

# LARS R. SAMUELSSON

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4663 Europa Trail N, Hugo MN 55038 - (651) 334-7704 - lrsamuelsson@icloud.com - larsrsamuelsson.com

## SAINT PAUL SIGHTSEEING

The French photographer Eugene Atget (1857-1927) photographed the overlooked, the unspectacular, the edges and corners of Paris, France. This project is an attempt to follow in Atget's footsteps, but this time the city is Saint Paul, Minnesota.

*Saint Paul Sightseeing* is about those places that we pass by, but never seem to pay any attention to. It's a landscape that exists, but too commonplace to warrant much affection. As an artist, I respond to marginal places that have been left out or simply neglected, spaces where time shows its effects in numerous patterns.

I am drawn to the flawed and mundane. The flawed can tell us many valuable stories about a city. Away from shopping centers with its perfectly arranged parking lots and endless chain stores, Saint Paul has areas with a unique atmosphere that few places can match. Walking through these places when the streets were almost empty was sometimes a surreal experience.

I made these photographs with a cheap and simple plastic camera called Holga. This camera is prone to light leaks and the plastic lens makes images that are less than crisp. Using this camera with all of its defects was a conscious choice. I believe it gives the photographs an extra dimension that further emphasizes my fascination with the flawed and neglected.

Eugene Atget used his photography to document buildings and neighborhoods in those parts of Paris that was soon to be erased. To me, this project has been a strange form of sightseeing where I was interested in finding and exploring something unique about Saint Paul.

