

Residential Security Map Greater Detroit 1937 (sourced online)
superimposed with -
Ethnic Distribution Graphic, Eric Fischer 2011
Grey is White, Hispanic, Asian & Other, White is Black, and each dot is 25 residents.
Data from Census 2010

GENERAL LIBRARY,
UNIV. OF MICH.
MAR 10 1909

IN DETROIT—Life is Worth Living

DETROIT 1818
HISTORICALLY CORRECT IN EVERY POINT OF DETAIL

WITH COMPLIMENTS OF
HURD-MARTIN CO.
(FORMERLY HURD-WHEELER COMPANY)
DETROIT, MICH.

FACTORY ILLUSTRATIONS

BIRD'S-EYE VIEWS

DETROIT 1908—SAME AREA AS VIEW ABOVE

WHAT DETROIT HAS ACCOMPLISHED IN THE PAST, IS THE
BEST EVIDENCE OF ITS FUTURE PROSPERITY

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MAPS AND CHARTS
Accession 7577

Hurd-Martin & Co Factory Illustrations & Birds Eye Views, Detroit, 1909
Clark Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI

Machine Space

38 minutes
Stephen Connolly 2016



Machine Space credits

Anthropologist
Julia Yezbick

Memoirist
Marsha Music

Lakeside Seance
Bruce McLaren
Janice McLaren
Richard McLaren

Transauto
Cuthbert Thomas

*Korash Florists,
Gratiot Avenue, Detroit*
James Rogers
Jason Rogers
Michael Rogers
Yvonne Hill
Dana Parks

Wexner Centre ADR
Jennifer Lange
Michael Newell-Dimoff
Alex Thompson

Driver Extraordinaire
Rob Todd

Also Appearing
Charlie McLaren

Inspiration
Giuliana Bruno
Ta-Neshi Coates
David Harvey
Bruno Latour
Henri Lefebvre
Thomas Sugrue

thanks to
Lars Bjorn
Allison Buenger
George Clark
Adam Clitheroe
Andy Conio
Ben Cook
Daniel Copley
Tony Dowmunt

Charlie Fleming
Shona Illingworth
Steve Klee
Ed Lucas
The McLaren Family
Scott Northrup
Mike Olenick
Jean Pitman
Judy Price
Jeremy Rigsby
Neil Stewart
Robert Todd
Sarah Turner
Susan Wineberg

special thanks to
Chris Bournea
David Dinnell
Lauren Hood
Jennifer Lange
Janice McLaren
Julie Murray
Marsha Music
Chris Stults
Rob Todd
Brandon Walley
Julia Yezbick

sound mix Wexner ADR
Paul Hill
sound assistance Kent SMFA
Charlie Fleming

*support provided by the
Film/Video Studio Program
at the
Wexner Centre for the Arts*

*support provided by the
School of Music & Fine Art
at the
University of Kent*

soundmix
Charlie Fleming

image/edit/sound
Stephen Connolly

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bubblefilm
2016



wexner center for the arts

Q. How did *Machine Space* come into being?

I enjoy travelling to screen my work. I first attended Ann Arbor Film Festival in 2006 and took in a trip to Detroit. Each subsequent time I went to the Festival, I'd visit Detroit with a different, knowledgeable local person. These informed visits to the city many times were made at a point when I also had a deep interest in exploring the connections between power and landscape in my films.

Machine Space is an exploration of how landscapes privilege some activities, and work against others. The film looks at how a built environment is enacted by people, rather than reporting on what a place looks or sounds like. The camera takes an active role in shaping this re-enactment, and takes the audience for a ride. The city is imagined as a spatial machine for movement and circulation.

Q. Detroit is a very particular city...

The city has a contested history and a difficult present. In Detroit, to pass from one street to the next is to witness the structural violence of a system of political economy that is global, and very visible and present in this city. *Machine Space* takes this into account and suggests how an understanding of landscape can be represented in filmic form.

In the film, we follow the red cars of the downtown transit – the Detroit *People Mover*. The route of this transit closely follows the historical and hidden boundary of redlining – the division of a city into areas where mortgage finance will only be offered at very unfavourable terms, if at all. African American residents of red-lined areas found it very difficult to buy homes; leading to significant barriers to accruing wealth. The map on the reverse is a 1937 HOLC financial security – or loans – map for Detroit, with a contemporary population distribution graphic laid over it.

The lending decisions were taken in the downtown and have significantly shaped the landscape and the lives of people in the city. In the film, the audience are taken on a journey along this boundary.

Q. How do you position your work in relation to documentary film? Your work often draws on fictional and factual versions of history.

I tried to avoid giving 'my impressions' of the city and instead I simulate the way in which most people can experience it – by car. Instead of choosing sites or events that may, or may not, be important, the film uses motion as an expression of the character and fluidity of Detroit.

History in Detroit weighs heavily. In response, *Machine Space* looks to a history in people's memories of everyday activities and experience in relation to movement. The events and 'stages of history' – the Fordist city of industrial production that Detroit was for instance – are off screen.

We see the city as it is now, and Julia and Marsha tell us how they experience it. This approach owes much to the French thinker *Henri Lefebvre*, who suggested space is a socially constructed domain. In the early 1970s he predicted the production of spaces would displace the production of material things; arguably this has taken place in Detroit.

But I hope the film also reminds us this freedom of movement has been achieved at costs to specific communities, and to a sense of community. There is a degree of remoteness to the intimate and restricted space of the car as it moves through the city. This remoteness plays a big part in the visual language of the film – from the enclosed space of the car to the remote sensing of the aerial images. As I have framed the film as a portrait of a *Machine Space* – a place of materials and production first, then people – I hope this is apparent.

Q. Tell us about the family in the film.

They are my family – and they are playing the board game of LIFE as an allegory for 'the good life' in the suburbs. I placed this strand in the film as a way of thinking about how many of the choices we make have tangible relationships to other places – far away from us, but also at a local level. And to include my situation, as a filmmaker, in the construction of these relationships. In raising our children, for instance, my view is that we are all implicated in the different worlds we live in – including Detroit. The game was re-voiced during a production residency at the Wexner Centre and this process has given a slightly unreal and once-removed quality to these scenes. I'm grateful to the staff at the Wexner Film and Video Studio for helping achieve this.

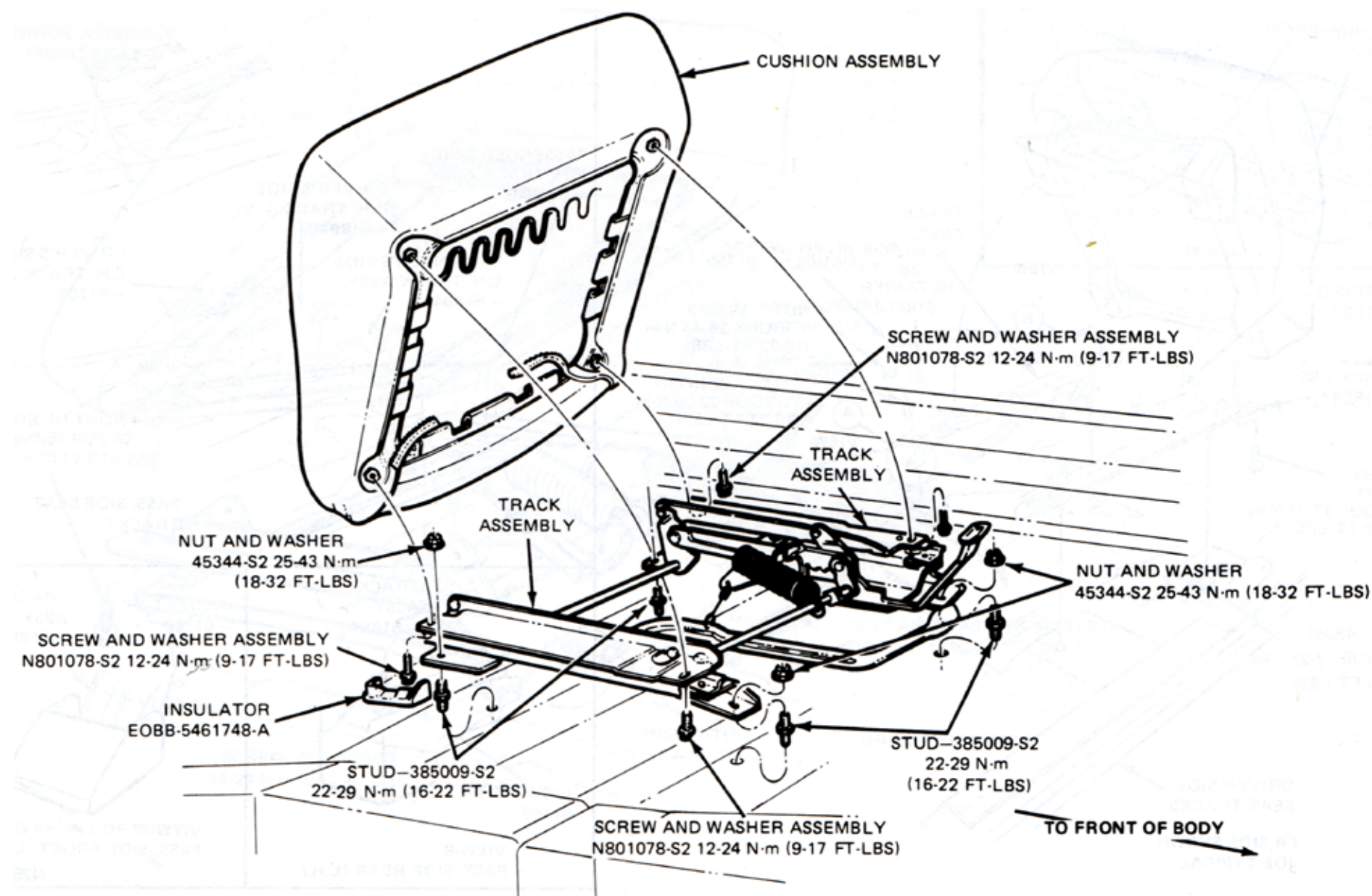
Q. Detroit has been the focus of much artist work. Can you comment?

The playwright Bertolt Brecht is held to have said about making artwork, "Don't start from the good old things, but the bad new ones." In my opinion, a bad new thing is nostalgia. A vision of the past as all good is a pervasive form of this feeling.

Consequently, the film avoids showing ruins. Instead, the past as motion and experience is a theme explicitly addressed by Marsha in *Machine Space*. She challenges the idea that the old days of this city were good for everyone. In mourning the departure of her white childhood friends from the city, Marsha also turns the usual object of mourning, of a lost Detroit, upside down.

Finally, although I have framed the film as a portrait of a *Machine Space*, we can feel that people can overcome the machine. As Marsha says, a way of representing the state of affairs in Detroit has not been arrived at yet. I trust the film is a step on a path to achieving this.

Stephen Connolly
March 2017



from: 1980 Car Shop Manual
Body Chassis

Pinto - Bobcat - Mustang - Capri - Granada - Monarch - Versailles