‘I don’t know. Give me a minute. Let me think about it. Explain yourself. Maybe. Maybe. We’ll see.’ You have to know the difference.” (Extract from an interview by Coralie Kraft published in LensCulture)

The Fine Line of Portraiture workshop will explore Nixon’s practice by studying his career, his key projects, the ideas behind them, and his manner of approaching his subjects.

In this three-day workshop participants will become familiar with Nixon’s methodology and will then apply certain concepts to their own practice. Independent fieldwork is a core part of the workshop, followed by a review of the work the next day.

The workshop will focus on all aspects of the photographic shoot, from choice of theme to intentions, but will delve most deeply into the “fine line” that defines the attitude in approaching a subject for portrait-based projects. The goal is to offer ideas and tools intended to challenge participants’ storytelling skills via portraiture. Daily review sessions will be held in the morning to achieve a collective vision of the work completed and to create a forum for the exchange of ideas and advice.

Nicholas Nixon was born in 1947 in Detroit, Michigan. He studied American literature at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and received an MFA in photography at the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque. He has worked as an independent photographer since 1974. He has been awarded two John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowships and three National Endowment for the Arts Photographer’s Fellowships. He was a professor of photography at the Massachusetts College of Art in Boston until 2018.

Nixon has been exploring portraiture and social photography since the 1970s. Although best known for *The Brown Sisters* which he began in 1975, he has pursued other series noted for their humanity and intimacy. Nixon’s subjects include students and schools in and around Boston, people living along the Charles River near Boston and Cambridge, and cities in the South, his family and himself, patients in nursing homes, and blind, sick and dying people. Nixon is also well known for *People With AIDS*, begun in 1987. Nixon recorded his subjects with empathy and detail to facilitate a connection between the viewer and the subject.

Nixon’s first solo exhibition took place in 1976 at the Museum of Modern Art and was curated by John Szarkowski. His photographs have been exhibited at numerous museums and galleries, including the Art Institute of Chicago; the Cleveland Museum of Art, Ohio; and the Pinakothek der Modern, Munich. He has published many books of photographs including *Nicholas Nixon* (2003); *A City Seen* (2001); *The Brown Sisters* (1999); *School: Photographs from Three Schools* (1998); *People with AIDS* (1991); *Family Pictures* (1991); *Nicholas Nixon: Pictures of People* (1988); and *Photographs from One Year* (1983). Nixon’s photographs belong to prestigious collections including those of Fundación MAPFRE; the National Gallery of Art, Washington; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; and the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, among many others.

Dates
**Thursday, November 21
to Saturday, November 24,
2024**

Schedule
**Thursday and Friday,
10 am to 1.30 pm and
2.30 pm to 6 pm
Sunday, 10 am to 1.30 pm
and 3.30 to 5.30 pm**

**Workshop will be
held in English**

Opening talk, *The Art of the
Portrait: Looking Closely,
Looking Longer*,
Nicholas Nixon in
conversation with Arianna
Rinaldo: **Wednesday,
November 20, 7 pm**

Face-to-face and online
**In English with simultaneous
translation into Spanish**

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The workshop is designed to be an intensive three-day experience with theoretical and practical aspects, conversations and fieldwork. The goal is to challenge one's method and approach to social photography through portraiture.

Opening talk Wednesday, November 20 at 7 pm

Face-to face and online

The day before the workshop begins Nicholas Nixon will deliver a talk at KBr: **The Art of the Portrait: Looking Closely, Looking Longer**

Day 1 Thursday, November 21

- 10 am - 1.30 pm Portraiture - methods and motivation
- 1.30 pm - 2.30 pm Lunch break
- 2.30 pm - 5.30 pm Independent fieldwork I
- 5.30 pm - 6 pm Submission of a selected edit for next day's review

Day 2 Friday, November 22

- 10 am - 1.30 pm Review of the previous day's shooting and challenges
- 1.30 pm - 2.30 pm Lunch break
- 2.30 pm - 5.30 pm Independent fieldwork II
- 5.30 pm - 6 pm Submission of a selected edit for next day's review

Day 3 Saturday, November 23

- 10 am - 1.30 pm Review of the previous day's shooting and challenges
- 1.30 pm - 3.30 pm Lunch break (the artist will be joining the lunch)
- 3.30 pm - 5.30 pm Q&As and conclusions

Submission of applications

Those interested in participating must submit their application between Monday, September 2, 2024 and Sunday October 6, 2024. Applications must be completed via the online form available on the website kbr.fundacionmapfre.org

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