

# Detroit Images: Not pretty

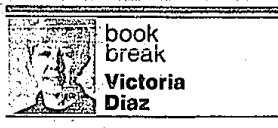
I HAVE been looking at "Detroit Images: Photographs of the Renaissance City," a collection of almost 200 colorful, black-and-white photos of contemporary Detroit. Published recently by Wayne State University Press, the book is edited by John J. Bukowczyk and Douglas Aikenhead, with Peter Slavicek.

To be sure, there are hopeful images in this book — the Tigers taking the field on a well-attended Opening Day in 1986; a young father embracing his small daughter in Cadillac Square; modest, well-kept homes on Deacon Street, gleaming in the sunshine; two youths traversing a pristine Washington Boulevard on bicycles.

But, for the most part, these are not pretty pictures. For Philip Levine, in an afterword, he called the collection "a book of ruins." Nothing wrong with such a book, of course. The trouble comes when a large number of such images are put together in one place, as they are here. After a time, simply because there are so many of them, the strength and boldness of each image begins to break down and to lose some of its effectiveness. Now and then, it even threatens to take on a kind of ludicrous quality in the repetition.

STILL, THE IMAGES in themselves are so arresting, the photography so remarkable... The visual journey begins with a dramatic shot of an old factory warehouse going up in smoke and flames, and dwarfing warty Chrysler cars. The collection concludes with a shot of the skeletal remains of another warehouse destroyed by fire. An exposed stairwell clings to a wall that threatens to fall in upon itself, a smokiestak juts into a murky sky, a strange, grisous light — present in so many of these images — pervades the scenes. There are no bystanders, wary or otherwise.

In between, the photos (the work of 14 different photographers) run the gamut from images of aging shopkeepers who look to be waiting for customers who will never come, to storefront churches resembling small fortresses, with their boarded-up windows and their barred-over front doors (called "security gates"), to the night-time individuals who resemble something out of "Nightmare," but are, in fact, revelers at a post-game World Series celebration.



book break  
**Victoria Diaz**

Images of the demolished northern end of Poletown are reminiscent of Depression-era, Dust Bowl portraits. A photo of the ragged remains of the last Ujovral building, taken on a day in 1986, looks as bleak as a picture out of Dresden in the '40s.

In the Cass Corridor, the exterior of an apartment building, its scabrous interior, and its half-clothed tenants appear to have been trashed by some nightmarish malignancy.

Beneath the Ambassador Bridge, basketball courts — closed because the soil on which they were built has been found to be chemically-contaminated — seem as eerie as Doomsday.

Here, in a home on Detroit's Near East side, is a family, sitting down to dinner, the children looking tentative, the adults appearing to be little more than resigned to some melancholy fate. Here is an old woman, literally out on the street with her furniture, her beautiful face resigned as well. Here is an old man, alone, at a Labor Day parade somewhere on Woodward Avenue.

Here is the boneyard rubble of another demolished structure, this on Franklin between Joseph Camp and Chelsea. Here is an Arbor on Kenner near Moran. And another at Trombly and Orleans. Here is a Dodge van, stripped and plundered and upside-down at Biltmore near Eight Mile Road. Here is a 1984 Fiero that has suffered the same fate. Here, on Hessel between Front and Ferry is a house, "on location" (we learn from the caption) from July 5 to September 26, 1985.

I don't know — maybe it's best to just examine the photos as slowly as possible, taking them a bit at a time. Perhaps that way, a reader can experience their impact more completely.

In addition to the pictures and Levine's afterword, the book contains an insightful essay on "Picturing the City/Photographing Detroit," by Aikenhead, plus a brief history of the Motor City, written by Bukowczyk.

## 11 area artists in summer art fair

Eleven area artists will be part of the 19th annual Summer Art Fair scheduled Wednesday, July 19 through Saturday, July 22 in downtown Ann Arbor.

Sponsored by the Michigan Guild of Arts and Artisans, the art fair hours will be 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesday through Friday and 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday. The festival features 340 juried artists from 34 states.

Area artist who will be participating include: ceramics: Barbara Gibson of Livonia; folk art: Amanda Bilyeau, Plymouth; glass: Mack Porter, Farmington Hills; jewelry: Dave Parsons, Plymouth; Ted Stierwick, Farmington Hills; and Frank Yanke, Farmington Hills; mixed media: Mary Ann Olson, Plymouth; Andrea Stierwick, Farmington Hills; painting: Wallace Bilyeau, Plymouth; Ralph N. Davis, Westland; photogra-

phy: Paul Miller, Livonia.

The summer art fair is the largest of the three fairs that comprise the "Ann Arbor Art Fair" which collectively attract over 500,000 visitors to Ann Arbor over the four-day period featuring a total of 900 artists, artisans and craftsmen. The Guild's Summer Art Fair is the only fair owned and operated by the artists themselves.

The guild's fair has three locations: Main Street, from Huron to William; Liberty, from Ashley to Fifth; and State Street, from William to South University.

The Ann Arbor Transportation Authority (ATA) provides the Art Fair Shuttle. Visitors can get to the Briarwood Mall or Pioneer High School and ride the bus directly to the fair. AATA also provides "the Circulator," which takes visitors from one fair site to another.



all about color  
**Helen Diane Vincent**

Q: We have just moved into a house in a new subdivision. The entire area is flat, landscaped with a few shrubs and small trees. We want to dress up the wood deck patio behind the house that overlooks an in-ground swimming pool. Our house is traditionally styled and made of terra-cotta brick. Any suggestions?

A: Since you are thinking of taking a more elegant approach, then look into the newer blue-green and white patio furniture and coordinate it with soft terra cotta and apricot for the table setting and any decorative accessories. Try to adhere to the apricots, or soft orange color even in the choice of flowers to be planted — allowing for the soil and other conditions.

Some of these flowers could be also put into terra-cotta pots and placed around the deck itself. A white trellis with pale violet-colored hanging wisteria positioned at the far end of the pool would add a subtle touch to the color harmony and provide some height to the otherwise flat landscaping. White and a few violet-colored flowers could also be interspersed with the soft orange clusters.

In clear daylight you would achieve an elegant yet relaxed look; with soft night-lighting, these colors would be sufficiently visible to be appreciated.

Q: Recently, our 14-year-old son, who is our only child, has insisted that he paint his entire room in black and fluorescent colors. It's already jammed with posters and paraphernalia.

His father refuses to go along with the idea. However, I'm inclined to let him have his way because, so far, he has offered us so very few problems. What do you think we should do? And should we be concerned with his radical change in color preferences?

A: Don't be overly concerned at this time. Your son is using color as a sign of a need to more clearly establish his own identity and to have some separate control over his environment. Quite typical of this phase of development, he is beginning to more vigorously explore avenues distinct from parental approval, and outside of conventional, cultural norms.

It's not unusual for teen-age boys, more than girls, to select this particular color combination for its intended shock value. Without excusing his extreme colors, keep in mind that he is exposed to far more hyper colors through TV advertising, rock concerts, and novelty items designed and marketed for the adolescent than you or your husband knew as teens.

The key to this situation is your son's behavior: If he should become overly withdrawn, then you should be concerned. Black will no longer be a mere novelty, but an indication of a far deeper disturbance. Otherwise, proceed with letting him decorate his room as he wants to. If you over-react or over-interpret his color preferences at this point in his life, you will make the matter seem more important than it really is.

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