

# WASHINGTON CITY PAPER

## **Best Bets:** *Recto/Verso – A Pandemic in Codex* by Matt Leedham

Review by Louis Jacobson  
September 29, 2022



Credit: Matt Leedham

**Matt Leedham**, a D.C.-area resident working in the tech sector, is a relative newcomer to photography, picking it up in 2016, and even more of a newcomer to bookbinding, which he started pursuing last year during the pandemic. Quickly, the two interests collided, producing an exhibit, *Recto/Verso, A Pandemic in Codex*, at Multiple Exposures Gallery that features his photographs printed on books that Leedham has made himself. “A colleague of mine mentioned making a photo book to me, and I assumed he meant he had ordered one from an online manufacturer,” Leedham says. “He explained that he had made one himself, which led me to YouTube a few hours later and started an obsession.” Since then, Leedham has crafted blank journals in styles ranging from German and British to Coptic and Japanese; in one particularly meta example, he made a book about an 1875 cast-iron book press that he had recently purchased on eBay.

The works in the Multiple Exposures Gallery exhibit pair twinned images by Leedham, usually travel-related, on the “recto” (or front, and in the exhibit, right) page of a book and the “verso” (back, or left) page of the same book. The books not only range in their materials—artisanal paper from Korea, India, and Nepal—but also in their format, with styles ranging from scrolls to accordion-fold and 3-D “tunnel” books. These are not the only formats Leedham plans to pursue, he says. “I’m definitely not done” exploring the intersection of photography and bookbinding, he says. “There are so many ways to communicate in book form.”

**Recto/Verso** runs through Oct. 2 at Multiple Exposures Gallery at the Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 N. Union St., Alexandria. Open daily, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. [multipleexposuresgallery.com](https://multipleexposuresgallery.com). Free.