



marc andre brzustowski

“a grand idea”

Solo Show: Gallery on the Grand, Mar 26th – Apr 11th

i came back to bridgeport to paint, to see what had become of the river and the hills and the bridge. i came back to test my memories against twenty years of change. this was my grand idea – to step in the same river twice.

bridgeport was the backdrop for all my first adventures, friendships, loves and losses. the best day could be a lazy paddle down the river – in at west montrose out at the grand hotel – or an afternoon of dead winter half light getting cheap thrills with snow, gravity and a crazy carpet. those were heady days indeed: jr's country kitchen introduced the pizzaburgersub, while the lanc kept us plied with cheap draft, all-u-can-eat pork burgers and baskets of smelt, caught in the river behind the tavern by the ghost of the general, as rumour had it. that was my golden age of bridgeport – when the dutch girl fed my sugar fix, the arcade took my quarters and a bridgeport girl stole my heart.

i learned how to ride a bike on sunbridge crescent. but i got flying lessons on bridge and woolwich streets. i knew every crack in the pavement and every pothole the length of lang, lancaster and carisbrook, the homestretch of my five year daily footway home from bluevale. and bridgeport always meant the bridge: spare, iconic, as permanent a part of the river as it seemed of the bank – an endlessly useful monument from the time of the last depression.

change is history. it divides the present from thoughts of the past. fields and farms, streets and buildings, riverbanks and woodlots, like memories, get overgrown and grown over, naturally and otherwise. so too do these paintings find a natural division, between site and studio, moment and memory, seeing and having seen, being and having been. and if the once grand hotel is gone so that cars will dance where strippers used to, then i guess we'll call that progress.

bridgeport was everything i took for granted. a loving home, the gift of brotherhood and friendship, a place with a view, a river for escaping and a bridge that never burned. and if you can't step in the same river twice, you can still float down as often as you wish.

marc brzustowski
ottawa, march 2009

these paintings were done on site and in studio between august 2008 and march 2009.

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