

Yves Marchand & Romain Meffre

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Ballroom, American Hotel, 2007, ultrachrome print, 150 x 190 cm, edition of 6

The Ruins of Detroit is a five-year collaboration between French photographers Yves Marchand and Romain Meffre. Together they have documented Detroit's abandoned buildings, thus bringing to light the current state of the 'Motor City' through a cinematic series of starkly beautiful photographs. Shooting with a large format, custom-made camera, taking advantage of natural light and using long exposures, the images embody the unique atmosphere of each location. Marchand and Meffre's work retains a formal quality and is conceived as a document, giving the viewer a surreal glimpse of Detroit's former glory. At its peak, Detroit was the world capital of car production and home to two million people. This monumental success attracted the great architects of the period and the eclecticism of the city's building programme reflected every fashion of the day. Yet the American dream soon turned into a nightmare. The 1950s saw machines replace workers and, in the following decades, hundreds of thousands of jobs were lost as the international car market changed beyond recognition and foreign car manufacturers successfully competed for their share of the US market.

The images bring to mind a Biblical disaster; it is as if all Detroit's citizens had fled. The abandoned factories and buildings, vacant schools and derelict ballrooms, to name but a few, are a poignant reminder of the fragility of the modern world and, possibly on a different scale, of a now 'broken America'. These beautiful but disturbing images look uncompromisingly at the remains of the once-astonishing Detroit, as a then global center of capitalism and its following, even more extraordinary, descent into ruin. One is reminded of Detroit's prophetic motto: *Speramus meliora, resurget cineribus* ("We hope for better things, which shall rise from the ashes").

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Born in 1981 & 1987 in the Parisian suburbs, both live and work in Paris.

Selected Solo Exhibitions

2015

Theaters at Cultuurcentrum Caermersklooster, Ghent
Industry, Polka Gallery, Paris

2014

Theaters at Deutsches Filminstitut, Frankfurt

2013

Gunkanjima, Polka Galerie, Paris
The Ruins of Detroit, Edwynn Houk Gallery, Zurich

2012

Theaters, Polka Galerie, Paris
The Ruins of Detroit, Fontana Fortuna Gallery, Amsterdam
The Ruins of Detroit, Tristan Hoare Gallery, London

2011

The Ruins of Detroit, Kühlhaus, Berlin
The Ruins of Detroit, Galerie Wanted, Paris

2010

The Ruins of Detroit, Le Maillon, Strasbourg
The Ruins of Detroit, Gun Gallery, Stockholm
Vestiges d'Hollywood, Cinéma du Pantheon, Paris

Selected Group Exhibitions

2016

Teamwork Makes Dreamwork, Polka Galerie, Paris
La forza delle rovine, Museo Nazionale Romano, Rome

2015

Reimagining the Industrial Revolution, Meadow Arts & Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust,
Coalbrookdale, UK

2013

Aesthetic Departures: Trends in European Photography, 1850 to the present, Detroit
Institute of Art, Detroit

2012

Parcours photographique de St. Gilles, Bruxelles
Le Silence, Nouveau Musée National de Monaco, Monaco