

Christopher Lee- Artist Statement

I seek to document the mood of contemporary time and place, while capturing truths and constants of the human condition. The tension of dialogue, or the lack of dialogue, is what I find most interesting in daily interactions. Dialogue is not necessarily dialogue in the traditional sense of spoken interaction. Instead, it is often the way in which disparate people or parts of an image are able to reconcile their shared space in the frame.

My work is heavily dependent on location and a sense of place. Exploration of my environment informs all of my projects, and the results of these interactions ultimately dictate the direction in which the work moves. In my *Delray* series, I photographed Ruby, a resident who moved from the south at age 12 with her family; Kevin, who ran a city recreation center in the 60s and 70s; Mr. Green, owner of Green's Variety, a store he's run since 1959 and the last one in the neighborhood; and many others.

Returning to my hometown of Detroit after a 10-year absence brought with it an intense desire to get reacquainted. A Sociologist by training, I have found myself documenting people and parts of the city with which I had a previously unknown connection, while at the same time unearthing a family history that began 50 years before I was even born. Re-assembling the continuation of my own history within these two extremes and reconciling it with the limitations of memory is the focus of my *90 Lawrence* series. 90 Lawrence Street is a house in Detroit. Purchased by my great-grandfather in 1923, 90 Lawrence Street has since been called many things; home, bank foreclosed house, home, abandoned house, tax foreclosed house, home. This series does not simply address the physical realities of the represented space. It is a critique of the tendency to use decay as an overly romanticized form of decoration, a trend that ignores the socio-economic issues underlying the subject matter.