



**Garden
of
Adam**

ABERDEEN
APARTMENTS

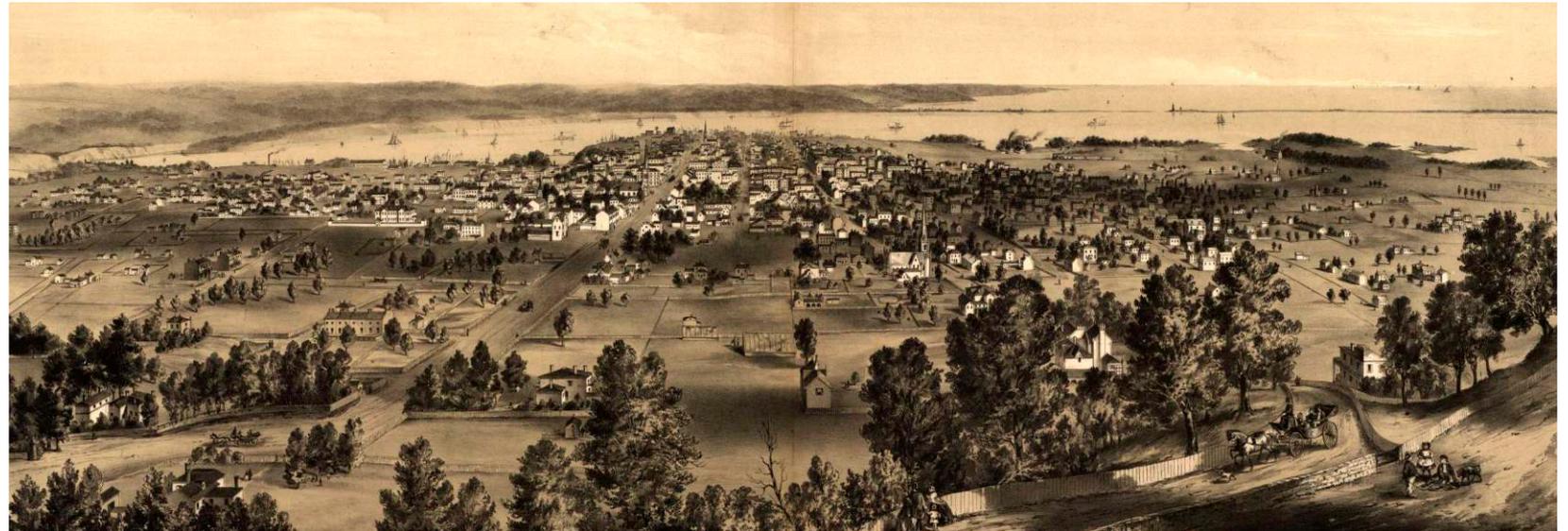
Garden of Adam

Eventually, almost all of us, at some point, look back retrospectively to chart ways of our inevitable future.

Reflecting upon dates in my calendar, I realized that I lived the longest at the same address, and by now longer in Canada than in Poland, where I was born. I faced challenges and joy while being married equally long to Polish and Canadian partners, having Polish and Canadian born daughters. I bring these details up not as my bragging rights but rather as an acknowledgement of the opportunities generously given. Confronting my experiences and forming opinions, however, doesn't get any easier.

The trouble I have is trying to form an outlook about the future with a reasonable degree of confidence. To do so, one has to rely on trusted information sources with easy access to it. Accessing it means today to encounter the barrage of sponsored information and broadcasts of opinionated individuals that flow without an independent filtering process based on verifiable realities. It is discouraging, takes time and also affects everyone in more ways, that we are willing to admit it. For decades visiting art galleries helped me to interpret the unfolding world in front of me. As many of them became the trading stage of emotions rather than ideas, my interest in visiting or showing my work at public venues have subsided.

More by default, rather than a choice, I still rely on a body of visual evidence that I can collect to have a chance to re-think and understand unfolding processes in social ecology. I am not sure yet how the interaction between spheres of social and natural ecologies works. I don't have any doubts that the outcome of this interaction will change lives in circles of my family and friends.



Depiction of Hamilton in 1859 Drawn. by C. S. Rice. Published by Rice & Duncan

Garden of Adam

The seed of this project was the image shown below. I took it during my first years in Hamilton, Ontario when I was getting acquainted with my extended neighbourhoods.

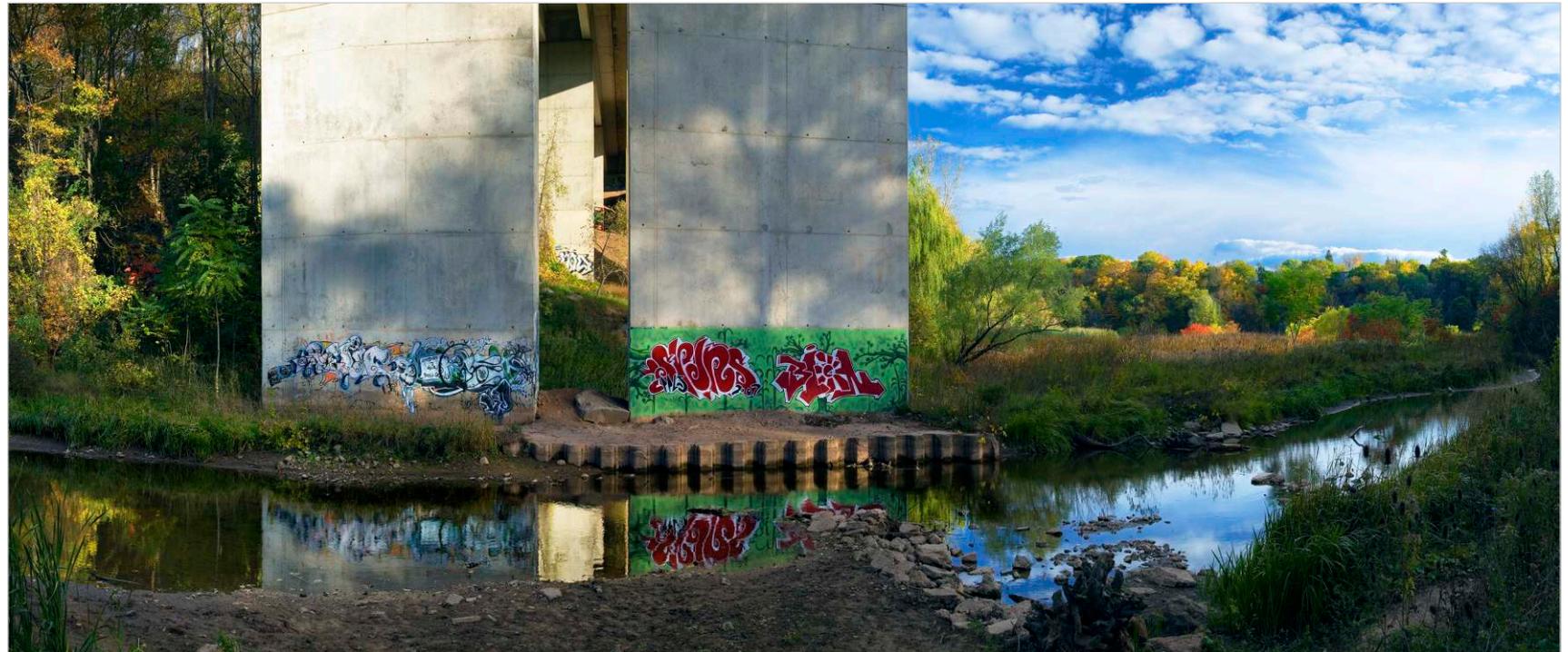
I noticed the graffiti-covered bridge supports and what struck at that time was the attempt to superimpose vivid, boldly expressed graffiti on another one previously painted. This scene somehow set off a string of thoughts about never-ending conflicts within humanity, the confrontation between long-entrenched myths and changing realities.

As we formed larger social groups in our cultural evolution, there was always needs for upgrades of our culture, the essential toolbox we use to deal with the complex structure and changing values of expanding societies. Some tools, or processes, outlived themselves but endured only as they made us feel better, alleviate anxiety or served particular interests. All of it can impair our reasoning and judgments. Additionally, my brain, as I realized too often, appears to be sometimes at war with itself. Developed under quite different conditions in far distant times, it has two hemispheres controlling different parts of my body and two different ways of my reasoning. My brain has trouble in this modern world that is streamlining all processes and their executions. The evidence all around reassures me that it is not only my problem.

Working on the Garden of Time convinced me that “life” evolved and operates within the framework of its paramount guiding principle; to create and maintain the living conditions. Naturally, I began to look around to find the evidence of anything that would provide me with confirmation that there is indeed some kind of modus operandi in our evolving culture.

The painter constructs
The photographer discloses.

Susan Sontag , American author



The city of Hamilton was established in the mid-19th century. Waves of incoming settlers from the British Isles fuelled its explosive growth, and by the 20th century, Hamilton had become the industrial heartland of Canada. Industrial growth attracted new waves of immigrants, mostly Europeans, in the first half of the century, but by the end of it, they were coming from all over the world.

Walking along Barton Street, I might pass houses of worship belonging to several different faiths or denominations. While most newcomers prefer to congregate around their ethnic community centers, the second generation typically becomes fully integrated, bringing new values and with them an opportunity to readdress who we are as a society. This necessitates redefining our social consciousness; old fault lines will no longer apply.



Tiger Town Hamilton 2008 42"x 80"



Neighborhood #4 Hamilton 2015 36"x 24"





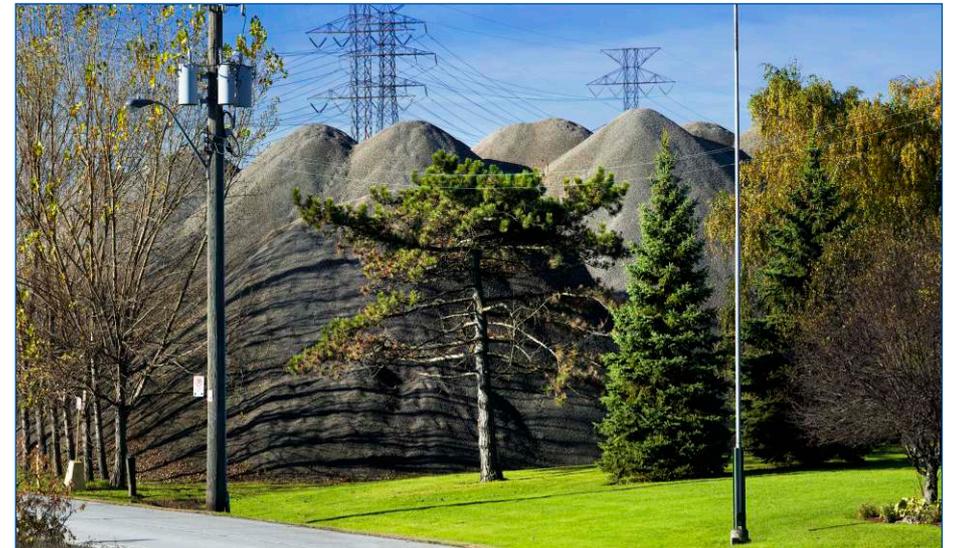
Habitat Hamilton Harbour 2011 33"x 96"



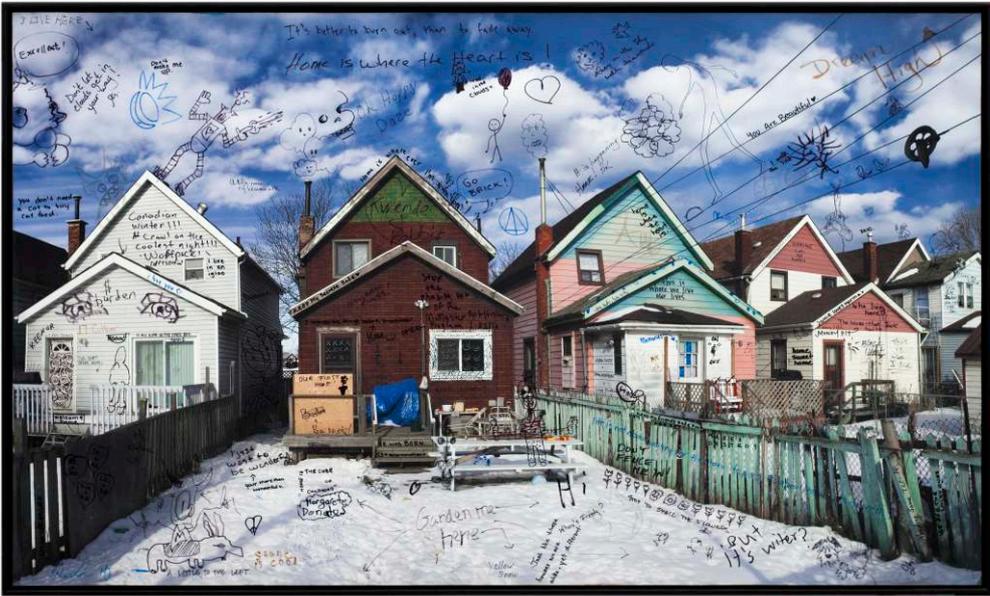
Abandon parking lot in Hamilton, 2012

The city of Hamilton is primed for redevelopment more than almost any other city on this continent. It has the central position within the GTA, the waterfront, the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in the city, the vast tracts of dilapidated industrial and residential lands. However, I realized that it has been in this position for decades. As the city perpetuates the failed already policies of urban sprawl, the prospect of it is more unattainable.

What are the policies about land use, and what are the consequences?



Walk in the Park Hamilton Harbour 2011 22"x 40"



Neighbourhood #1 2008 36"x 60" (photograph after interaction with an audience)

Over the years, I had more questions about Hamilton than I had answers. A decade ago, I conceived a project titled "Intermission." I strived to encapsulate in one only photograph the issue debated at the time in local media. In a parallel project, "I Take My City Back," I show my commentary photographs at local public events. I challenged the audience during these events to write on images of their response to what they saw. I used the help of project manifesto bold statements like: "democracy in art, art is a democracy." I stopped this project going as I was unable to find sympathetic hosts for subsequent showing.

The image "Neighbourhood #1" is the result of the audience interaction with one photograph. This image testifies that the vast majority of participants saw the chance to display anxiety about themselves. The faint drawing of a bicycle above the cloth line was made by the city major at that time. I interpreted this drawing as a balancing act on a tightrope. He lost the next election to win the subsequent one four years later. His winning election platform was remarkable in one regard; there was no commitment to do anything particular. I was not surprised.

Never less, I had a lot to think about the outcome.

The major was elected last time with the support of slightly more than 20% of eligible voters.



Conversation Downtown Hamilton 2012 22"x 36"



Light Rail Project Hamilton 2011 34"x 60"



Countryside on Niagara Escarpment

As I broaden my interests outside of the city, I noticed changes slowly creeping into environments around the Dundas Valley and Niagara Region. They reflect people's preferences, needs or desires rather than natural processes of Nature. Most nurseries are stocked with “re-engineered” shrubs and trees that satisfy our fancy or esthetics. Native plants were being replaced by new varieties with substantial disregard for long-established symbiotic relationships within each specific environment.

Among other things, the invasive plant and insect species were allowed to proliferate with a disregard for their impact on local ecosystems and the long-term consequences.



Nursery in Niagara Region



Oaks Hamilton/Flamborough 2015 32"x 56"



Countryside in Niagara Region



Rural Winter #3 Hamilton/Flamborough 2011 24"x 30"

Without a doubt, the countryside around me has been changed. It merely reflects something deeply ingrained in human culture; the acceptance of correlation between the wealth of an individual and ecological impact his/her life. Ornamental gardens originated in ancient Egypt and since then proliferated among the privileged elites. By now, the definition of the wealthy elite changed and encompasses hundreds of millions around the planet. The meaning of "costs," however, did not; nobody wants to talk about the legacy costs of processes in our society.

My walk or bicycle ride in a country changed by a generous display of "wants & desires."



Winterland #3 Hamilton/Flamborough 2015 26"x 96"

New Years Eve Hamilton/Flamborough 2015 40"x 76"





The Niagara region was traditionally Toronto's fruit and vegetable basket. Now extensive tracts of land are covered by greenhouses with hydroponic systems that could operate equally well if built over old landfill sites. Meantime, a rush to construct licensed marijuana growing operations is taking over the best agricultural land in many parts of Ontario. These businesses typically require enormous energy inputs and then release up to 4.5 kg of CO₂ per 1 gram of saleable product. Produced on the ground under a different climate, the energy input could be rather negligible.

Witnessing processes in the city, and outside of it, compel me to come up with some kind of conclusion. Sadly, I have none.

If one considers “society” as an outcome of the interaction between individuals, it takes place within the framework of social contracts implemented in the course of our history to govern us, the “individuals.” It is not essential, in my view, to know if administrators and lawmakers fall behind requirements needed to update this framework, whether I fail in my capacity to upgrade lawmakers and administrators, or if the “society” knows what it really wants. All that counts is the outcome.

The word we use, “the economy” is meaningless as long as society denies that water, air, land, our “wants and desires” are also the essential components of “costs.” So is the assurance that the food coming from behind these walls is safe enough to put on my table.



With my gradually entrenched sense of nationality, I tried to place my experiences within the context of many current national debates. One of them in this regard was a long conversation I had with a forester in Victoria, BC, who convincingly argued that logging practices in BC, despite all appearances, were on the firm and rational ground. A couple I know, on another hand, built a house to higher environmental standards by using the glued laminated timber (glulam). The whole house was pre-cut, packaged and shipped from Switzerland to central Canada. No prior effort was spared to find a local supplier. The rationale was right; almost a quarter of global CO2 emissions come from the production and transportation of steel and concrete, the standard building materials.

I found myself, like times before, between two arguments. Outside of it, however, was the whole realm of contextual realities, the backdrop of all human reasoning.

For decades, British Columbia timber had restrictions on access to the USA market. Alberta has been strangled by transportation chokepoints limiting access to the world markets for its oil and gas, the ingredients for making laminating adhesives. There is no better place on a planet to mass-produce laminated timber and prefabricated homes than Western Canada and taking credit for the sequestration of carbon. The employment opportunity, value-adding principles or development of new technology in this context look like an afterthought.

Instead, I witnessed war like vocal confrontations where these two provinces quarrelling the “environmental principles” against the “rights to export a natural resource.” In the backdrop, the decades-long fixture, the interprovincial trade barriers still higher than with international markets.



Slush Burn Vancouver Island

Vancouver Island 2012 25"x 70"



I am an emotional being, like most of us, with a propensity to hang on to many entrenched myths that comfort me with a sense of continuity in my life. That is why I don't question or invalidate a myth unless I have to. Many of them were introduced to serve a particular purpose, and yet they got entrenched and endured. The concept of nationality, as an example, emerged, more or less, at the same time as an idea of the Age of Reasons. One meant to serve the interests of the ruling class while the other advocated the idea of questioning and reasoning with everything, including nationality.

It appears that since then, we live in the age of enduring contradictions. I might be willing to believe in ideas like the unlimited growth of resources as long as there is something for me in it. If everyone thinks as I do, however, there is no more competitive advantage. If "we" mean everyone on the planet, we have no choice and to interact along with this shared understanding. Cheating would be single out with consequences attached to it. It is a brave new world, and I should better get used to it.



Promise Hamilton, Ontario 2012 35"x 48"

Silent Night Hamilton, Ontario 2012 26"x 50"

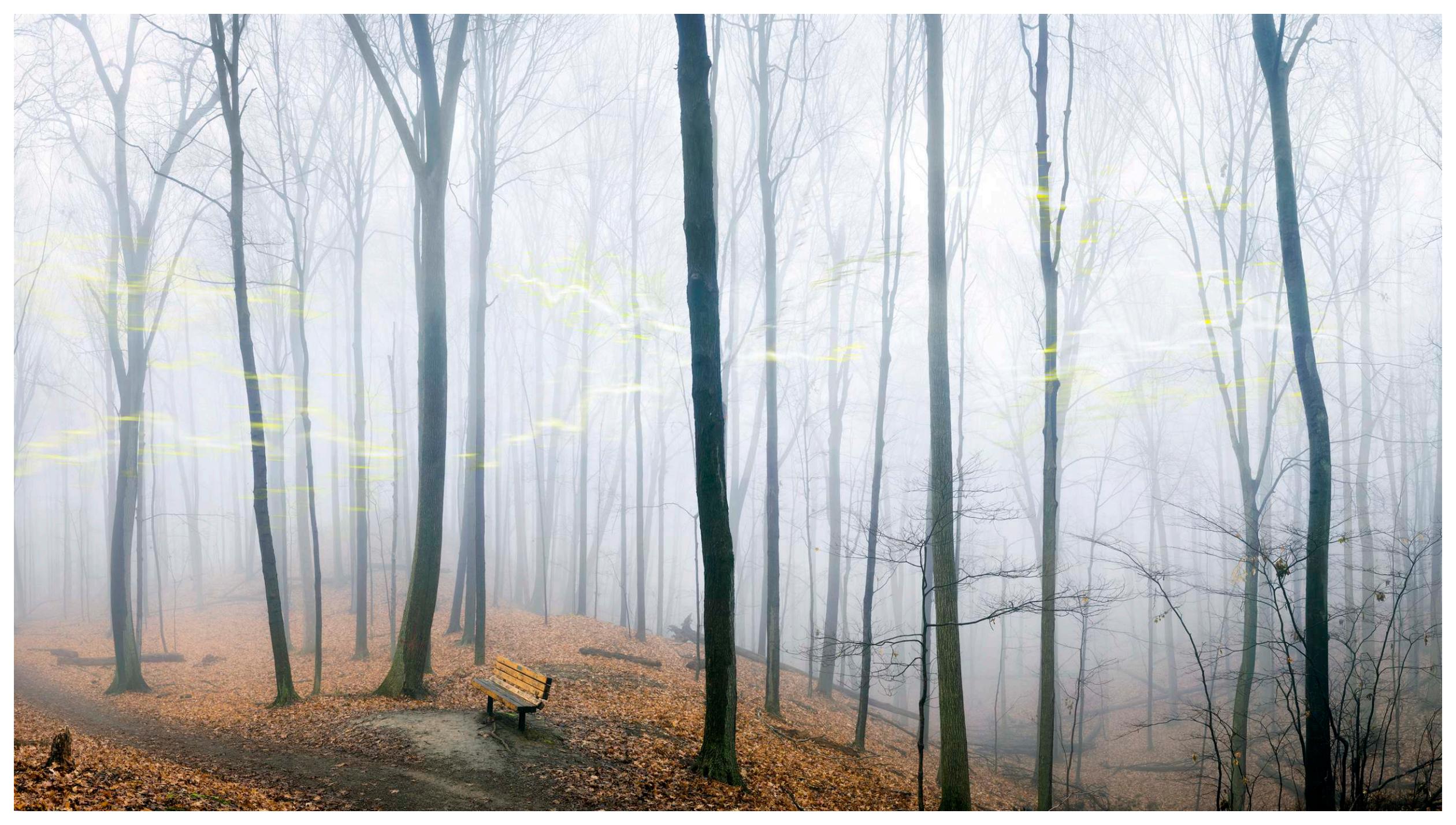
*Next Page : Rendezvous of the Reforestation Trail
Dundas Valley, Photo-base medium 2015 65"x 120"*

Unlike working on the Garden of Time project, from where I could draw a clearly defined conclusion, working Garden of Adam became quite daunting and unfinished task. I think that the reason is the absence of unifying us and commonly accepted framework of our being; the global social consciousness.

The future of our world will depend on the interaction between the spheres of natural and social ecologies.

Ignorance on any side is not an option.







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