

STEPHEN BULGER GALLERY

JOSEPH HARTMAN
Hamilton

Exhibition Dates: May 10 – June 7, 2014

Reception for the Artist: Friday, May 9, 5-9pm

Artist Talk: Friday, May 9th, 7pm; the Artist Talk will take place in the gallery space during the Reception for the artist.

The gallery is pleased to present, “Hamilton,” our second solo-exhibition by Canadian Photographer Joseph Hartman.

In 2007, photographer Hartman (b. Barrie, Ontario, 1978) relocated from the small rural community of Lafontaine, Ontario, where he lived most of his life, to Hamilton, Ontario. Initially feeling disoriented and disconnected from the city, he began to photograph Hamilton as a way to understand the place he now calls home.

“Hamilton” is Hartman's largest body of work to date; it spans seven years and includes more than 40 photographs captured with a 4 x 5 view camera on colour film. Hamilton, a city best known for its steel industry, is now in a state of transition as heavy industry slowly leaves. Hartman overlooks the factories and smoke-laden skyline that have represented the city for decades and instead documents a cross-section of Hamilton's working-class neighbourhoods and the surrounding landscape. He focuses on the city's east end, drawn in by the "gritty personality" of the people and buildings of the area.

Although his photographs concentrate on Hamilton, his images depict remnants familiar to any North American city affected by globalization. For generations, families could rely on steady work and fair wages producing many of the staples and trappings that we have come to enjoy in a successful society. The pursuit of wider profit margins and the lessening of tariff restrictions caused the majority of these jobs to be located elsewhere. The subsequent erosion of stability for these middle-class workers is made evident by desolate downtown streets and the increase of low end stores. Their resilient citizens wait poised for another rebirth while their surroundings continue to bear the marks of their recent hardships. Hartman's photographs serve as a reminder of what remains, and offer a glimpse of promise.

After receiving a Master's degree in Kinesiology at the University of McMaster in 2004 and being accepted into Medical School, Joseph Hartman decided to pursue a career as an artist. Hartman, a self-taught photographer, has apprenticed with Canadian photographer Edward Burtynsky. Hartman's work can be found in several collections including: The Art Gallery of Hamilton, The MacLaren Art Centre, Royal Bank of Canada, TD Canada Trust, and Farrow Partnerships Architects.