

## 'Upstate': Tema Stauffer's portrait of a post-industrial city along the Hudson River

Combining poetic landscapes and interiors with portraiture, American fine art photographer [Tema Stauffer](#) explores the visually and historically complex community, culture and architecture of one of the oldest regions in America in her new monograph, "Upstate" ([Daylight Books](#), October 2018). The city of Hudson, on the shores of the upper Hudson River, was the first American city to be chartered after the American Revolution. Incorporated in 1785 to honor Dutch explorer Henry Hudson, it developed rapidly as a thriving whaling and merchant seaport.

After an economic downturn in the early 19th century, Hudson's economy rose during the middle of the century thanks to heavy industries such as iron factories and mills. The Hudson River School — a mid-19th century art movement embodied by a group of landscape painters that included Thomas Cole and Frederic Edwin Church — portrayed the natural beauty of pastoral landscape in the Hudson Valley and themes of discovery, exploration and settlement.

In the 20th century, Hudson's economy suffered during the Great Depression; factories closed and manufacturing jobs were lost. In recent decades, Hudson has experienced new economic growth, revitalization and transformation as a result of the arrival of newcomers from larger cities.

Stauffer's "Upstate" photographs, shot on color film and exquisitely bathed in natural light, lyrically depict ordinary houses, front porches, decaying barns, ruined factories, parked cars, winter branches and evocative landscapes, along with compelling portraits of local residents. Some of her photographs reveal a melancholic atmosphere that permeates the Hudson Valley, where the past still resonates. Others evoke a quiet beauty and mystery emanating from the architecture and artifacts reflecting the industrial era, the rural setting of upstate New York and the shifting economic conditions over time.

In many ways, the ups and downs of Hudson's cultural and economic landscape reflect the experiences of dozens of other post-industrial cities all across America.

Tema Stauffer is a photographer whose work examines the social, economic and cultural landscape of American spaces. Her work has been exhibited at Sasha Wolf and Daniel Cooney galleries in New York as well as at international galleries and institutions including the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery. Her work has been included in numerous print and online publications, including the New York Times, the Chicago Reader and the Village

Voice. In 2010, she was awarded an AOL “25 for 25” grant for innovation in the arts for her work as an artist, curator and writer. She received third prize in the Photo Review Competition 2012 and was a finalist for the Outwin Boochever Portrait Competition 2013. She was also the recipient of the 2012 Women in Photography – LTI/Lightside Individual Project Grant and a 2014 CCNY Darkroom Residency for her documentary portrait series “Paterson,” depicting residents of Paterson, N.J., during the years following the economic crisis. She received her BA from Oberlin College and her master’s degree in photography from the University of Illinois at Chicago. Stauffer is an assistant professor of photography at East Tennessee State University.

There will be an “[Upstate](#)” book signing and reading Oct. 24 at [Reece Museum at East Tennessee State University](#). The exhibition runs Oct. 22-Dec. 14.

Photography by [Tema Stauffer](#)

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