

American Made:

Stories from UAW Local 602



**What You Drive
Drives America!**

Eighty Eight

American Made: Stories from UAW Local 602

November 7-30
Otherwise Gallery
1210 Turner St., Lansing, MI 48906

Opening reception: Sunday, November 7, 1-5 pm
(during First Sunday Gallery Walk)

The Residential College in the Arts and Humanities at MSU and the Michigan Institute for Contemporary Art collaborate in the opening of this student-run and designed exhibition.

American Made: Stories from UAW Local 602 is the product of a collaborative project between students enrolled in the RCAH 291 creative workshop on “The Power of Photography” and members of the United Auto Workers Local 602 in Spring 2010.

The project was inspired by the work of Dorothea Lange, and other photographers employed by the Farm Security Administration of the U.S. government, who used the camera to educate the populous about the plight of rural farmers during The Great Depression of the 1930s, and the desire to learn more about how the recent economic recession and restructuring of General Motors has impacted the lives of auto workers in our community.

To prepare for this project, over the spring semester, students received technical training in photographic practices, including elements of composition, portraiture, and documentary photography, and experimented with the combination of text and image, digital editing, darkroom printing, and collage techniques.

To better familiarize themselves with the history of the Lansing automotive industry and the current concerns of UAW members, the students read several issues of the UAW Local 602 online newsletter *Life on the Line* and chapters from Lisa Fine’s book, *The Story of Reo Joe: Work, Kin, and Community in Autotown U.S.A.*, which was augmented by an informative presentation given by doctoral student, Emily Altimare, on her study of the GM Delta Township plant. Students then attended a UAW Local 602 meeting and toured the GM plant to acquaint themselves with some of its members and broaden their experience.

Afterward, each student met with a volunteer from the Local 602 who was interested to share their story and present a different perspective to that provided by national media. These are the stories told in this exhibition – most in the form of image and text that have been transcribed from oral interviews. Two students, inspired by the work of local photographer Jeremy Herliczek, have chosen to exhibit their work in animated presentations at either end of the gallery.

We would like to thank the members of UAW Local 602 for working with us on this project, and for allowing us to share some of their stories with you.

(Photo credit: Ellina Stein)