



## **Walking Distance**

Scott Hocking, Emily Linn, Laura Macintyre, Toby Millman, Kathleen Rashid,  
Christopher Samuels, Gary Schwartz and Corine Vermeulen

29 May – 27 June 2009

### Scott Hocking

*"The I-94 Industrial Park Renaissance Zone is 289.6 acres. The Industrial Park, Phase 1, located inside the Renaissance Zone, is comprised of 189 acres. Up to 153 acres of Phase 1 are buildable. The property is approximately 2,500 feet by 2,500 feet. The property is an irregular square shape. The land is flat. There are no wetlands on the site. The site is not within a flood hazard."*

*Excerpt from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation's online I-94 Industrial Park Detail PDF*

Over the last 10 years I have watched street after street of this neighborhood become abandoned, torn down, and blocked off by concrete barricades. The last residents moved out, their houses and the surrounding burnt ones were demolished; the haunted church on St. Cyril was scrapped to the point of collapse; the vacant streets became dumping grounds, which brought on the concrete roadblocks; the trees were torn out, to appease potential builders; finally Cooper school on Georgia was closed and scrapped clean. But the sale of the land has been slow going. Aside from the massive complexes along Huber, most of the area still sits vacant. Hundreds of uprooted trees lie in massive piles. Random mounds of earth and demolished debris have overgrown with grasses and wildflowers. Flooded streets have become marshlands and swamps. Wildlife abounds: pheasants, rabbits, foxes, snakes, frogs, hawks, and numerous birds, along with stray cats or dogs, can all be found here. The I-94 Industrial Park Renaissance Zone has inadvertently become one of the most topographically natural areas of Detroit.



South from Marcus Mound (2009)





Concord Swamp, Spring (2009)





West from Marcus Mound (2009)





Majorie East, Spring (2009)





Concord Swamp Swift (2009)



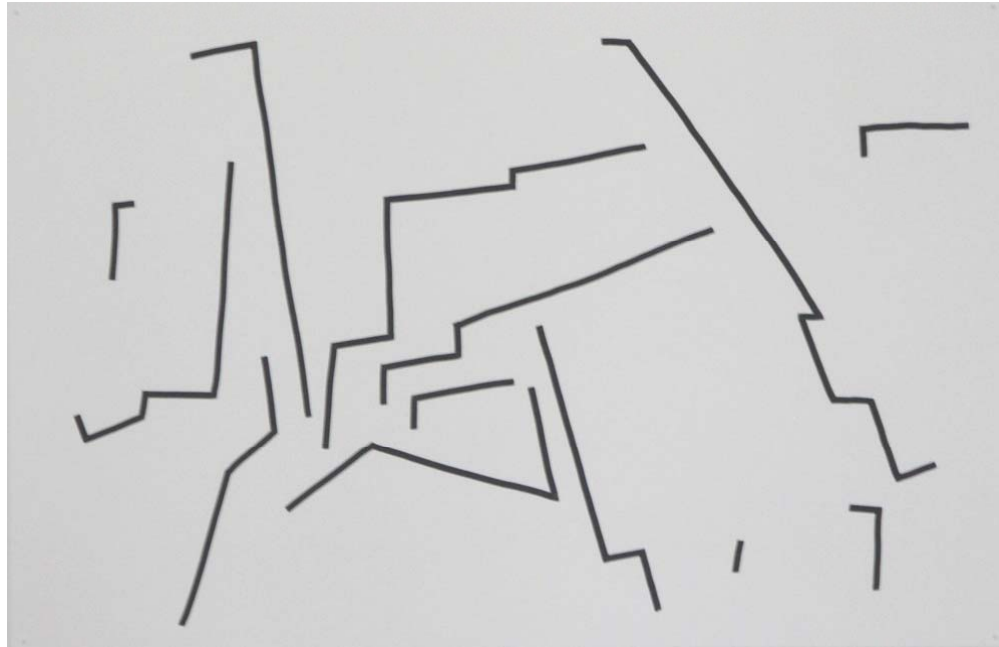


Winfield South, Spring (2009)



Emily Linn

Familiar Routes: My family has lived in Detroit for seven generations. Although I live in the same physical space as so many of my ancestors, the city has changed greatly over that long period of time, as has my family. Trying to connect with the home that these ancestors knew, with the help of my grandmothers, I was able to map and walk thirteen routine routes in Detroit which members my family once followed. The routes I followed were primarily daily routes from home to work or school. The video follows my feet walking the routes and the lines in the drawing represent each of the paths I took.



Familiar Routes





Familiar Routes

## **Routes:**

**Near 6540 Bewick to six blocks north and east** – my great-great-grandfather's walk to work in the 1900s

**3223 Meldrum to Bethany Lutheran church** – my great-grandparents' walk to church in the 1910s

**1611 Gray to the Detroit River** – my great-grandfather's walk to work in the 1910s

**2211 Pingree to 2111 Woodward** – my grandfather's walk to work in the 1920s

**3808 Vicksburg to Masonic Temple** – my great-great-grandfather's walk to Masonic Temple in the 1920s

**14619 Marlowe to seven blocks south and east** – my grandmother's walk to school in the 1920s

**5072 Garland to Forest just below Mt. Elliot** – my grandmother's walk to her aunt's house for Sunday suppers in the 1920s

**4825 Ellery to Joyce school** – my grandmother's walk to school in the 1930s

**3803 Vicksburg to Angell school** – my grandmother's walk to school in the 1930s

**11510 Bradford to 11843 Willis** – my grandfather's walk to work in the 1940s-50s

**Four blocks along Allendale** – my great-grandmother's walk to my great-great-grandmother's house in the 1940s

**11510 Bradford to Wilkins school** – my father's walk to school in the 1950s

**15075 Minock to Vetat school** – my mother's walk to school in the 1950s

## **Familiar Routes**



## Laura Macintyre

*"The farthest I've gone from my house (in Hamtramck) is about three miles," says Macintyre, a 41-year-old art teacher at Grosse Ile High School.*

*The subjects in Street Level are familiar: crumbling storefront churches, liquor stores next to vacant lots and neglected alleys. But Macintyre puts an interesting spin on the formula. Her work is painted in vivid colors. Paintings of abandoned homes are soaked with vibrant red, green and yellow, as well as gray and brown, making the aging Rust Belt streets seem almost tropical. One of the paintings, entitled "Hello," even features a couple of palm trees (though they're ads on ice cream trucks, parked at a gas station).*

*"I have really bright colors because I have really warm, almost like 'Pop Rocks' feelings about it," she says. "I want to show people who might think that this is urban dysfunction that it's not. Look at the beauty in it."*

Extract from Metro Times article 9/19/2007



Diffusion 7am North / Confluence 12 Noon East





Tree of Heaven / Thirteen Motes



Cold Snap



### *Toby Millman*

Over the course of several weeks, I spent my days off from work walking through the alleys of Hamtramck in an attempt to explore the neighborhood. I was attracted to the alleys as small, unnamed concrete paths, intertwined with both the larger and smaller streets in the neighborhood yet still rarely walked through, considered off the beaten path. As I photographed, I became less concerned with the alleys themselves and more attracted to the backyards of the houses that lined them. There is a false sense of privacy in these spaces, where socks hang to dry and children's toys are left in mid-play. There is also both a uniformity and a uniqueness that many houses in Hamtramck share, homes ornamented with back porch awnings and satellite dishes blend into the rear façades, which are largely kept bare.

These images are my first return to photographing my own surroundings after a long hiatus. Until 2001, I lived in Brooklyn, New York where I often photographed my neighborhood. Then I photographed people, mostly, as a means of getting to know my neighbors and engaging with the community. Since then I have moved around, both within and outside the US but largely away from urban environments. While I always photographed and used photographs, I made them for different purposes. As a new resident of Hamtramck, I'm still feeling like an outsider and not quite ready to wield my camera in front of unsuspecting strangers. The alleys provide some level of quiet, enabling a slow return to photography as a means to connect with the place I live.



Hamtramck Alley Series I (2009)



Hamtramck Alley Series 2 (2009)





Hamtramck Alley Series 3 (2009)

*Kathleen Rashid*

Throughout many years of practice, painting and drawing have become a means by which I examine the nature of perception and expression, particularly how literal depiction paradoxically subverts and undermines “literal” interpretation, opening the perceptions into deeper layers of meaning. So it is that the scroll of pavement I walk daily, laid beneath my feet to conceal and counteract the effects and passage of time, eventually becomes its most faithful record. Stained, scarred and broken by its own history, its imagery arouses a correspondingly rich narrative underneath my own consciousness, as I look down occasionally to watch my step.



Sidewalk Studies (2009)





Sidewalk Studies (2009)



Sidewalk Studies (2009)



Sidewalk Studies (2009)

Image copyright the artist





Sidewalk Studies (2009)



Sidewalk Studies (2009)

### Christopher Samuels

Walking distance as a perception can conjure many powerful inclinations. "point B and its percepts" works as a tool, a way to experience a defined perception of space and distance. Spatial dynamics in relation to material merges together forming an importance of two points, reducing this concept to a simple expression of material.

My work is usually part of a larger installation. What may first appear to be an accidental assembly can then emerge a carefully crafted environment directing the viewer's gaze and movement, calling attention to sometimes precariously or awkwardly placed objects. Moving through my environments can have a healing effect, allowing the spectator to witness the dialogue between the work and the space while foregrounding the viewer's own physical encounter with the surroundings. Speed is another fundamental element of my work. Sculptures can appear to be a frozen or interrupted movement, giving the work a feeling of instability and ephemeral balance. This appearance of fragility stretches the works into a dimension which is effortlessly poetic





Point B and its Percepts (2009)



Point B and its Percepts (2009)

Gary Schwartz

"Don't it always seem to go  
That you don't know what you've got  
'Till it's gone"

BIG YELLOW TAXI - Joni Mitchell

Walking represents freedom, adventure, exploration & unknown possibilities. As an artist & animator I'm obsessed with investigating the question of walking, the walking cycle in it's many temporal forms; motion picture, stop-motion, puppets, flipbooks, zoetropes, mutoscopes, kinetic sculpture, drawing, clay, sand, etc... working with the hard core fundamentals of locomotion. Always moving forward but never getting there. I occasionally lost the ability to walk. I was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis in the mid 70's. I continue to explore the inexhaustible question of walking. I haven't gotten there yet





PHI (2009)



PHI (2009)

### Corine Vermeulen

The Walk-In Portrait Studio was a community art project by Femke Lutgerink (text) & Corine Vermeulen (photography)

From Tuesday April 14th until Saturday April 18th, 2009 the Walk-in Portrait Studio on 13106 Klinger Street opened its doors from 11 AM – 5 PM. Inspired by the famous Walker Evans photograph of the License Photo Studio in New York we set out to create a studio on Klinger Street. The studio was set up in a formerly foreclosed house that is currently being renovated. Over the course of 5 days around 85 people came in to have their portraits taken. The following week the portraits could be picked up, free of charge, at the same location.





Jamal, Aida (2009)



Rena, Kawaun (2009)



Tina, Renee (2009)





Willy, Zana (2009)

Rebecca Mazzei

Article on the show

Originally published in the Metro Times: 6/17/2009

*A place can have definite or indefinite boundaries. Places, in my mind, have always been marked by very definite barriers. It's a product of growing up with a younger brother who is handicapped. Some time, very early on, I unconsciously made the decision to join him on his journey, and began processing my experiences in terms of the physicality of my surroundings. It's like second nature now: Is this terrain flat or bumpy? Is it wet? How many people are sharing it? How soon will I be moving from this location to a new one? As an adult, I am more often than not somewhere he can't easily be — say, hiking in a forest or walking up three flights of stairs in an old apartment building — and my barrier has become emotional. It's guilt.*

*A heightened sense of awareness characterizes a really wonderful, intimate exhibit entitled Walking Distance, on display at Hamtramck's 2739 Edwin gallery through the end of the month. In photos, drawings, paintings, video and installation, 10 artists do more than document urban landscapes; they explore what defines our relationship with the world around us. The topic seems to be on the minds of many artists, as humanity continues to lose touch with the real world.*

*Walking Distance guides us around an array of local spots that are at once common and barely recognizable. Emily Linn, whose family has lived in Detroit for seven generations, researched 13 routine routes in Detroit that members of her family once traveled. She walked these paths with a camera at her side, shooting the street beneath her feet. The concrete flows fast down the screen like a stream, and bounces to the rhythm of her gait. The footage affords frustratingly little opportunity for the viewer to develop any real connection to a place that means so much to her. In a subtle language, she manages to honor her ancestry while expressing the loss she's struggling with; the futility of seeking to reclaim everyday moments that have long passed.*



*Guests entering the gallery at 2739 are greeted by a zoetrope made from wooden figures on a turntable. Artist and animator Gary Schwartz was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in the mid- '70s. Since then, he has occasionally lost the ability to walk, and writes in his artist statement that he has been fixated on the "walking cycle" as it manifests itself in motion picture, kinetic sculpture, stop-motion animation and more. His piece seems as heartbreakingly cruel as it does playful, because the freedom of mobility is a delusion set in motion by a strobe light. The power of the zoetrope is a result of our eyes deceiving us, just as illness betrays the body. The strength of this show is, in part, credited to its curator, Steve Panton, who displayed the work so that visual cues guide eyes from one piece to the next. Gateways into new worlds form fences, doors and windows in Toby Millman's photographs, a Brooklyn transplant just getting to know her new neighborhood, while Laura Macintyre's paintings celebrate the vibrancy of an area she's lived in her whole life. The setting, for both of them, is Hamtramck.*

*Imposing concrete barricades in Scott Hocking's photos — inched apart just enough for someone on foot to pass through — represent a gateway that takes us from one era to the next. For 10 years, Hocking has tracked the evolution of what is known as the "I-94 Industrial Park Renaissance Zone," an area of about 289 acres located close to Hamtramck on the city's east side, between St. Cyril and Mount Elliot. The neighborhood was once residential, but gradual depopulation led to the demolition of homes. Hocking explains that the area was used as a dumping ground and eventually the barricades were put in place. The expansive territory in his photos now occupies an incredible interplace between civilization and total collapse. It's a section of Detroit that has returned to the condition of fertile landscape Count Pontchartrain described in 1709 as "the earthly paradise of North America," replete with wildlife and natural landscape. The Detroit Economic Growth Corporation, reads the State of Michigan's website, seeks businesses for "industrial redevelopment." Invested with such social power, Hocking's lush landscapes are also an indictment of a city and state government floundering with little vision.*

*The subject matter in Walking Distance may be local, but it's far from provincial. As a side note, while art of the local landscape hangs on the wall, the creators have been in and out of the country, working and vacationing in China, Panama, Germany, Italy, Los Angeles and Philadelphia.*

*Corine Vermeulen-Smith is relatively new to the local art community; she's from the Netherlands, and her photos of local residents look like stunningly contemporary interpretations of 17th century Dutch paintings. The placement of a hand on the knee, the cropping of a woman in an oversized jacket and the slight tilt of head gives off the air of classic nobility and beauty. For four days, Vermeulen-Smith, with Femke Lutgerink (who provided text), turned a formerly foreclosed home on Klinger Street in Hamtramck into a "Walk-In Portrait Studio," where she shot pictures of strangers for free. Vermeulen-Smith opened up shop as a way of introducing herself to the community where she and her husband recently bought a home. "It was like baking an apple pie and saying, 'Hi, I'm your new neighbor,'" she writes in an e-mail. She adds that she'd like to continue this project as a traveling photo studio, documenting different communities around Detroit.*

*Painter Kathy Rashid turns her attention to cracks in the sidewalk, focusing on a spot about as big as where nearly one foot can rest. In her interpretation, a place is an intimate story told millions of times.*

*The show's most abstract piece is Chris Samuel's installation, a waist-high construction of a gate, some paint cans and mirrors reflecting the steps of those who pass in front of it. This is a poignant representation of an environment built up from imbalance, yet surprisingly functional as it now stands.*