



RUSS MARSHALL

Detroit Photographs, 1958-2008

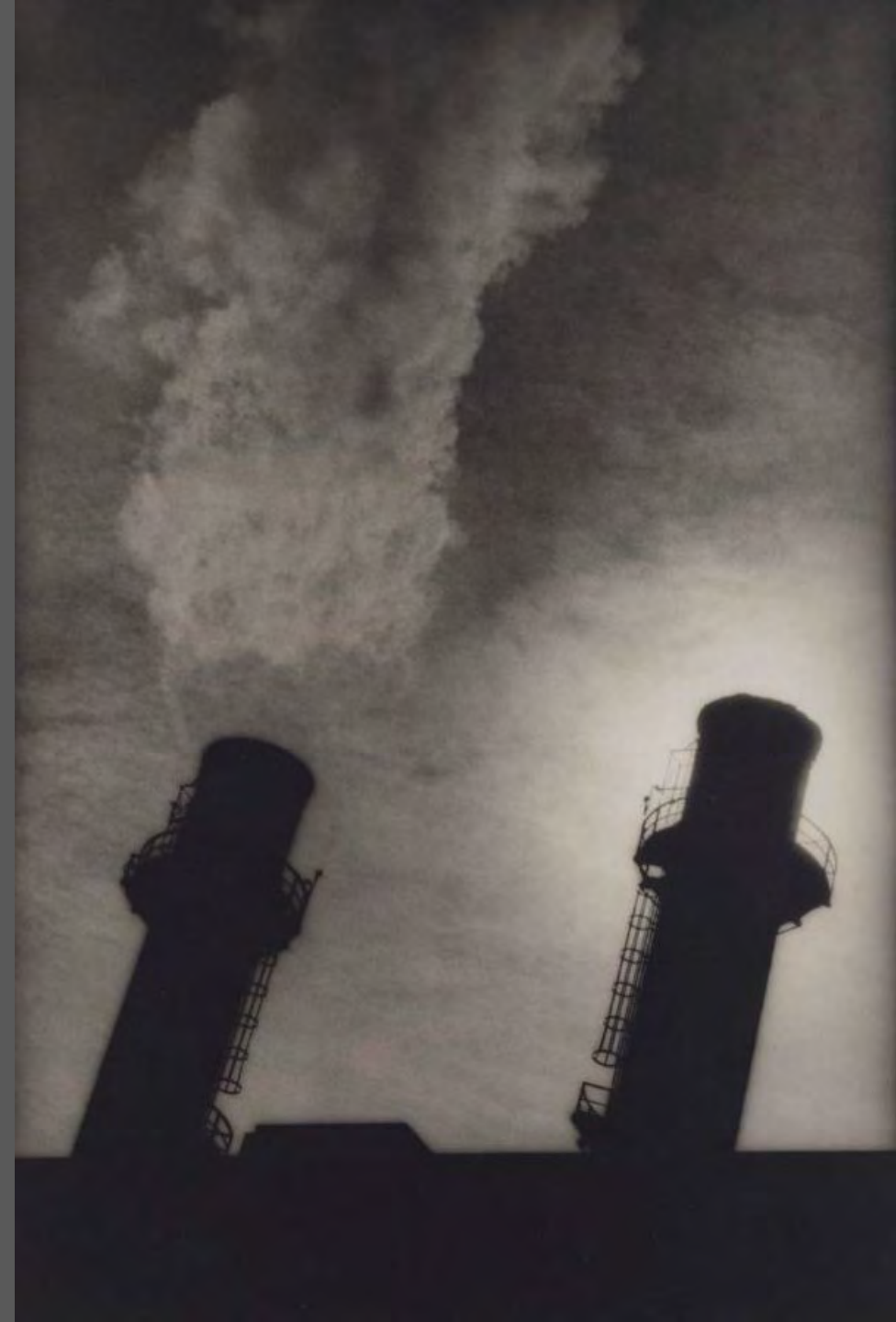


RUSS MARSHALL: Detroit Photographs, 1958–2008

explores 50 years of Russ Marshall's Motor City-inspired photographs at the Detroit Institute of Arts. Marshall chronicled blue-collar life and Detroit's rich music scene against the backdrop of the area's architecture and industry. See over 90 of his evocative black-and-white photographs including images of auto assembly line workers and Eastern Market butchers, blues and jazz musicians and patrons, plus memorable Detroit street scenes and landmarks such as Michigan Central Station.

Cover: *Ambassador Bridge and Zug Island*, 1968 (printed 2004)
Gelatin silver print; 8 15/16 × 15 15/16 in.
Gift of the artist Russ Marshall, DIA No. 2012.144

Right: *Mistersky Stacks*, 1999 (printed 2000)
Gelatin silver print; 4 3/4 × 8 in.
Gift of the artist Russ Marshall, DIA No. 2012.165



RUSS MARSHALL: Detroit Photographs, 1958–2008

The exhibition includes these sections and themes:

Everyday Detroit

**Michigan Central Station
Eastern Market**

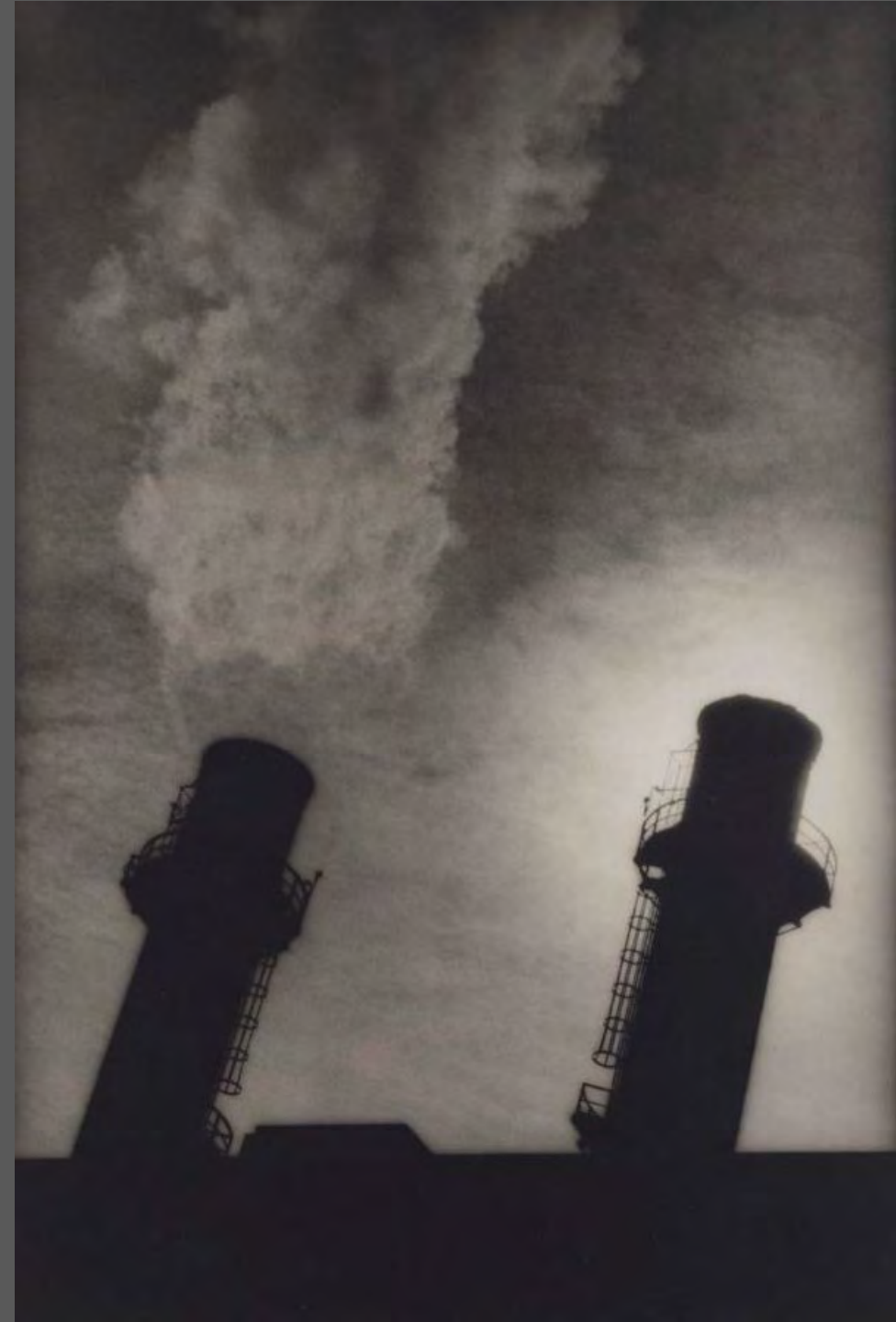
Sounds of Detroit

Observing Public Life

Tribute to the Worker

A Lens Toward Europe, 1987–1990

Highlights from the exhibition are included in this presentation.



RUSS MARSHALL

Detroit Photographs, 1958–2008

“OUR FAMILY PHOTO ALBUM was probably my first significant exposure to photography...on some level, at an early age, it was impressed upon me that it was important to keep the memories of these miners, steelworkers, and farmers alive.”

—Russ Marshall

FOR SIXTY YEARS, photographer Russ Marshall (American, born 1940) chronicled changing industrial landscapes in Detroit and southeast Michigan through depictions of those who lived in them.

Born into a family of coal miners, farmers, and factory workers, Marshall approached his subjects with deep familiarity and respect. His photographs—looming skylines, bustling streetscapes, and candid portraits—are a testament to the strength and resiliency of people in southeast Michigan and the vibrancy of life in the region.



Russ Marshall selecting his work for the exhibition
Russ Marshall: Detroit Photographs, 1958–2008

“I'm drawn to these subjects because it's what I know. For years I carried a camera with me all the time. On trips, out on the streets, and hanging out with my buddies. Everywhere. Every photographer remembers those shots that are forever lost for lack of a camera at the ready.”

—Russ Marshall, *American Elegy*, 2012

INSPIRATION FROM EVERYDAY DETROIT

Early in his career, Russ Marshall was drawn to city streets and public life. He photographed everyday Detroit and its commonplace sites: people at newsstands, factories, and parades. These early photographs document the city as he saw it.

Over time, however, Marshall began experimenting with techniques to create more atmospheric and romanticized representations of the city. The resulting imagery accentuates Detroit's billowing smokestacks and silhouetted figures.



Here, passersby pause to look north down Woodward Avenue over some construction fencing. Perhaps the sight felt novel: in the 1950s and '60s, Detroit's downtown area saw some of the first major building projects since the 1920s.

Beyond the edges of the photograph, three newly built highways and other demolition projects had leveled predominantly African American neighborhoods and business districts, displacing more than 40,000 people.



Construction Watchers, Detroit, Michigan, 1960 (printed 2004)
Gelatin silver print; 11 15/16 x 18 1/8 in.
Gift of the artist Russ Marshall, DIA No. 2012.148



Detroit Newsstand at Campus Martius, 1959 (printed 2004)
Gelatin silver print; 11 11/16 × 18 1/8 in.
Gift of the artist Russ Marshall, DIA No. 2012.149

MICHIGAN CENTRAL STATION

Michigan Central Station is one of the most photographed places in Detroit. Vacant for 30 years, it has been used as a symbol of decline and decay. But Russ Marshall offers a different view.

Lunch Counter (1959) suggests a bustling yet transient place. Thousands of travelers crossed paths here briefly before moving on to their next destination.

Returning in 1987, Marshall captured ornate architectural details, many of which were stripped away in the years after the station's closure. These interiors speak to another era in the otherwise empty and unused station.

In 1988, the last train left Michigan Central. Redevelopment is underway.





Michigan Central Train Depot, Lunch Counter, Detroit, Michigan, 1959 (printed 2012)
Gelatin silver print; 12 × 8 in.
Gift of the artist Russ Marshall, DIA No. 2015.142

DETROIT'S EASTERN MARKET

An apple farmer appears to haggle with a customer over produce.

Busy lunch counter workers sling sandwiches for hungry marketgoers.

Hog farmers prepare meat for their next buyer.

Scenes like these were typical when Marshall photographed Detroit's bustling Eastern Market on a chilly day in 1980. It's one of the largest open-air markets in the United States, and vendors and customers from around the region have relied on it to sell and purchase goods since 1891. Today, Eastern Market sees more than 40,000 visitors each weekend.





Sandy's Lunch Counter, Gratiot Market,
Detroit Eastern Market, 1980 (printed 2013)
Gelatin silver print; 8 x 12 in.
Gift of the artist Russ Marshall, DIA No. 20115.174



Hog Farmers 3, Detroit Eastern Market, 1980 (printed 2013)
Gelatin silver print; 12 × 8 in.
Gift of the artist Russ Marshall, DIA No. 2015.181

OBSERVING PUBLIC LIFE

1960s–1980s

Russ Marshall found inspiration in factories and city streets, but he also photographed people in social settings: hippies on Belle Isle, business leaders and socialites at exclusive events. The images in this section express both the ease and awkwardness of social settings, and convey the humor found in public life people are caught unawares, people watching, or gossiping.

Mink, 1987 (printed 2003)
Gelatin silver print; 8 × 8 in.
Gift of the artist Russ Marshall, DIA No. 2015.250



A SYMPHONY FOR DETROITERS

In 1984, Russ Marshall photographed social events surrounding the arrival of acclaimed German conductor Günther Herbig to the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. Herbig reinvigorated and reestablished Detroit's classical music reputation during a challenging economic time for the city and the orchestra.

In *Detroit Symphony Orchestra Reception*, a young woman appears contemplative during a party at the home of Judge Damon Keith, a civil rights activist and arts supporter. In *Opening Night*, Marshall caught philanthropist and arts patron Christine Germack (center) unawares while surrounded by other concertgoers.

Marshall's photographs capture some of the social dynamics of high-society Detroiters.



Top: *Detroit Symphony Orchestra Reception For Günther Herbig At Judge Damon Keith Residence*, 1984 (printed 2003)
Gelatin silver print; 11 5/8 x 17 7/8 in.
Gift of the artist Russ Marshall, DIA No. 2012.152

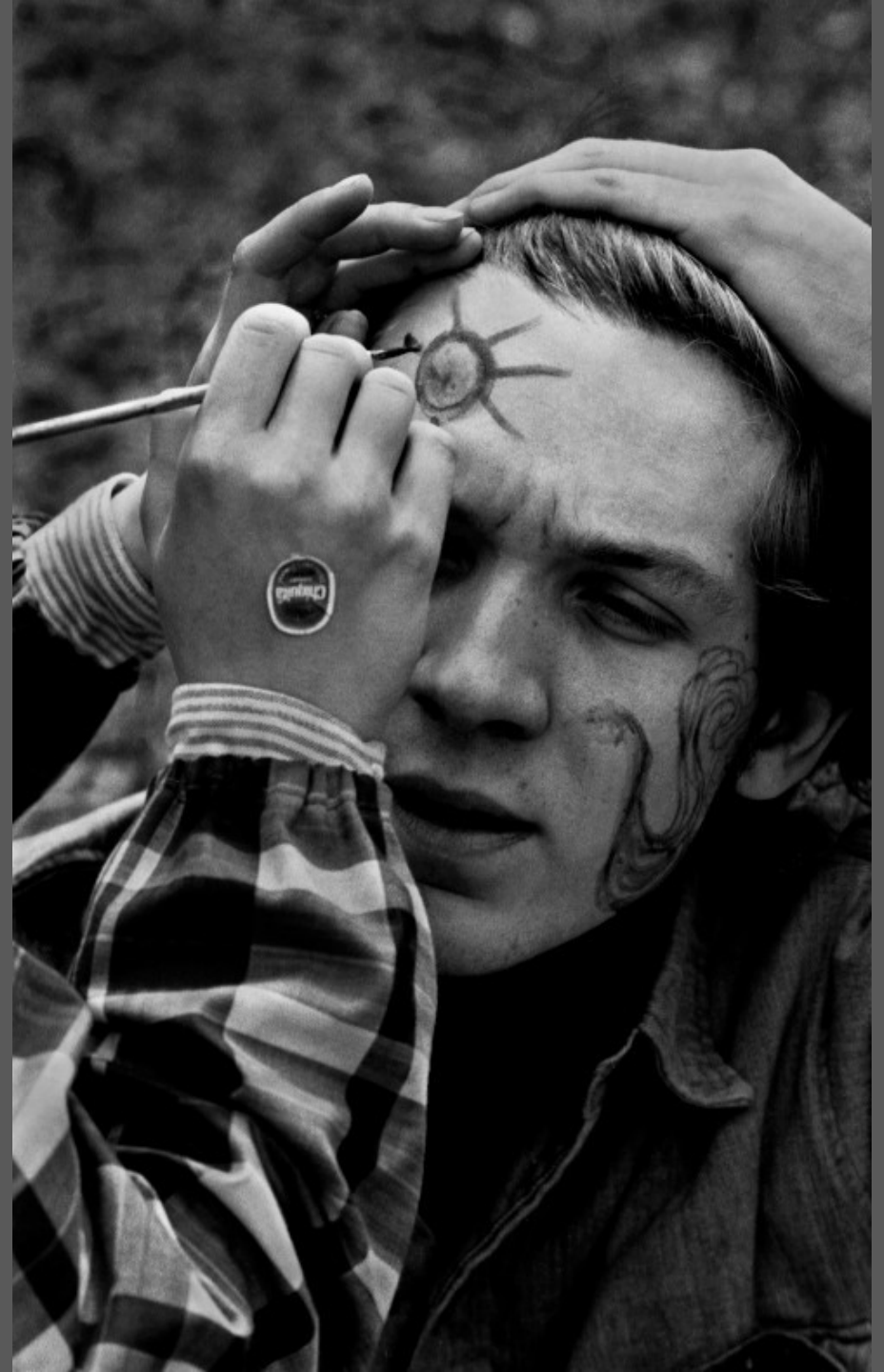
Bottom: *Opening Night, Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Detroit*, 1984 (printed 2003)
Gelatin silver print; 11 11/16 x 17 7/8 in.
Gift of the artist Russ Marshall, DIA No. 2012.168

BELLE ISLE LOVE-IN (1967)

On April 30, 1967, Marshall observed thousands on Detroit's Belle Isle during a Love-In. His photographs capture the spirit of the time, which was fueled by the anti-war movement and a rejection of mainstream culture. Nearby, look for some visual symbols of the movement: prayer beads, "love" balloons, and references to psychedelic drugs.

Artists, writers, and musicians from Trans-Love Energies organized Detroit's Love-In. Many events that occurred around the U.S. during what was called the "Summer of Love." After hours of music, food, meditation—and reportedly, illegal substances—Detroit's event ended abruptly when armed police officers dispersed the crowd.





Face Painting, Love-In at Belle Isle, Detroit, Michigan, 1967 (printed 2018)
Dye-based inkjet print; 18 × 10 1/4 in.
Gift of the artist Russ Marshall, DIA No. T2019.370



Becoming Dylan, Love-In at Belle Isle, Detroit, Michigan, 1967 (printed 2018)
Dye-based inkjet print; 18 × 10 1/4 in.
Gift of the artist Russ Marshall, DIA No. T2019.368

TRIBUTE TO THE WORKER

From 1975 to 2005, Russ Marshall worked as a freelance photographer for labor and trade union magazines. His photographs emphasized the dignity of the workers and captured aspects of their daily routines and surroundings to reveal the humanity behind manufacturing.

Marshall witnessed rapid changes to the automotive industry. Many factories he photographed closed soon after. Of his work, Marshall says “I knew and sensed over time that these jobs and these workers and these factories would someday be gone; replaced by something or nothing. It wasn't lost on me that I had this opportunity to document and preserve the fact that these workers did exist at this time and in this place.” (HuffPost, 2012)

Ms. USA, Ford Motor Co., Batavia, Ohio, 1985 (printed 1997)
Gelatin silver print; 18 5/16 × 14 1/2 in.
Gift of the artist Russ Marshall, DIA No. 2012.166





*Line Assemblers, Ford Rouge Engine Assembly Plant,
Dearborn, Michigan, 1985 (printed 1999)
Gelatin silver print; 14 1/2 × 18 in.
Gift of the artist Russ Marshall, DIA No. 2012.42*



*Press Operators, GM Fisher Body Trim Plant,
Fort Street, Detroit, Michigan, 1982 (printed 1997)
Gelatin silver print; 14 3/8 × 19 3/8 in.
Museum Purchase, Albert and Peggy de Salle Charitable Trust,
DIA No. 2012.28*



Detroit Steel Plant Laborers, 1979 (printed 1997)
Gelatin silver print; 18 3/8 × 17 7/16 in.
Gift of the artist Russ Marshall, DIA No. 2012.151



Kernie Easterday used the tiny parts at his fingertips to assemble more than 100 soldering irons each day. Marshall photographed him while on assignment for *Solidarity*, a publication of the United Auto Workers Union (UAW). Easterday, a member of UAW Local 985, told Marshall his perspective on the union:

“Our average wage is \$8 an hour, we get health care, optical, dental, a pension, and other benefits. Unions keep people together and help make sure we get a fair day's wage for a fair day's work.”

Assembler, American Beauty Electric Irons, Detroit, 1993 (printed in 1997)
Gelatin silver print; 14 3/8 x 18 3/8 in.
Gift of the artist Russ Marshall. DIA No. 2012.45



Fisher Body Trim Plant, Fort St., Detroit, Michigan, 1982 (printed 2018)
Dye-based inkjet print; 9 × 6 1/8 in.
Gift of the artist Russ Marshall, DIA No. T2019.399



*Skilled Tradesmen, Ford Motor Company
Rouge Engine Plant, Dearborn, Michigan, 1985 (printed 1997)
Gelatin silver print; 14 7/16 × 18 3/8 in.
Gift of the artist Russ Marshall, DIA No. 2012.173*



*Striker, Detroit Coke Corp., Zug Island,
Detroit, Michigan, 1986 (printed 2000)*
Gelatin silver print; 4 3/16 x 18 3/16 in.
Gift of the artist Russ Marshall, DIA No. 2012.174

Hands clasped and listening intently, a couple attends a meeting of Local 1776, the United Auto Workers branch that represented employees at Willow Run Assembly. The U.S. military hat in the man's hand suggests he is a veteran.

When Marshall took this photograph, General Motors had recently announced that the plant would close. The couple's troubled faces emphasize the impact of the closure on 4,000 employees. According to the New York Times, Local 1776 President Bob Harlow prepared for the closure by arranging job retraining sessions and mental health support.





Buick Engine Assembly Line, GM Fisher Body Plant, Flint, Michigan, 1985 (printed 2018)
Dye-based inkjet print; 9 × 6 1/2 in.
Gift of the artist Russ Marshall, DIA No. T2019.401

THE SOUNDS OF DETROIT

Nearby, images of passionate performers evoke the vibrant ambiance of Detroit's iconic bars, nightclubs, and festivals. Marshall's photographs create an important record of legends who performed in Detroit and made it their home.

Jazz and blues have been at the heart of Detroit entertainment since the 1920s. Though some venues shown here have closed, others—like Baker's Keyboard Lounge and the annual Jazz Festival—remain important places of creativity, employment, and leisure.

LaMonte Hamilton at the Vanity Ball Room, Detroit, Michigan, 1982 (printed 1994)
Gelatin silver print; 12 × 9 in.
Gift of the artist Russ Marshall, DIA No. 2015.187



“I got interested in Jazz because in high school, my mom took me downtown to the Drum Shop on Broadway Street [in Detroit] to pick out a snare drum for my Christmas gift...And all through high school, I was alone in this interest... So it was natural for me to photograph what I loved.”

—Russ Marshall, DIA interview, 2019

Dixie Belle, Singer with the Wolverine Dixieland Jazz Band at the Jazz Center, Detroit, Michigan, 1979 (printed 2013). Gelatin silver print; 12 × 8 in. Gift of the artist Russ Marshall. DIA No. 2015.185



“Music is an art form of communication that transcends race, gender, nation, and language. I feel a great privilege to be a part of it. It's wonderful to bring people joy.”

—Don Mayberry,
Solidarity magazine, 1993

Beads of sweat across bassist Don Mayberry's forehead reveal the intensity of the performance shown here. The image appeared in *Solidarity*, a magazine that emphasized the shared experiences and concerns of union workers across many industries. Mayberry's feature explored how unions helped musicians like him know their music had been used by someone else and ensured they were paid for their work.





First Annual Detroit Blues Festival, Detroit, Michigan, 1977 (printed 2019)

Dye-based inkjet print; 12 × 18 1/2 in.

Gift of the artist Russ Marshall, DIA No. T2019.388



Lil' Jr. Cannaday, Detroit Blues Festival, Detroit, Michigan, 1979 (printed 2019)
Dye-based inkjet print; 12 1/2 × 8 1/4 in.
Gift of the artist Russ Marshall, DIA No. T2019.392

Here, Marshall photographed Blues singer Sippie Wallace (1898—1986) at the first annual Montreux Detroit Jazz Festival, known today as the Detroit International Jazz Festival. Wallace started her career in Chicago in the 1920s and later moved to Detroit and became a church organist and singer. Her legacy grew globally until her death.

In the 1980s, riverfront festivals like the Jazz Festival reinvigorated Detroit and drew international attention to its prestigious music scene. Today, the Jazz Festival is considered one of the largest free jazz festivals in the world.



Sippie Wallace, Montreux Detroit Jazz Festival, Detroit, 1980 (printed 1994)

Gelatin silver print; 14 1/2 × 18 5/8 in.

Gift of the artist Russ Marshall, DIA No. T2019.393

TURNING HIS LENS TOWARD EUROPE: 1987–1990

In the 1980s and '90s, major events dramatically shifted society and politics in Europe. These included:

- Revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe that ended communist control
- Demolition of the Berlin Wall that divided Germany for 28 years
- The collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War (1947—1991)

Against this backdrop, Marshall travelled to Europe, sometimes on assignment for a U.S. based labor union. He photographed in streets and alleys, in parks and public squares, and on public transport. His photographs explore everyday people's routines and activities, as well as the challenges brought about by the changes happening around them.



EXPOSING THE BERLIN WALL

Marshall took these images along the Berlin Wall, which divided East and West Berlin, shortly before Germany was reunified and the wall was demolished. Notice that the wall is worn away, exposing interior reinforcements. Germans had slowly chipped away at the wall—some in anger, others for souvenirs. At center, a child holds a piece of it.

At bottom left, Marshall photographed from where some of the wall was already torn down, capturing East Germany to the left. The area shown—a trench without vegetation—was known by locals as the “death corridor” because it was heavily guarded to prevent people from leaving.





Genevieve and Boris, E. Berlin, East Germany, 1990 (printed 2018)
Dye-based inkjet print; 12 × 16 1/8 in.
Gift of the artist Russ Marshall, DIA No. T2019.417



Guarding Lenin, Budapest, Hungary, 1989 (printed 2018)
Dye-based inkjet print; 12 × 16 1/8 in.
Gift of the artist Russ Marshall, DIA No. T2019.408



The blankets, bottles, and newspapers in the makeshift shelter convey none of the wealth suggested by the British Petroleum advertisement in the background. For Marshall, this photograph suggests the effects of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's policies, which favored corporate interests and sold public housing.

The title refers to the writing scrawled on the concrete. Perhaps Sandra took shelter under this bridge. Or maybe—like the jogger and bus—Sandra just passed through.

Sandra Woze Here, Waterloo Bridge Over the Thames, London, England, 1989 (printed 2018)
Dye-based inkjet print; 12 x 16 in.
Gift of the artist Russ Marshall, DIA No. T2019.415

“I work two ways. At times I wade into an oncoming crowd with the Nikon FM camera plastered against my face, shooting the swiftly changing scene on instinct.

At other times, I’m more calculating, planting myself before a pertinent scene, waiting for the people to arrange themselves in my viewfinder as they pass through. In this latter mode I’m more anticipatory than instinctive—more deliberate than spontaneous.”

—Russ Marshall, *Outtakes* magazine, 1994



Brixton Tube Station, London, England, 1989 (printed 2018)
Dye-based inkjet print; 12 x 16 1/8.
Gift of the artist Russ Marshall, DIA No. T2019.410



SHARE IT

Many of Russ Marshall's subjects lived through moments of profound change that affected the ways they worked and lived their lives.

How did you adapt and overcome when faced with changes beyond your control?

Share your experience

Via text at: 313.217.3690

or online at: link.dia.org/R

Responses will be shared on a monitor in the DIA's DeSalle Gallery of Photography.



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