

ANDREW MOORE

MAKING HISTORY

SELECTED PHOTOGRAPHS

1980 - 2010

MAKING HISTORY

Under a bright, cotton-cloud sky, the rooftop of a New Jersey casino heads for the state of nature and stalls out at primitive art. Slathered in tar and rustproof paint, it looks only vaguely like architecture, the way a bear enclosure at the zoo resembles a cave. Tall letters peeking through the paint read “OW”; their reflection in a weed-choked puddle replies, “OM.”

Andrew Moore photographs the layered, impure theater of manmade time.

In the home of Cuba’s former emissary to the Vatican, a green office is inhabited by four portraits. Two of them, a faded Cubist watercolor and an Academic chalk rendering, hang framed in corners of the room. In a larger-than-lifesize photograph above the window, Che Guevara flashes a matinee idol’s grin. On the desk, facing a well-thumbed Russian-Spanish dictionary, stands a white figurine of president Machado, who died under anaesthesia in Miami Beach two decades before the revolution.

A writer charged with describing the past enjoys the privilege of invoking things that are

no longer available to the senses: cities turned to dust, all the breakfasts of the Czar, the bones of vanished generations. For a photographer, the past exists only in the form of things present. Bullet holes expose rebar in the walls of a Bosnian housing complex. A naval outpost of the Czar tips gently into the encroaching Baltic. A trepanned human skull sits on a high shelf in the souvenir-crammed apartment of a Crimean bear trainer.

Even if the writer decides to imitate a camera by enumerating details in a scene, those details will need to assume a fixed sequence: first the skull, then the fruit and cheese laid out on the table below, lastly the buffalo horn and tennis racket hanging on the wall. What writing can’t recreate is the way the present perpetually assembles energies that have come to it from all over the past. The present is a lens that advances through time, concentrating stories momentarily, tenuously, before they scatter.

Near the bullet holes—records of the four-year siege of Sarajevo—hangs laundry that has been drying a few hours. Out front, a moped has just been parked. Gypsy kids, roughly the



Pink Chambers, Noto Sicily 2004

age of the bullet holes, watch a photographer at work. In the distance, two dogs stand on a shattered balcony from which a sapling sprouts, haloed by the year's first spring leaves. Every surface in the scene is touched on one side by late afternoon sun.

"Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past." Andrew Moore takes the economic and political circumstances Marx had in mind and nests them within the circumstances of natural history: Detroit's vines and mosses, the patient sands of Dubai, dusk light in New York. Hubert Robert painted shepherds living amid the tall leafy ruins of the Roman Campagna. Moore has photographed pedicabs at rest under the open sky inside Havana's crumbling Teatro Campo Amor, and Japanese compact cars parked before the proscenium of Detroit's Michigan Theater. Above them vaults a ceiling that looks imported from Hadrian's Villa.

Lincoln Kirstein called Walker Evans "a surgeon operating on the fluid body of time." To call the photographer a surgeon was a way

of avoiding other suspect, maudlin labels, like poet. Wary of sentimentality, the great modern American photographers did all they could to convert scenes they found in the public realm into private puzzles. Evans's insistently off-center compositions, Robert Frank's palette of glare and grain, Stephen Shore's contemplative color fields, leave us at an abstract remove from history. Moore takes an interest in history of a public and legible kind. His pictures, in their directness and acuity, are not about his experience of places. They are about what an attunement to experience has to tell us about places that define the present.

Times Square, 1996, night. Beneath the unlettered marquee of a shuttered cinema, what was once a palatial ticket lobby is a lit-up shop promising porn at "closeout prices." Atop the marquee, with the theater's shadowy beaux-arts façade for a backdrop, cursive red neon letters spell: Empire.

Joel Smith, Curator of Photography
Princeton University Art Museum



Palace Theater, Gary Indiana 2008





Reading Room, Detroit 2009



Circular Lobby, United Artist Theater, Detroit 2008



7.

Ballroom, Lee Plaza Hotel, Detroit 2008



Merman Graffito, Fisher Body Plant, Detroit 2009

Waiting Room, Michigan Central Station, Detroit 2008





Masonic Office, New Orleans 1980



The Rouge, Dearborn, Michigan 2008



Model T Headquarters, Highland Park, Michigan 2009



Michigan Theater, Detroit 2008



Aurora, Detroit 2008



Librarian's Office, Detroit 2009



Vanity Ballroom, Detroit 2008



Organ Screen, United Artist Theater, Detroit 2008

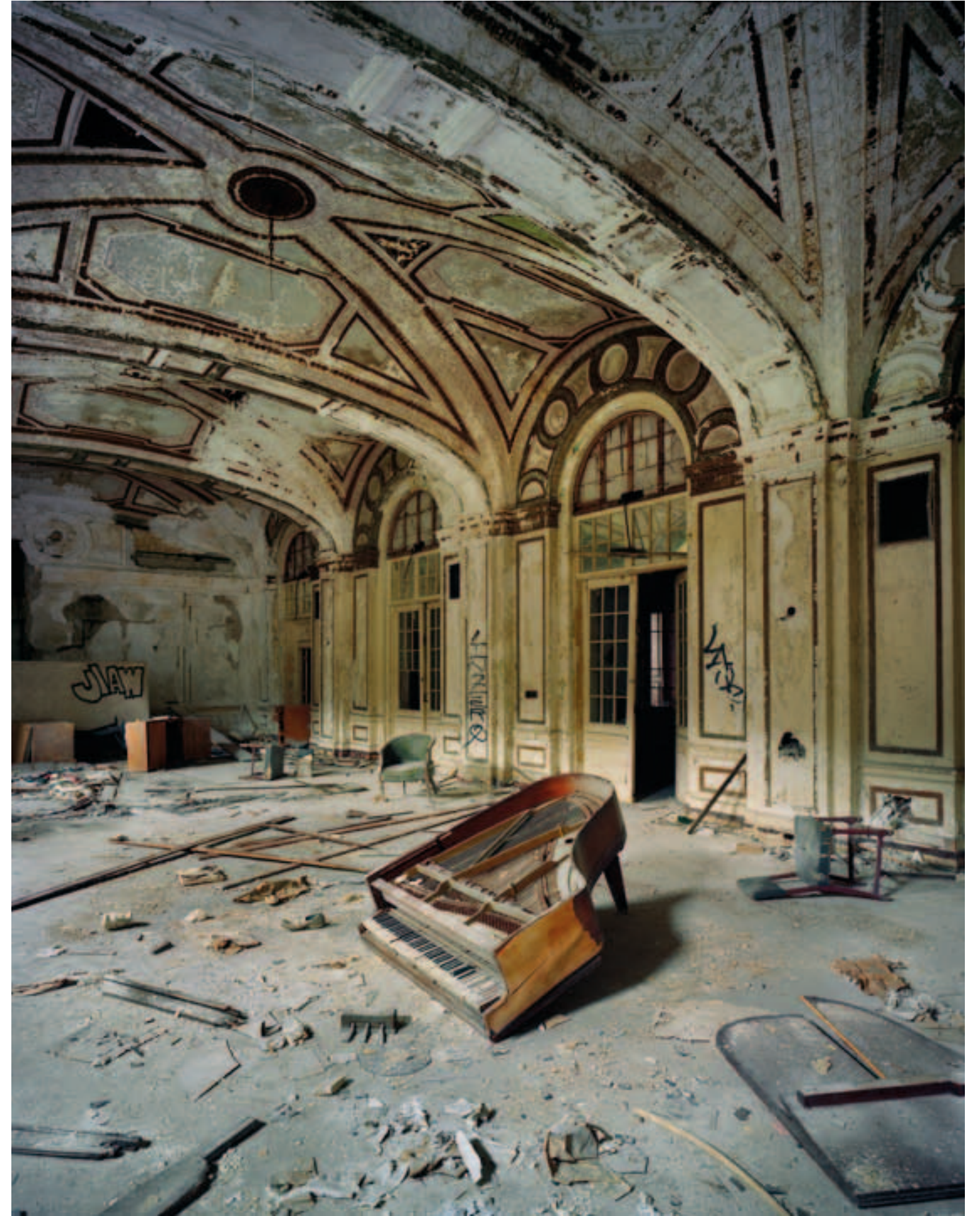


Locomotive Workers' Theater, Ulan Ude, Russia 2003



Peacock Alley, Detroit 2008

Piano, Lee Plaza Hotel, Detroit 2009





Dormitorio de Luisa y María, Havana 1999



Matanzas, Cuba 1999



La Chimenea, Havana 1998



Calle Industria, Havana 1998



Cuarto en El Cerro, Havana 1999



Teatro Campoamor, Vista Este, Havana 1999



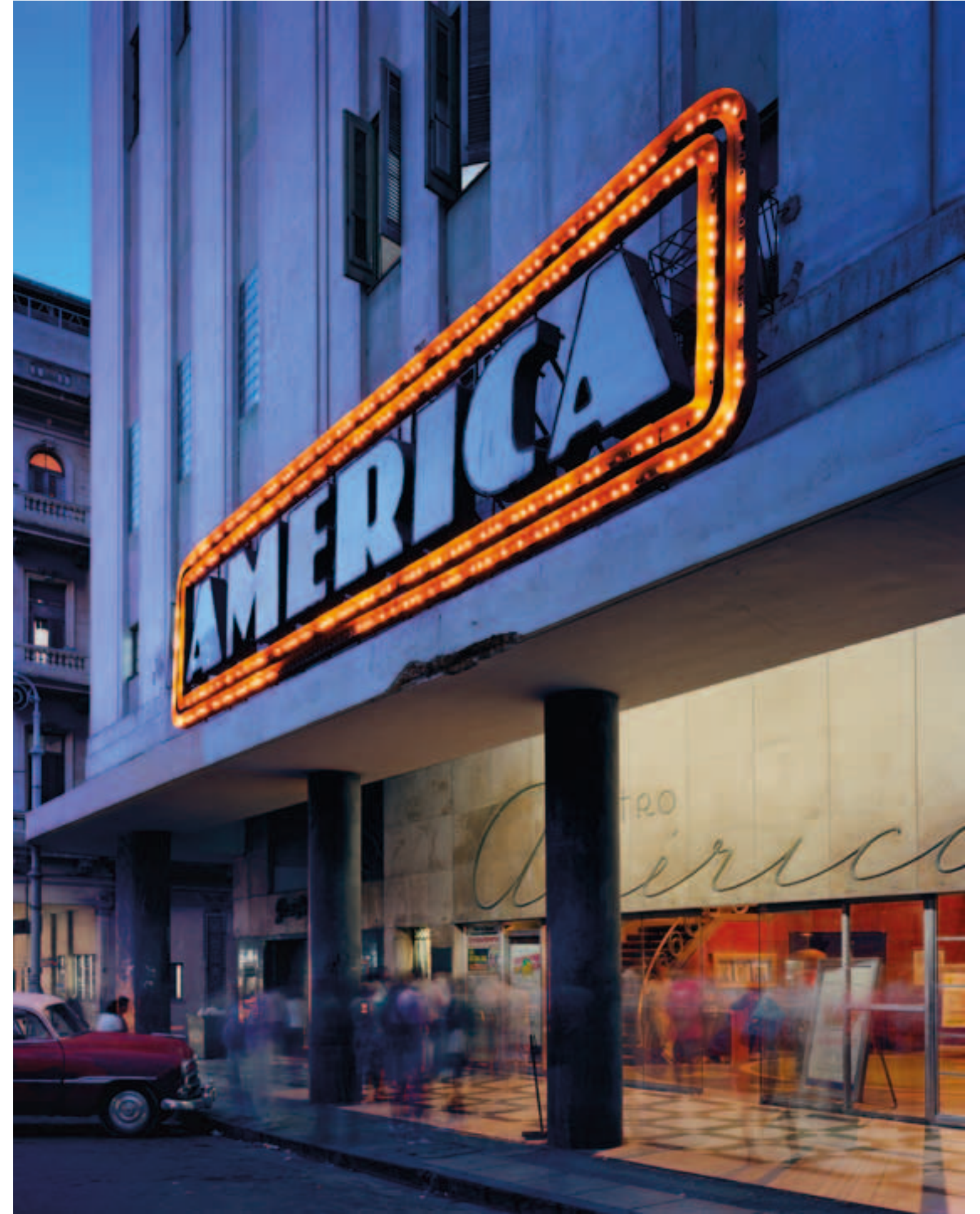


Wreck, Jibarra, Cuba 2008



Vedado Azul, Havana 2001

Teatro America, Havana 2000





Despacho de Portuondo, Havana 2000



En Casa con Los Alonso, Havana 1999



Margarita, Havana 1999



Teatro Campoamor, Vista Oeste, Havana 1999

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+31 (0)20 627 28 32
info@reflexamsterdam.com