

TRAVIS ROOZÉE
PROJECT STATEMENT
151 Norton Street

Every relationship is embedded with an intricate history. Looking closely, taking the time to scrutinize, I appreciate the people and places I connect to.

In the summer of 2010, I examined the degraded structure of an abandoned house in Pontiac, Michigan. I had photographed the once handsome home the previous year. At that time, I was attracted to its exterior condition and the surrounding winter landscape. When I revisited the house, my scrutiny focused on the detailed transformations that had occurred within.

The building's function had shifted from residence to repository. Every inch of the house had accumulated a unique patina. Wood beams burned by a vandal's fire had become iridescent charcoal; crumbling plaster displayed ingredients of horse hair and sand; exposed lath and studs showed the building's framework; decades of layered paint had chipped into pixelated bits; varnished wood was scorched into pearlized bubbles; surfaces had oxidized and moldered. The building was uninhabitable, yet its materials had developed a vibrant life.

Arson is a constant problem in Pontiac, and weeks after I made my photographs, the house was destroyed. The city's vacant and foreclosed buildings are easy targets for bored kids and malicious adults. There were suspicious fires throughout the city last summer. In my neighborhood alone, four homes were destroyed during June and July. In each instance, the debris was quickly removed, leaving a barren lot and half scorched trees.

The work I made while living in Pontiac was framed by loss, sadness, and frustration. The empty properties strewn throughout the city are evidence of those sentiments.

April 1, 2011