



# *Temporal* **IMPERMANENCE**

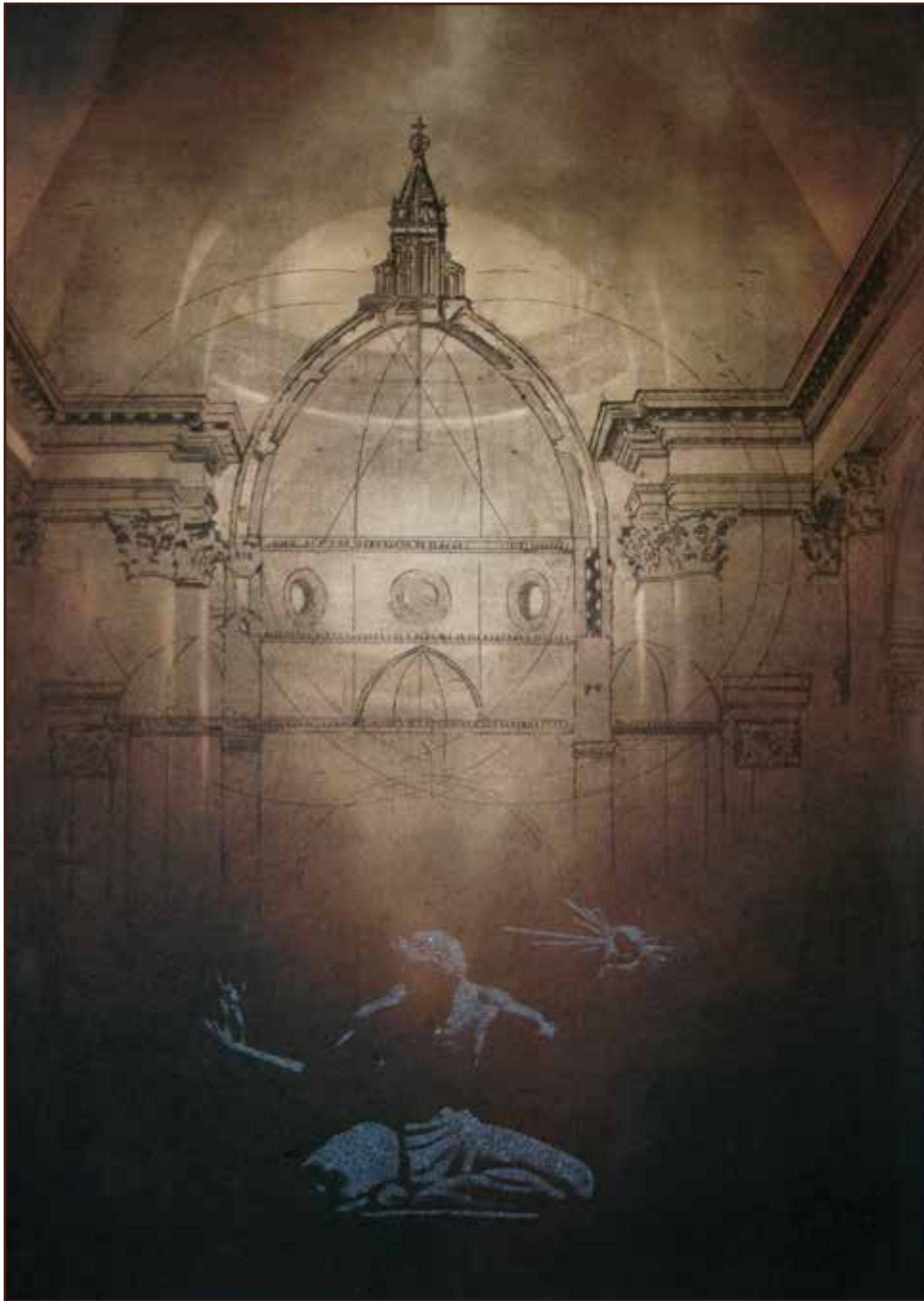
## **MFA EXHIBITION**

**Jay Wallace**

### *In Memory of Madison*

I would like to dedicate this exhibition to my oldest daughter, Madison Leigh Wallace, who tragically past away last month in the icy Sioux River. This sudden change in our family has left us experiencing first hand the fragility and nature of life, she is a testament to how impermanent our temporal lives are. Madison was looking forward to my MFA Exhibition and celebrating my graduation with me. May she smile down on us.





### **The Spirit of Detroit**

Etching, Digital, Serigraphy - 12x18"

This was the very first piece I completed for this exhibition. After studying Renaissance architecture in art history, I was inspired to research Detroit's history through the architecture I had come to know when I lived there. Detroit has some of the most impressive and historically significant architecture in the world, some of it disappearing through abandonment and decay. The city of Detroit is the largest city in the state of Michigan, developed from a small fur trading post of New France to a world-class industrial powerhouse and one of the oldest and largest cities in the Midwest. Beginning in the late 19th and early 20th century, many of the city's Gilded Age great mansions, cathedrals, industrial complexes and buildings arose. Detroit was referred to as the Paris of the West for its architecture. In the foreground there is a silk screen of the 26' bronze statue, the largest since the Renaissance. The golden rays represent God, and in the figures right hand he holds a family, the community and spirit of Detroit. God is manifested through that great spirit of community and hope for the future. In a period of doubt, when the whole world is looking at the cities decline, and failures, we are reminded of temporal impermanence. It is my desire to share this story of change in the de-industrialization of Detroit.







## Lee Plaza

Digital Transfer - 12x18"

Built as a towering symbol of wealth Art Deco masterpiece. Ralph Lee wanted to bring the luxury of New York to Detroit through this Mediterranean French chateau-esque 15 story hotel. A ballroom with crystal chandeliers hosted dances played by orchestras on the balcony. The basement had a beauty parlor, a game room with driving nets for golfers and billiards; a playroom for children at the front of the building with a specially trained supervisor; and a meat market and grocer for the tenants so they didn't have to leave the Lee's comfy confines. Besides room service and concierges, there also was a circulating library, a flower shop, a cigar stand and a beauty parlor. Among the other luxuries: Each apartment had a Servidor, allowing for dry cleaning to be put out or packages delivered without being disturbed. Following the Great Depression, Lee faced financial challenges and was involved in fraudulent activities. Later, in the summer of 1969 Detroit turned Lee Plaza into a senior residence. After a resident was murdered there in 1987, it started to go down hill. Lee Plaza closed in 1997. Few building have been scrapped as much as Lee Plaza. Immediately following the closing scavengers scrapped the place down. One of the first things to be stolen was the copper roofing, and 50 terra cotta lion heads that adorned the outside of the building. Some lions were sold and turned up in Chicago on a new project development. They have since recovered 30 of the 50 heads.

"Detroit is a large unguarded graveyard." – Katherine Clarkson.







### **Arnold Home**

Digital Transfer - 12x18"

The Arnold Home on 7 Mile road was a mixed use hospital / senior care facility that opened in 1932, with a further addition completed sometime in 1960's that brought its capacity up to 224 beds. The Arnold home, named after the humanitarian Reverend C. L. Arnold, was a well-run facility that started to decline in the 90's, and closed in 2004. Since its closure, the building has been scrapped heavily. Fox 2 in Detroit did a special report where they caught a few scrappers red-handed. Two scrappers were killed when part of the building they were torching collapsed on them in 2012.

Urban healthcare in Detroit faces many challenges that affect everyone. About 75 percent of Detroit's patients either have Medicaid or are uninsured. Two of three deaths in the city could have been prevented through accesses to proper care. Health care reform will be huge. We're talking about 33 million people who are going to be brought into the fold of coverage. About 56 percent of all those who are uninsured are people of color. Obviously, Detroit is 89 percent African American and each insured American is paying \$1,200 to \$2,000 in their premiums to cover the uninsured. With the expansion of Medicaid and the subsidies for low-income residents to buy policies on the new exchanges. A new program, the Voices of Detroit Initiative is a project to move underserved patients out of emergency rooms and into doctors' offices. Outreach representatives were in every emergency room in Detroit. Healthcare continues to be a hot topic of debate in the US where now basic healthcare and education are no longer affordable to most people, continuing to farther the divide between social economic classes.







### **Eloise**

Etching, Digital, Serigraphy - 12x18"

What began as a hospital for the poor, became a wasteland for the insane. Once the largest asylum in the country, today, nothing remains except 2 of the original 75 buildings. A memorial plaque on the grounds states that it once housed 10,000 inmates, but the plaque doesn't tell you that they only had room for 8,300. Overcrowded patients were forced to sleep on the floor. Many Patients were left unattended, ignored, and forgotten. Eloise was a pioneer in psychiatric medicine, it was the first hospital in the midwest, third in the country, to use electroshock therapy. Lobotomies, a relatively new procedure, were done regularly. The most severe inmates were chained to the upstairs walls of the barn. Their screams would echo over the grounds in discord with the swine below. Those afflicted with TB were forced to live in hastily erected tents on the farm grounds well away from the hospital. Tuberculosis housing was eventually erected 7 years later.

Some Inmates spent their entire lives in Eloise, a few because they were sick or poor, others because their initial treatment somehow went terribly wrong. Most of the inmates who died and were claimed by relatives were buried in mass grave sites labeled with just a number. Those who weren't burned, were sent off to the University of Michigan Medical School for cadaver study and eventually their remains cremated were discarded in the trash. A museum was set up in the administration building, but because of the state's embarrassment of it's past it was taken down to forget the past, what only remnant left is the surrounding numbered gravestones.





## Michigan Central

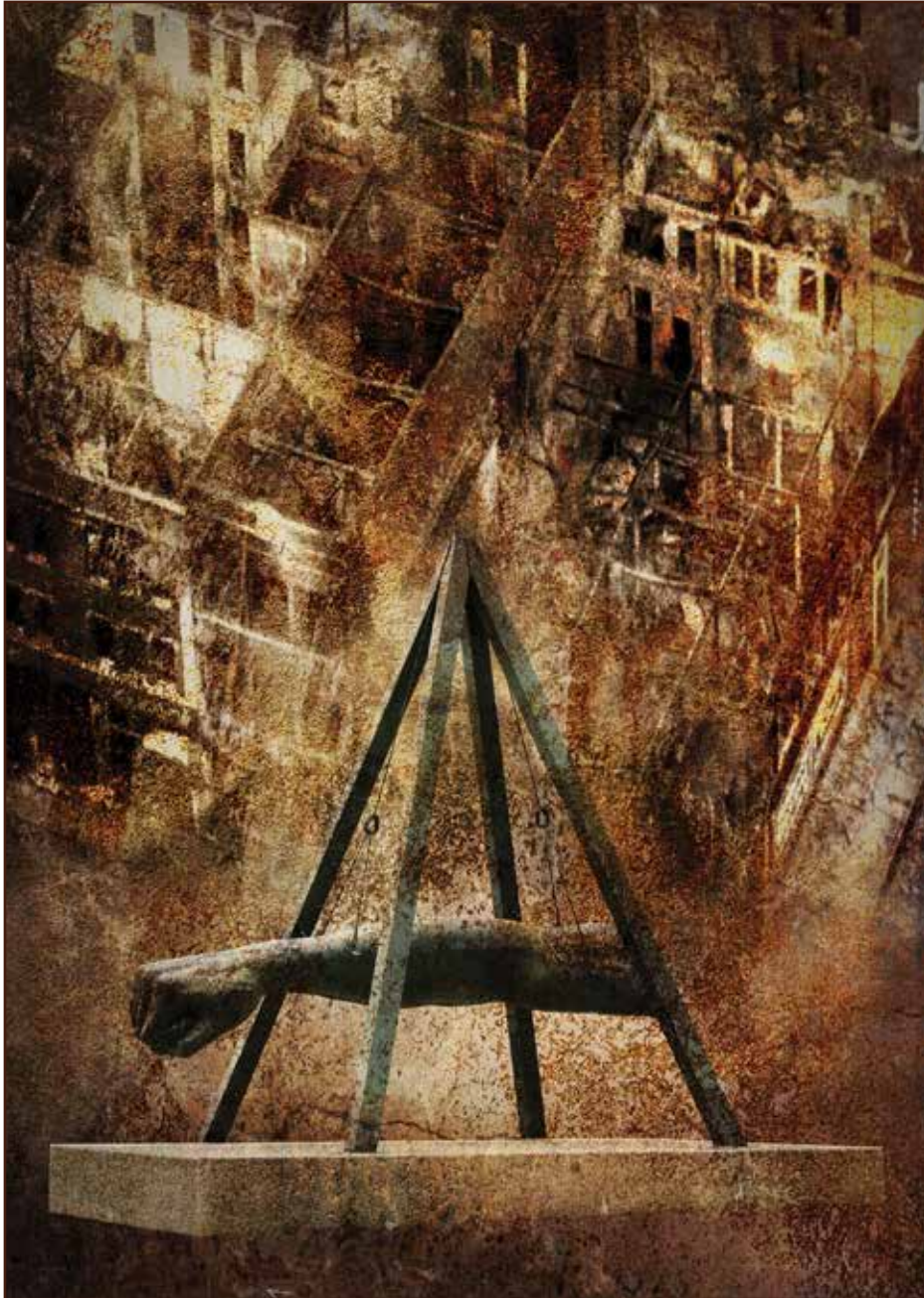
Ceramic Relief, Serigraphy - 36x24"

Nothing symbolizes Detroit's grandiose rise and spectacular fall like Michigan Central Station. No other building exemplifies just how much the automobile gave to the city of Detroit and how much it took away. The idea was part of the City Beautiful movement of the time, which called for grand public buildings at the end of dramatic vistas. The railroad turned to the architects Warren & Wetmore, Charles Reed and Allen Stem. The sheer mammoth proportions of the station was meant to be awe-inspiring and make a statement to travelers about the greatness of the city in which they were arriving. As one would walk into the building's centerpiece, the main waiting room, with its marble floors and soaring, its 54-foot ceilings echoed with the sound of a bustling city on the move. The waiting room was modeled after the public baths of ancient Rome and stretches the length of the building. Covered in tiled vaults, coffered arches, the waiting room was decorated with marble floors, bronze chandeliers, and gargantuan

68-foot Corinthian columns. The grandeur of the interior is something that will be lasting, for it is of marble, brick and bronze, all of this is set off by one of the best lighting schemes ever installed in a building," the Free Press wrote in December 1913. There was a news stand, flower shop, drug store, barber shop and shaving, reading and smoking rooms, lounge and arcade rooms, restaurants, bathing facilities, and 12 floors of office space that serviced more than 4,000 passengers a day.

However, passenger trains soon fell into a major decline with competition from government subsidized highways and intercity airline traffic. Because of a lack of transit network after the 50's the train station and city could never recover. New plans are currently being made in this department. In 1971, the federal government formed Amtrak, which took over MCS that year, though the rail service was struggling at the time. Alas, Amtrak could not afford the upkeep. January 5, 1988 the last train ran through the depot. Later Mark Longston tried to develop a Casino dubbed the Midnight Express. Detroit voters would not accept a casino until 1996. Seven years too late. During that time, vandals stole anything of value, such as brass fixtures, copper wiring, decorative railings along balconies and staircases, plaster rosettes from the ceiling and marble from walls and the base of columns. Those who didn't steal found other ways to disgrace it. In 2009 efforts were made to counteract the city's desire to tear it down. SaveMichiganCentral.com is currently collecting investors who want to help business in Detroit. New windows are now being installed and anyone can be part of this new exciting project. And even better This summer, construction is expected to begin on M-1 Rail, a light rail/streetcar along Woodward Avenue designed to make travel easier between downtown and businesses near Wayne State. The U.S. Department of Transportation announced a \$25 million grant for the project in January 2013.





## **Fist**

Digital Transfer - 12x18"

The story of Detroit is bigger than ourselves, it's about freedom and American's tireless fight for equality. The fist of Joe Louis, a sculpture commissioned in the 80's to represent raw power, the spirit of freedom from it's past, the heart, soul and toughness of Detroit. Detroit was one of the main three thoroughfares for the Underground Railroad there is a monument on each side of the river. Their fight for equality included some of the bloodiest riots in the nation's history

By the 1940s Detroit already had a long history of racial conflict. Race riots had occurred in 1863 and as recently as 1941. By the 1920s the city had become a stronghold of the Ku Klux Klan. The industrial plants provided jobs but not housing. As a result, the city's 200,000 black residents were cramped into 60 square blocks on the East Side and forced to live under deplorable sanitary conditions. Ironically, the ghetto was called Paradise Valley. In 1943 the NAACP held an emergency war conference in Detroit and accused the nation of its hypocritical commitment to personal freedoms abroad and discrimination and segregation at home. The Detroit 1943 riot began at Belle Isle. On the bridge which led back to the mainland, a fight erupted between a total of 200 African Americans and white sailors. Soon, a crowd of 5,000 white residents gathered at the mainland entrance to the bridge ready to attack black vacationers wishing to cross. By midnight, a ragged and understaffed police force attempted to retain the situation, but the rioting had already spread too far into the city. 6,000 military troops were there paroling the deserted city for six months afterwards.

The background imagery here is taken from the sixty seven riots. In 1967 there was another deadly riot caused by two white police officers who were expecting to round up a few patrons, but instead, the officers attempted to arrest everyone who was on the scene at a veterans homecoming party. While the police awaited a "clean-up crew" to transport the arrestees, a crowd gathered around the establishment in protest who were "confused and upset." Fires were set through the northwest side of Detroit, then crossed over to the east side. Within 48 hours, the National Guard was mobilized, to be followed by the 82nd airborne on the riot's fourth day, violence escalated. At one point in the Algiers Motel incident, police killed 3 unarmed black youth. At the conclusion of 5 days of rioting, 43 people lay dead, 1189 injured and over 7000 people had been arrested. Causes of this riot stem from heavy police brutality and harassment, lack of housing, and jobs for the black population.







## **Ferris School**

### **Digital Transfer 12x18"**

Since 2005 Detroit has closed more than half of its 200 schools. The city's once-reputable school system plunged far below mediocrity. Currently, nearly half of the city's population is functionally illiterate, only 25% graduate from high school, and 3% of fourth graders meet national Math standards, according to one study. "It's been going on for 50 years," said a DPS board member. DPS has gone through 7 super intendants in 9 yrs "It's the can that's been kicked down the road by various mayors and city councils." Detroit public schools (DPS) made news when it was reported that students many times had to bring their own toilet paper and hand soap to school. Updated history books and computers were not available. Lack of substitute teachers, inadequate busing with school closings. Kids want to learn. "Incompetence, mismanagement, and cronyism by Detroit school officials, employees, and contractors, and a system with inadequate safeguards, have devastated a \$1.5 billion school construction project." In June 2009, Robert Bobb brought in a team of forensic accounting analysts, who discovered that 257 "ghost" employees were receiving paychecks. Two months later, seven more public officials were charged with multiple felonies for operating an embezzlement scheme. It was also discovered that approximately 500 illegal healthcare dependents were costing the district millions, the district was found paying utilities on vacant buildings. DPS has been inflating enrollment. Only 5 of the 194 schools had good book keeping. In 2012, a DPS contract accountant and her daughter, a teacher, were indicted by the FBI for fraud, conspiracy and tax charges. There have been questionable appointments with DPS Board. The most glaring is that the president of the school board, Otis Mathis, was a functioning illiterate.

The focus now is where to begin. Finger pointing is not problem solving, and things will not change over night. One of the prime things new businesses look for in relocating is the surrounding schools, so in order to improve the future of Detroit, we must improve the future of our children serving them, not the unions, start teacher evaluations. DPS needs to prioritize its little funds where it can get the best returns. There needs to be more focus on transition programs to college, more charter schools patterned after the University Preparatory Academy. New state-appointed emergency manager Roy Roberts has announced that a plan for Detroit Public Schools will include longer academic years and the expansion of preschool programs. As part of the "Neighborhood-Centered, Quality Schools" initiative, Roberts said the new strategy will include closing less buildings than initially announced; 4 as opposed to 28. The district will employ a "community schools" model to keep programs at some schools available 12 hours each day, seven days a week. Preschool programs will also be expanded to include all 4-year-old children in the district. New initiatives to filling the 28,000 empty seats and training on how to treat parents better, and fostering a friendly and caring atmosphere.

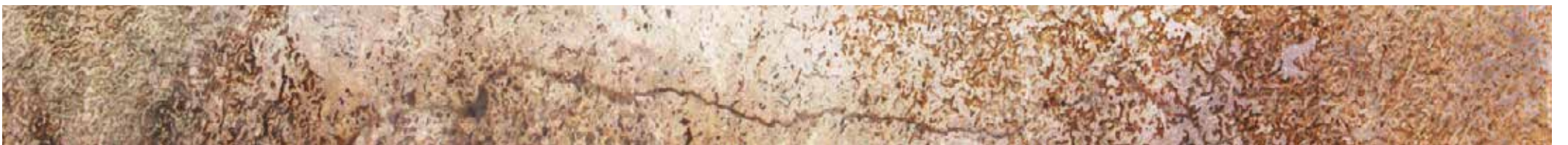






**St. David**  
Digital Transfer 18x12"

Detroit was once heavily Catholic, dotted with well over 50 parochial schools and 100 parishes that served the Irish and East European immigrants who built the city. St. David was built in 1923 and was one of the only coed Catholic schools in the area. Then came 1967 and the race riots that lasted five days, took 43 lives and changed the composition of Detroit almost overnight. The trickle of white ethnic Catholics to the suburbs that had started after World War II became a flood. Within seven years, the city's African-American residents had become a majority. But only 50,000 or so were Catholic, which meant the archdiocese could no longer support the same network of parishes and schools. St. David's closed in 1970. An intense internal debate was followed for the University of Detroit by consultation with Rome and finally a decision: not only would the school remain in Detroit, but it would also start investing its resources in the city and increase the racial diversity of its student body. It is the only boys Catholic school left in Detroit.







**Motown Balcony**  
Intaglio, Digital - 18x12"

Music has always been a big part of Detroit. Motown is a record company founded by Berry Gordy, Jr. in 1959 in Detroit, Michigan. The name, a portmanteau of motor and town, is also a nickname for Detroit. Motown played an important role in the racial integration of popular music by achieving a crossover success. In the 1960s, Motown and its soul-based subsidiaries were the most successful proponents of what came to be known as "The Motown Sound", a style of soul music with a distinct pop influence. Motown was the music of the 60's, but there was music in Detroit before Motown. In fact, the city's jazz, blues, and rhythm & blues traditions contributed to the Motown sound. However, before Motown became a major force, Detroit was already well on its way to being a R&B and soul hotbed. As the Jazz Age began, Detroit quickly emerged as an important musical center. Detroit has been the home to several pop icons including Madonna. Detroit is the location of one of the first important hardcore punk scenes that swept underground America in the early 1980s. Throughout the 1990s Detroit was a mecca for hardcore punk bands (funk) and hip hop. It's the birthplace of Techno, where it hosts an annual electronic music festival each Memorial Day weekend thousands of dressed up spectators celebrate music. With a wealth of great venues, the music scene in this part of Detroit percolates. Both urbanites and suburban visitors regularly flock to clubs like Saint Andrew's Hall and the Shelter, as well as the larger Fillmore (formerly the State Theatre), to see an array of local and national musicians. The Theater District in Detroit is second only to New York's Broadway District for the number of historic theaters, where Fox is the centerpiece.





## Eastown Theater

Photogravure, Digital - 12x18"

With the rise of movies and the city's fortunes in the 1920s, Detroit got a number of palatial movie palaces. Eastown was made after the classical baroque style with gold gilded ceilings and marble stairways flowing to the Mezzanine, complete with elegant apartments and a grand ballroom. The Eastown spent nearly four decades thrilling Detroiters as a grand movie house until it closed in 1967. But it was far from dead. Around this time, many old movie houses and ballrooms, like the Grande Ballroom and the Michigan Theatre, were being converted into rock venues. The once opulent movie palace was largely stripped of adornment, and its seats were ripped out in order to cram more humanity onto the cement floor. It was in this incarnation that the Eastown became one of the foremost places to see rock 'n' roll in town and one of its most notorious concert halls. Kinks, Yes, Fleetwood Mac, the Faces, Jefferson Airplane, Cream, Captain Beefheart, Steppenwolf, King Crimson, James Gang, Rush, J. Geils Band Elton John, and Joe Walsh. Among the locals, the MC5, the Stooges, Mitch Ryder and the Detroit Wheels and Bob Seger all took its stage. Ted Nugent and The Amboy Dukes and Alice Cooper. The Eastown was all blue-collar, and it was rough. The theater received six violations for overcrowding. It also was no secret that the Eastown was a haven for drugs. Detroit police and city officials knew about it, "but fear that any move to stop the drug traffic will provoke a riot" allowed the thriving, unchecked drug dealing to continue with over a dozen dealers each weekend, the Free Press wrote in December 1971. Neighborhoods wanted the place closed, because Eastown patrons would park in their driveways or on their lawns and "sometimes ran through the streets without any clothes on." "The gangs in the neighborhood were awful," recalled Jaszczak, now 62 and living in downtown Detroit. "When we went out to change the marquee, we'd have to send two people out there or else they'd steal the letters and try to sell them back to us... We'd do a show and patrons would come out and all their tires would be gone." It's one of the worst neighborhoods in Detroit. Rave parties took over Eastown in the 90's but after a devastating fire in 2010 it's now a pile of ashes waiting to be demolished.



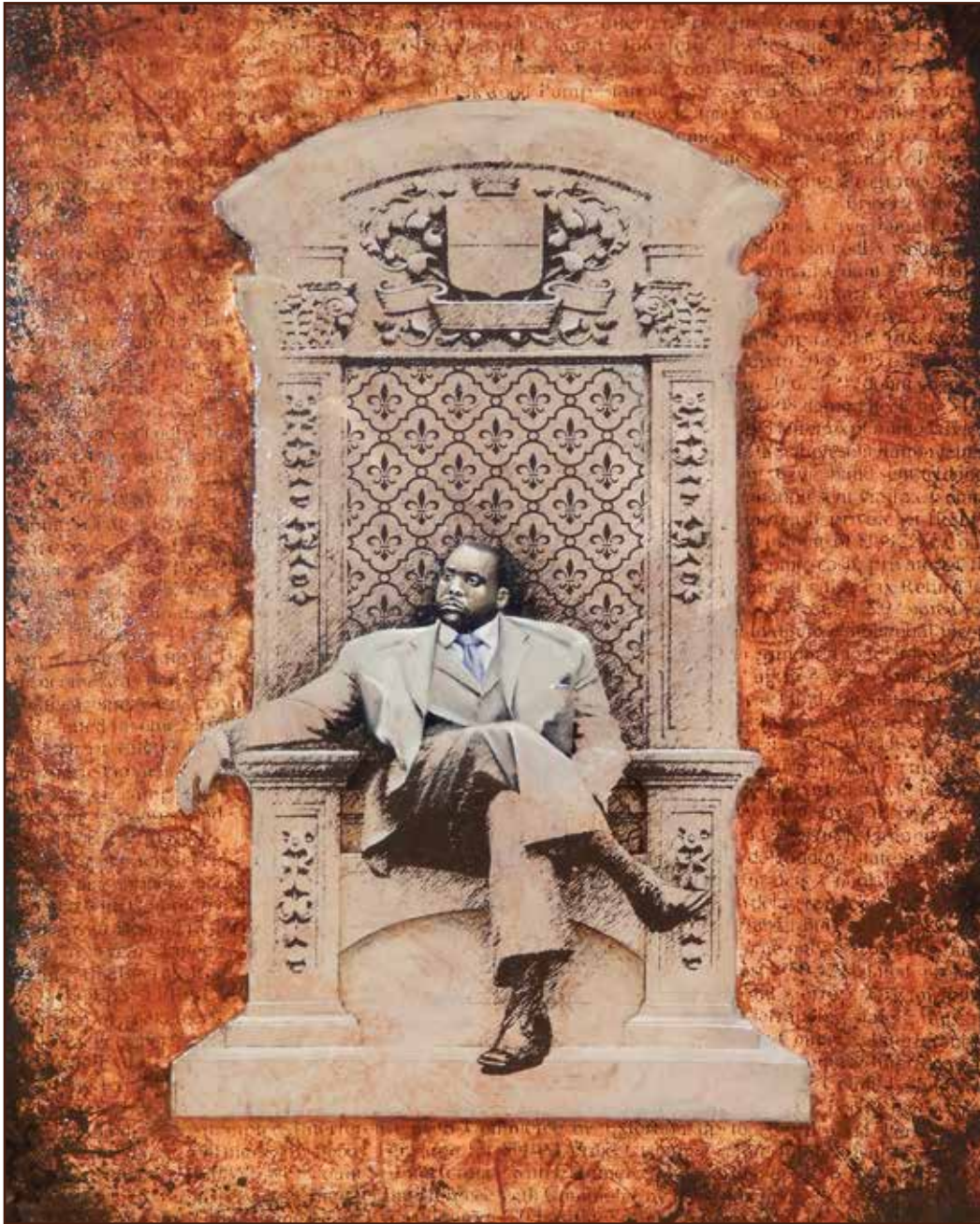




**St. Agnes Cathedral**  
Digital Transfer - 48x28"

St. Agnes was completed in 1924, and thrived through the middle part of the century, growing to 1,600 families, three priests, 22 nuns, and a girl's high school with 180 students by 1964 – the 50th anniversary of the church. A few years later though, a police raid on an after-hours drinking establishment provoked riots. Though St. Agnes was relatively unscathed by the 1967 riots, most of the buildings around it along 12th street were burned to the ground. The neighborhood never recovered, and attendance numbers started to drop. In 1980 it hosted Mother Theresa and later in 1989, reflecting the racial makeup of the neighborhood, the Archdiocese renamed the parish "Martyrs of Uganda," in honor of African missionaries who had been executed in 1887 for refusing to renounce their faith. Detroit churches have started to close and people are worried that the churches are leaving where the people need them the most. "We're not a business, we are a church and we are called to serve." St. Agnes closed in 2006 and by 2009 the pipes of the organ had been stolen by metal thieves, and many of the glazed tiles set into the walls and pillars had been stripped out. Damage caused by weather from the roof, and vandalism took hold through 2010, and the sanctuary began shedding large amounts of its facade. The new owner Scott Griffin bought the church for \$90,000 one month after we were there, and secured the place and is trying to figure out what to do with it; It has the potential to anchor the neighborhood once again.





### **Cadillac Chair**

Acrylic, Serigraphy, Oil - 18x24"

It could be one of the strangest monuments ever. To celebrate Detroit's 200th birthday, it was decided to honor the founding of the city. The city name comes from the Detroit River (French: Le Detroit) In 1701 Cadillac led a party of 100 Frenchmen to establish a fur trading post called Fort Pontchartrain Du Detroit. In 1901 it was decided to build a one million dollar monument to honor Cadillac, but after public opposition to a frivolous use of tax payer dollars the city went for a cheaper option... a red sandstone chair. Named after Cadillac, the founder, city leaders hailed it as an important marker of Detroit history, a true testament to how grand the city was, something that would stand for ages; It lasted only forty years before it crumbled to the ground. This piece is symbolic of Detroit's greatness, and it's fall to greed. Juxtaposed similar to Ingres's Napoleon on his Imperial throne, sits Kwame on the royal Cadillac Chair. Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick ran a criminal enterprise complete with extortion, bribes and kickbacks. Kilpatrick was convicted of and looting 500 million dollars from Detroit's police and the city's pension fund through failed personal investments and buying three California Malls. Kwame follows other decades of incompetence and entrenched corruption in Detroit's government that wrecked the city, and is among the most sordid episodes in the storied history of American municipal corruption. But there's hope, a new mayor by the name of Benny Napoleon is running for mayor who is looking to help Detroit rise from the ashes.





### **Brewster Projects**

Vandyke Brown, Oil - 12x18"

The Brewster Projects tower over a blighted urban wasteland just on the edge of downtown. And, while it might not look like it, there is a lot of history there. They were the first public housing project built in 1938 for African-Americans that was federally funded, and was home to Motown legends Diana Ross, Mary Wilson, Florence Ballard and Smokey Robinson, and actress Lily Tom. At the time it was considered a nice modern place to live. Now, the whole complex is an eyesore of four empty, windowless skyscrapers hovering along I-375. More than a dozen row houses, a recreation center and a pair of small apartments sprawl out over 18 acres. The towers were added in 1942 during the postwar suburban utopia, African American's started moving into the homes that were becoming available and the projects turned into a hive of drugs and crime. By the 90's the Brewster was only filled to 36% capacity and scrappers were ripping vacant units apart, even as families lived in the homes next door. Squatters moved in. Drug dealers set up shop in the towers and row homes. The Brewster-Douglass was simply no longer a safe place to live, even by the worst of Detroit's standards. It is a symbol of Detroit's decline. It is a symbol of the disastrous public housing projects of the 1950s. It is a symbol of institutionalized segregation. It is a symbol of failure. Two of the six towers were demolished in 2003 and the rest are scheduled for demolition this year. The Obama administration has secured 6 million dollars to help demolish the towers so that developers can get busy with this prime down town land.







### **Renaissance Center**

Vandyke Brown, Serigraphy, Oil - 24x18"

The two times I have taken my wife, Lara to Detroit, I have wanted to dine with her in the rotating rooftop restaurant at the top of the Renaissance Center, and both times they were closed. Before the "Ren Cen" was built this area was lined with industrial parks including silos and the Robin Hood Factory. This beautiful area is now the River walk and is a popular spot for joggers, and bikers adjacent to Hart Plaza, the Ford Auditorium (now gone), Cobalt Hall, and the Windsor Tunnel. This place was conceived and named the Renaissance, by Henry Ford II and financed by Ford Motor Company. Built in 1971 this building was the largest privately financed project built to help revitalize Detroit, and in the first year of operation it generated over 1 billion in economic growth. Architect John Portman's initial design for the Renaissance Center focused on creating secure open soaring interior spaces, while its design later expanded and improved to connect with the exterior spaces and waterfront through a reconfigured interior, open glass entryways, and a winter garden. It has 5 large towers, shopping mall, business office, 6 story lobby and houses the famous annual car shows. The middle tower is the tallest hotel of it's kind. It's been called a city with in a city. The Renaissance Center was part of innovation, and an enriched vision of what Detroit could be. Detroit is second only to New York's Broadway District for the number of historic theaters, where Fox is the centerpiece.

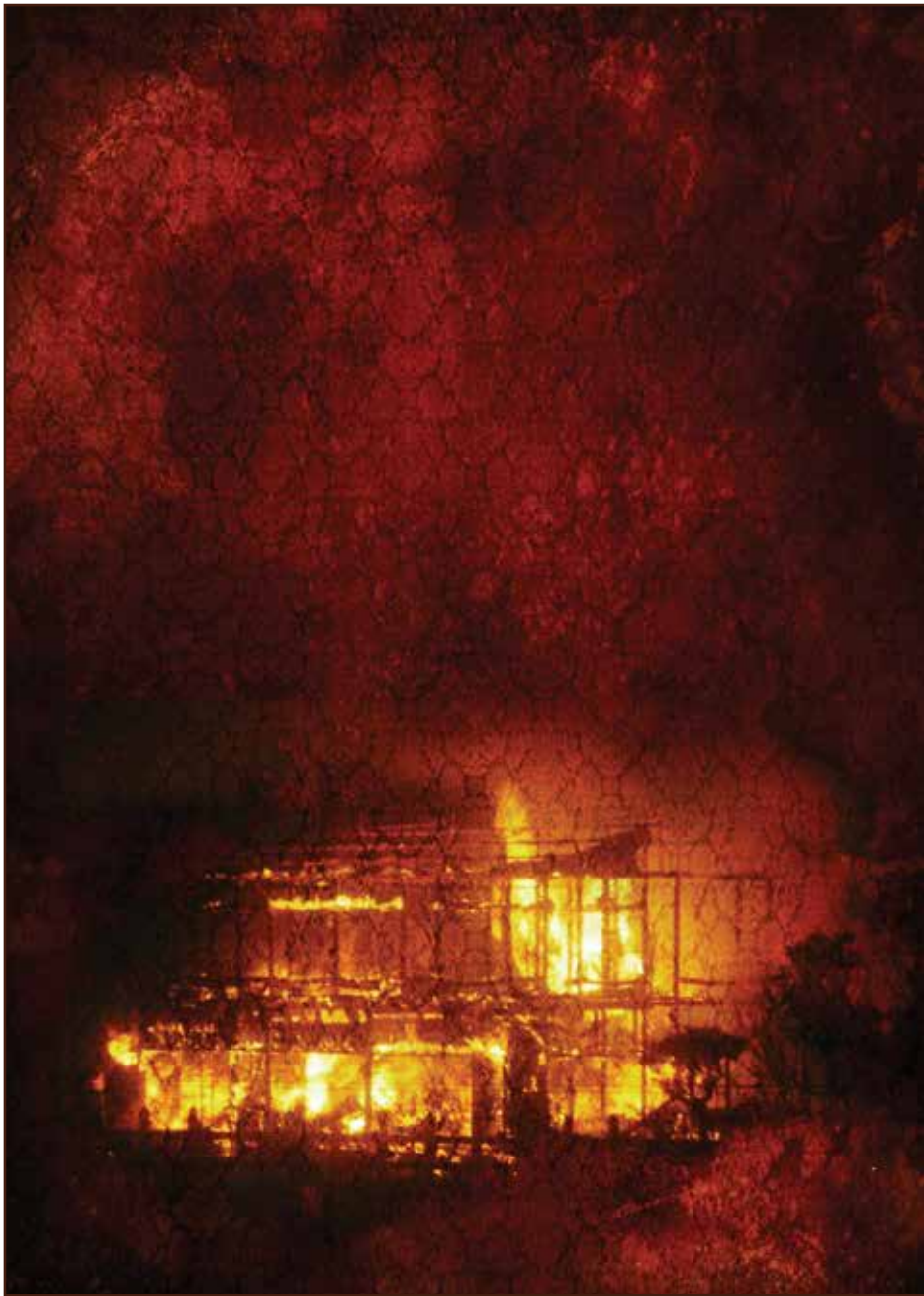




**Brewster-Wheeler**  
Intaglio, Digital - 12x18"

The Brewster Central Recreation Center was built in 1929 during the segregation laws, to serve the recreational needs of the city's expanding black population and Brewster projects located next door. World-famous boxers Joe Louis and Sugar Ray Robinson got their start at Brewster. The name was later changed in honor of Leon Wheeler, the first black trainer allowed to train whites at the Detroit Parks & Recreation department. He went on to coach the Harlem Globetrotters and the famed basketball teams at Detroit's Brewster Center. Wheeler was also the Director of the Brewster Center until his retirement in 1945. Wheeler, quite possibly, was the most outstanding Recreational Director and Supervisor in Detroit's history. At some point in the 90's a basketball court was donated by former NBA star Chris Webber. Along with the surrounding projects, the center closed in the late 2000's. The Brewster projects are being torn down, but the Recreational Center is being spared.





## **Devils Night**

Digital Transfer - 12x18"

When jobs left Detroit, the people left. Homes were foreclosed and left behind, in hopes of finding work. These homes had no buyers they've stood empty. Dilapidated, dangerous, abandoned structures that in the 70's became targets for arsons. Some arsons were in fact, the homeowners who sought to avoid foreclosure, and tried collecting fire insurance payments; This was Detroit's version of mortgage modification. Insurance fraud is up 40% from 2008. Crimes became more destructive in inner city neighborhoods and peaked when for reasons no one understands in 1984 800 fires were set 72 hours before Halloween, and subsequently every Halloween is termed Devils Night. Men in their bathrobes armed with their shotguns and water hoses on front porches keeping watch over their homes. There are no better ways to test the health of a community, than to see how it celebrates holidays. Over 500 arson fires are set each month in Detroit. The costs of extinguishing the fires has become prohibitive, homes have been allowed to burn, firefighters' focus in on controlled burns. Burnt homes have become safe havens for gangs. Neighborhoods that are scheduled for demolition force families who live in these neighborhoods to leave and are compensated market value which could be as low as one \$1,000. Currently, there are 90,000 vacant homes and Mayor Bing has radical plans to bulldoze a quarter of the city, and to subvert residents to other areas. It's been a humbling and surreal experience to witness many of the places where we took photo references which are now burnt down. We are grateful for the opportunity to document some of this architecture before it's gone forever.

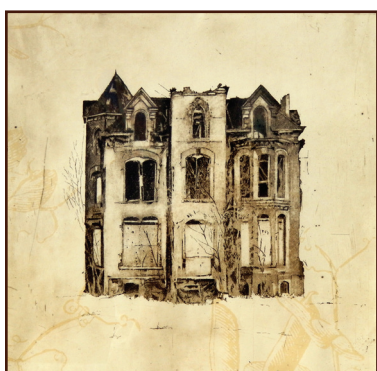






### Ghetto Palm of the Urban Prairies

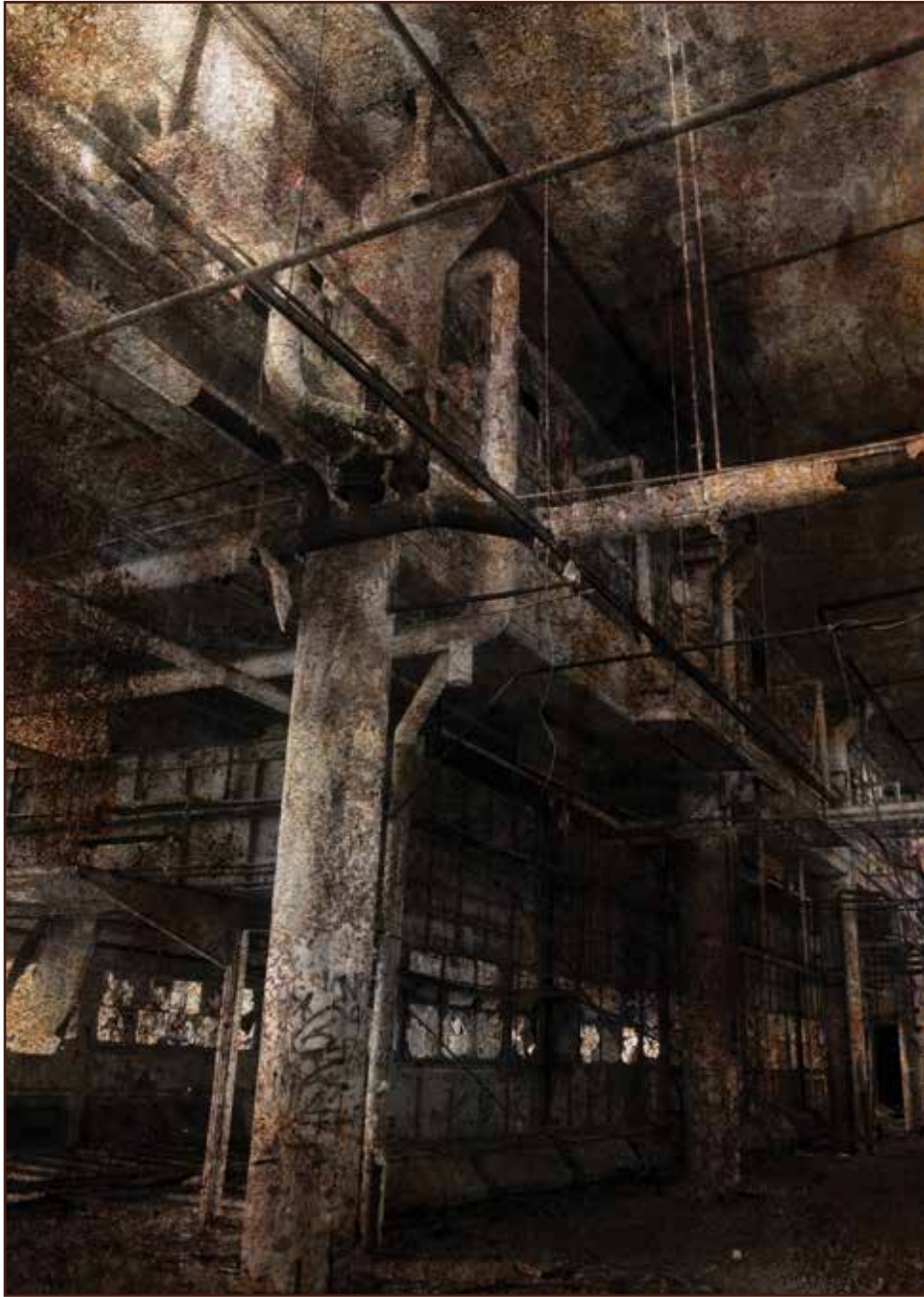
Intaglio, Serigraphy - 96x21"



Historic neighborhoods began to decline in 50's, where the advent of streetcars and then automobiles allowed prosperous citizens to live farther from downtown. Early residents moved out, notably to up-and-coming neighborhoods such as Indian Village, Boston-Edison, and Brush Park became less fashionable. Featured in this piece are homes from Brush Park. One problem with Detroit is it's poor city and neighborhood planning. The Industrial wall and annexation policy impacted Detroit as residents sought to move away from the factories that lined the city. When Detroit experienced one of the largest migrations from the 1920's, it led to a vast spread of homes making up 138 sq miles, the current population could fit in about 50 sq miles. You could fit New York, San Francisco, and Boston into it's city boundaries and still have extra room.

With all the abandoned homes, Detroit is turning into an urban prairie, with grass overtaking sidewalks, sapling trees towering over fences, and utility lines competing with tree branches. Old alleys resemble hiking trails, and empty lots are thick with wildflowers. In the summer, plant growth overtakes many abandoned houses. Giant trees are growing on the roofs of skyscrapers. Abandoned buildings are full of pigeon roosts and feral cats that keep the rat population in check. Wild dog packs roam neighborhoods, hunting the pheasants, turkeys, opossums, roosters and raccoons that have returned to the city. *Ailanthus altissima* – also known as the "ghetto palm" or the tree of heaven – has spread throughout the city. Over time the remaining homes will become crushed by these trees planted by homeowners decades ago. The city is now calling for new ideas to use the more than 40 sq miles of empty prairie in the city. Garden lots are being purchased for \$200 and maybe even larger community farming will be introduced. In a city without a major chain grocery store, people are again growing their own food. The 5,000 vacant acres are more than capable of supplying enough fruits and vegetables to supply the entire city's needs, they not only provide the space to begin anew but also the incentive to create innovative ways of making our living—ways that nurture our productive, cooperative and caring selves. Youth volunteers began working on community gardens with Southern-born African-American elders who called themselves "Gardening Angels." People were moved by the image of young people and elders reconnecting, going back to sharing and taking care of one another with the Earth.





**Fisher I**

Photogravure, Digital - 12x18"



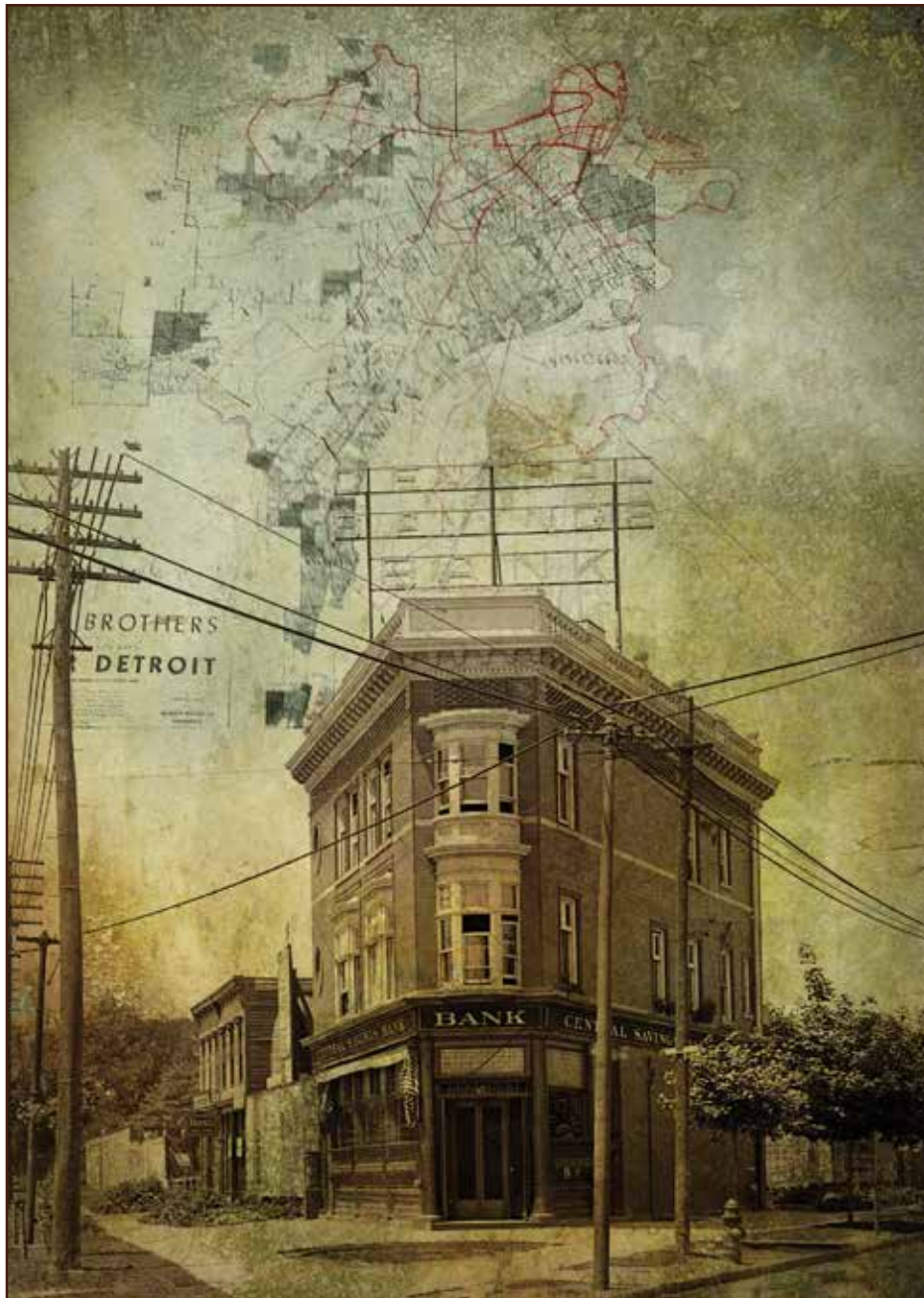
**Fisher II**

Digital Transfer - 18x12"

Detroit is known as the world's automotive center, hence the nickname Motor City. The financial problems that have come due in part to companies lack of hindsight in building fuel economy cars, and also lies in government intervention and the federal reserve through wall street. Some leaders feel the automotive industry should be allowed to fail. However Chrysler and GM, were not allowed to fail and forced into bankruptcy where deals for shortchanging employees who sacrificed everything they built their lives upon. Ten years ago these companies already decided that the future was in China, and they have abandoned the US. The Fisher Plant was known as plant #21, it was built in 1919 as part of an expansion of the sprawling Fisher Body Company's complex on Piquette avenue. To meet increasing demand, Fisher expanded operations to over 40 plants in Detroit, Cleveland, Flint, and Ontario. After the war the Piquette plant focused on stamping and assembly work for buses, ambulances, and limousines. By this time though, the Fisher name had started to recede from public view. The last day of production was April Fool's Day, 1984. Despite its ideal location close to midtown and Wayne State University, a lifetime of industrial processes at Fisher Body 21 left the site severely contaminated. A 2004 survey by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality found "asbestos materials, lead waste, industrial equipment, storage tanks, other solid / hazardous debris and wastes, and contaminated soils and concrete" in and around the plant. Today despite over \$1 million dollars of work, the site is still considered "contaminated" by the EPA. The City of Detroit is seeking interested developers to renovate the site, but as of yet there have been no takers. For just \$300,000, you could own a slice of automotive history with a great view of the city.







## Redline

Digital Transfer - 12x18"

Insurance Redlining has plagued the cities of Detroit and Flint, Michigan for decades. By definition, Insurance Redlining is a technique employed by the insurance industry to literally draw a red line around areas; neighborhoods, communities and cities, to justify charging higher rates in the red lined areas for a variety of reasons. This approach has resulted in insurance rates, in large cities, for instance, that are sometimes two or more times higher than the rates charged in the suburbs. This dragnet approach does not take into account the fact that suburban dwellers often work in the cities that surround their bedroom communities. The distance that they drive increases the likelihood of an accident, in fact when in the city, they become a part of the city traffic numbers that are used to "punish" city dwellers for living in the city.

Detroit was the greatest industrial boomtown during what was known as the Great Migration from the south, during a period when segregation laws still existed. Because of this, much of the city was built around these laws. When you factor in Detroit's restrictive covenants, the work of redlining was based on where you lived, what color you were, and your occupation, it fueled contentions over public housing. No area wanted to be the location for their neighborhood to be in danger of redlining, meaning the value would degrade, and access to money for improvements would significantly be decreased. The focus on single family houses led to housing shortages, and official policies with banks prevented blacks from obtaining homes loans, and were shafted by appraisers. The creation of ghetto's came from absentee landlords who failed to make repairs on the houses they were renting to black families. In 1970 there was a scandal for the City Department of Safety Engineers who burned thousands of building code violation records. Without the records the people could do nothing about fixing the neighborhoods. In 1970 Erma L Henderson was instrumental in leading the fight against redlining. She helped pass anti redlining laws and the NAACP green-lined banks locals were asked to only bank at institutions that adhered by the new law.

Redlining still exists in Detroit. If you live in certain parts of Detroit you can guarantee you will pay the highest cost for car and home insurance in the country. Unlike eastern cities that displayed patchworks of "ethnic enclaves," Detroit's geography was about class and race. Today Detroit is 87% black and Livonia is 95% white, they are only two miles apart. Detroit remains one of the most segregated cities in America, and it's gnarly fingers still hold it back.





## **Speramus Meliora**

Digital Transfer - 12x18"

There are many artists who exhibit themes of loss and ruin for decay sake. It is my desire to share the loss as part of a bigger picture that is a story of change, growth, and rebirth. Detroit has the chance to invent an entirely new urban model of Post Fordist Urbanism, that is uniquely Detroit. While driving through the city we often would see bill boards, store signs or graffiti on the sides of buildings that said "God bless Detroit, Save Detroit" and you couldn't help but feel their intense desire for positive change. It is with this spirit that I found how ironic the Detroit City seal represented this message. The two Latin mottos read Speramus Meliora and Resurget Cineribus, meaning "We hope for better things" and "It will rise from the ashes", which was written by Gabriel Richard after the fire of 1805. The fire caused the entire city to burn, only one building survived. The figure on the left weeps over the destruction while the figure on the right gestures to the new city that will rise in its place out of rapidly transforming economic and social condition. Detroit is experiencing a second rise. The new "Cooltown Detroit" is a 1.6 acre urban park designed for businesses to relocate, trying to create a place where people truly want to be. Residents seem to have less faith in city government and more in fearless entrepreneurs who have embraced the city's iconic soul. To help businesses, parts of Detroit are designated Michigan Renaissance Zones, which are virtually tax free for any business or resident presently in or moving there. Many companies such as Google, Compuware and others have relocated. Detroit is one of only five cities whose been designated a federal empowerment zone. Businesses in the 18.35-square-mile zone are eligible for federal incentives. Detroiters see better days ahead "we're already at the bottom and there's only one way to go and that is up." Many residents believe the city's future lies not so much in a state-appointed financial manager as in venture capitalists with undying loyalty to Detroit, such as Dan Gilbert. "Disciplined Dreaming" Dan calls it where he calls to action companies to rethink their traditional business models, and urges more creativity and risk-taking "Detroit is the heart of the United States" he says. "Everything starts in Detroit."