

ART / PHOTOGRAPHY

ART IN EVOLUTION // SCOTT HOCKING [DETROIT]

[Edward Ian Cibula](#) / [February 4, 2016](#) //



The natural course of most things is a long winding road paved with decay which eventually leads to regeneration. For Detroit artist Scott Hocking, the road to creation is paved in much the same way. The disrepair that follows the exhaustion of resources and the passage of time provides Hocking with the building blocks he uses to create site-specific installations which become the primary subjects of his conceptual photographs.

Like many in Detroit, Hocking's story is one of adaptation. He didn't start out as a photographer, much less as one with a visionary approach. In fact, Hocking says that his photography in the early '90s had very little conceptual thought behind it, he was just documenting things and places which he found interesting. "If there's one thing I regret it's that I didn't document the fuck out of everything back then because so much has changed," he muses. Change is a term Hocking knows intimately, his entire life's course was altered just as he entered his 20s. A car accident led a young Hocking to turn his focus onto his home city —the same city so many of his peers were eager to escape from. Instead of running as Detroit's industries moved on and some of its great buildings began to degrade, Hocking took a step closer, first moving into the city proper and then taking the time to intimately explore many of the monolithic spaces which are today being hailed as some of the best places to engage in urban exploration.



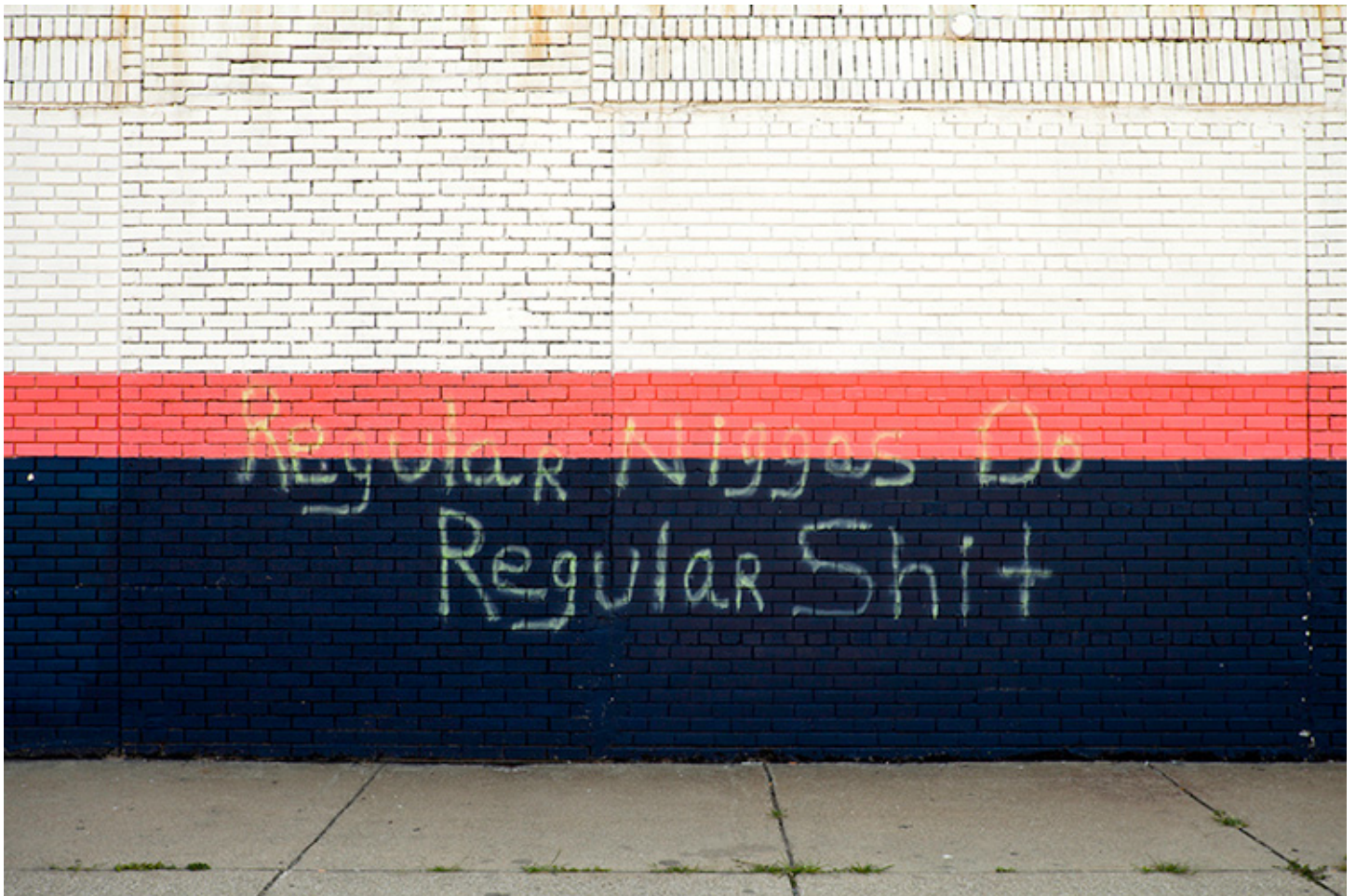
The catalyst for his development as a conceptual photographer was his interest in sculpture and installation. As he began creating his site-specific pieces, Hocking began to consider more and more how he could capture these local creations and share them with a wider audience. One of his earliest attempts the *Ziggurat* project was housed in the legendary Fisher Body Plant 21; Hocking muses that he spent so much time in the legendary building that “it became [his] second home...I’ve lived within walking distance of the building for 20 years now, I still go to it now and then for a little peace of mind.” Taking wood blocks which used to be part of a plant floor, Hocking painstakingly assembled a loose pyramid. The project took months to complete; in that time, Hocking got to know others who frequented Detroit’s abandoned buildings. These ‘scappers’ were in the process of stripping away every pipe and fitting worth a dime and Hocking found in them an alternative audience for his art.



“PHOTOGRAPHERS ARE ABLE OR TRYING TO TRANSLATE SOMETHING THREE DIMENSIONAL INTO TWO DIMENSIONS AND STILL HAVE IT FEEL LIKE THREE DIMENSIONS AND THAT’S REALLY FUCKING HARD...TRYING TO ACHIEVE THAT IS MY GOAL.”



This process of creating a structure hidden out the public eye and then presenting it through photographs is a method that Hocking uses not only in Detroit, but all over the world. The resulting photographs now capture highly-detailed slivers of his artistic vision. His approach means that found objects are united with carefully selected elements to create new structures entirely. These are then photographed in varied ways. From close ups of each important detail to macro shots, Hocking reveals the complete experience of being in the three-dimensional space — and by extension being in his mind. “Something strange happens when you place the camera between you and the world, the framing aspect is always very interesting to me, what you decide to include or exclude, what you decide to focus on or cut,” he explains. What makes Hocking ‘s work particularly interesting is that he’s willing to turn his focus onto the unconventional; for example, in one series of photographs he set out to capture Detroit’s ‘*Bad Graffiti*’. The results are snapshots of urban humour at its finest with all the artistic irreverence of street art but far less of the technical polish.



Hocking’s approach, along with his intimate knowledge of Detroit, is what allows him to try the “crazy ideas” that make the day to day life of an artist so rewarding. “Maybe it’s good that I came from a background with no money, I’m used to the ups and downs of life period. Deciding to be an artist didn’t change much about that except I was doing what I loved,” he says. Of course, his background has also helped because from a young age Hocking was used to making things with his hands. The tactile manipulation of the world around him serves as a medium for his own artistic impulses and quite literally sets the stage for his conceptual shots. With a deep desire to continue exploring, building up and documenting the hidden corners of the world around him, Hocking is poised to keep his artistic impulses engaged and his creative drive on the next shot.









See more of Scott Hockings work on his [WEBSITE](#)
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THE AUTHOR

E. Ian Cibula is a transplanted Montrealer. A graduate of Concordia University, he makes his living as a freelance writer so that he can pick which hours he'd like to work, and which to spend by the water. Ian's deep interest in arts, music, culture and sport push him to see the world through many lenses. He wishes to see as much of the spectrum of local culture as possible and hopefully share what he gleans by bringing the authentic experience of different subcultures to life in his writing.