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RELIC BOXES BY
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DETROIT'S DECAY AND IMMINENT RUIN IS A MORBID REALITY FOR MANY AND DIVIDES PEOPLE INTO TWO GROUPS: THOSE WHO STAY TO DWELL WITHIN THE HEART AND THOSE WHO PUSH OUT FURTHER AND FURTHER INTO THE CONCENTRIC SUBURBAN PATTERN, HALOING THE CITY. FOR THOSE LIVING IN THE CITY, THE SCORES OF ABANDONED BUILDINGS HAVE BECOME COMMONPLACE. SILENT NEIGHBORS, THE FAMILIAR ANALOGY OF LIKENING DETROIT TO A GHOST TOWN COULD NOT BE MORE TRUE. BUSINESSES LEFT EN MASSE YEARS AGO AND NATURE HAS SINCE TAKEN OVER. TREES GROW THROUGH ROOFTOPS, DOGS TRAVEL IN PACKS TO SCAVENGE, WHILE A PACKARD RUSTS FOR YEARS IN A LONG VACANT PLANT. DETROIT ARTISTS SCOTT HOCKING AND CLINT SNIDER FORAGE THESE BUILDINGS, ARMED WITH SIMPLE TOOLS - FLAT-HEAD SCREWDRIVERS AND VICE GRIPS - THEY WITHDRAW THE MONUMENTAL SPOILS OF A FORGOTTEN DETROIT. THEIR WORK MAKES REFERENCE TO THE NAMES OF OLD BUILDINGS AS IF POINTS ON AN URBAN TREASURE MAP. THE ITEMS, WHEN GATHERED AND ARRANGED, TAKE ON NEW LIFE. RELICS, HOCKING AND SNIDER'S FIRST COLLABORATION CAME AS PART OF A SERIES OF INSTALLATIONS SPONSORED BY THE DETROIT INSTITUTE OF ARTS CELEBRATING DETROIT'S TRICENTENNIAL. RELICS CONSISTS OF OVER 400 MODULAR WOODEN BOXES SPILING OVER WITH REMNANTS FROM ABANDONED CHURCHES, FACTORIES, HOMES, AND FIELDS. EACH CAREFULLY CONSTRUCTED UNIT ECHOES THEIR CONCEPT STATEMENT: NATURE TAKES APART WHAT WE ONCE STRUGGLED TO ASSEMBLE. THERE IS A THRESHOLD THAT IS HARD TO PINPOINT, WHEN THE MAN-MADE OBJECT BECOMES NATURE AGAIN. THE SIDEWALKS CRACK AND SPLIT WITH PLANTS AND ANTHILLS, RUST RUNS CONTINUALLY DOWN STREET SIGNS, FLAKES OF PAINT STRATIFY BRICK WALLS, AND WOOD STRUCTURES WARP AND BUCKLE FROM THE ELEMENTS. DETROIT IS THIS TRANSITION.