

# “Heart of the South Bronx: Trades” by Martine Fougeron

Ongoing since 2011, Bronx Trades is a hybrid art project / document about the active industries in the Bronx, NY neighborhoods of Port Morris and Hunts Point, including but not limited to: steel, metal recycling, baking, hand-made bedding, and wooden boat making. Martine has structured her project with four kinds of images: portrait, landscape, environment, & abstract. It has been exhibited in The Bronx and used in the community for youth instruction about trades, and will take the form of outdoor murals. Some of the industries Martine brings to us are centuries-old and some are decidedly 21st century.

But no matter their era, the fact that they are operating in the South-Bronx is what makes this project such a happy revelation. For Bronx Trades shows us that thing-making, fossil fuel storage, art--even artisanal baking--persist as thriving businesses in NYC. Some of these things are even exported to China. Martine recognizes the beauty in the forms that make up the industries she's pursuing. In fact, her photos affirm both the artistry and every-day heroics of intrepid people whose work entails craft and bodily labor.

- Anna Van Lenten



2013. Abad Auto Parts in Hunts Point was founded by Oscar Senior. Abad's shop is big and spectacular, with an ochre rooftop terrace and auto lights displayed as sculpture installations for residents and school kids to see. The terrace has fabulous views of Hunts Point and the Bronx River.



2013. At THE POINT's campus youth are taught organic gardening, an art container and an artist's collective thrive, the legendary graffiti artists TAT's CRU painted the mural here, Rocking the Boat teaches local kids wooden boat making and behind it, SIMS Recycling recycles all the area's metals & plastics, sent by barge to NJ. Brooklyn.



2014. Recalling a Paeolithic cave wall, these anonymous, paint-dipped hands were imprinted by a worker at Navish Bronx Recycling, a scrap metal yard. Amidst barbed wire semi-enclosures, workers receive and compress scrap metals, and send them off--mostly to China.



2013. Castle Oil. There are about 15 bright-green liquefied storage tanks by the river in Port Morris. Each time I tried to shoot them from the street, a guard would say, "You are on federal land and you cannot photograph." One very cold day the guards were a bit off guard and I was able to get the photograph.



2012. This is the son of a worker who has been at Elite Signs for 20 years. Elite specializes in custom signs for Yankee Stadium and the surrounding food centers. As old printers would have done, they create huge signs, banners, letterings, and graphics in acrylic or aluminum. These signs adorn huge businesses or small delis. They make our urban landscape.



2014. A reflection of the elevator at Colgate Scaffolding, a family-owned and -operated business that puts up scaffolding in such places as Yonkers City Hall, Saint Patrick's Cathedral, and the Chrysler Building. Its factory is where all the scaffoldings are repaired, repainted, and stored. And it's where employees are trained.



2014. Specialty Steel of America is a custom fabricator of plate and structural steel. Used for special repairs of appliances and cars but also more poetically for some renowned artists who create their steel structures here for Burning Man... which is what really excites the creative owner Wilhem Warren.



2014. Midland Steel, owned by the Allen family, is a beautiful brick factory, with 50+ foot ceilings. Servicing the eastern seaboard, it will 'level' and 'slitter' the rolled coils, which weigh 20,000-50,000 pounds. Steel was one of the first industries in in Hunts Point. As the city grew higher so did its demand for steel.



2013. Gloves, as grey as the steel they carve. Worn out to perfection by months and years of a worker's hands, at rest. Gloves are the essential. Tools the extension. Gloves and tools are always present and different in every trade.



2012. Decorator and head calligrapher Nancy Reyes has been working at Valencia Bakery in the industrial section of Hunts Point for 23 years. On her T-shirt is the name of her hometown in Puerto Rico, where most of the workers in this small, family-owned business hail. Valencia opened in 1948.



2013. American Auto Wrecking, is in a part of Hunts Point that is like a massive auto parts display. One feels that with the corrugated palisades and the barbed wire, one is in the far west or a Third World Country. But in reality it is exactly 6 miles from the Metropolitan Museum.

Martine Fougeron, Parisian-born, is a fine art photographer based in New York since 1996. Her work has been exhibited internationally and is held in major public and private collections. With incisive images of life and culture in NYC, she is a frequent contributor to The New Yorker, The New York Times Sunday Magazine, The Wall Street Journal, and New York Magazine. Fougeron has worked as a photographer since 2006 when she graduated from ICP; she is now on the faculty there. Prior to that, she had a successful career in the fragrance industry, where she was the "nose of the noses" of 20 world-class perfumers. Her first monograph 'Teen Tribe' will be published by Steidl in 2015.