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Brooks Cameron Piper
Trinity University, bpiper@trinity.edu

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Detroit Industry and the Problem of Proximity

Beginning in 1932, Diego Rivera painted a series of twenty-seven murals in the interior courtyard of the Detroit Institute of Arts collectively entitled *Detroit Industry* (fig. 1).¹ The murals illustrate a range of regionally inspired themes, depicting scenes of Detroit's factories, Michigan's bountiful harvests, and even the valuable resources that lay underground.² While each panel is capable of provoking meaningful discussion,³ this essay focuses on the lower central panel of the north wall, which portrays the interior of Ford's River Rouge automobile factory, famous at the time for its innovations in efficiency. Rivera was fascinated by the plant's unique industrial design.⁴ Industry, above all was the aspect of Detroit that captivated him. He was not commissioned to paint images of laborers, factories, and machines; rather, he had been recruited to fill the museum's courtyard with images that represented Detroit—images that communicated to museum-goers that the city was capable not only of collecting great art, but also of inspiring it.

Great cities can be instantly associated with the works of art they have inspired. Paris, in our collective imagination conjures up images such as Gustave Caillebotte's *Paris Street, Rainy Day* (fig. 2), Pierre-Auguste Renoir's *Moulin de la Galette* (fig. 3), and Georges Seurat's *La Grande Jatt  * (fig. 4). These images represent Paris as a city whose culture is constructed by

¹ Downs, *Diego Rivera: The Detroit Industry Murals*. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1999), 21.

² *Ibid.*, 66-67.

³ Such as the panel entitled *Vaccination*, which represents forms in a manner evoking images of the Madonna and the baby Jesus in the controversial context of the modern pharmaceutical industry, for more conversation on this and other panels see Max Kozloff's "The Rivera Frescoes of Modern Industry at the Detroit Institute of Arts: Proletarian Art under Capitalist Patronage" *Artforum* 1973.

⁴ Downs, 24.

orderly streets and architecture, lively public squares, and elegant green space. These images were created well over one hundred years ago, and yet because of their popularity, resonance, and widespread accessibility they *still* largely define our conception of Paris, its culture, and its contribution to the world. How would our conception of Paris be altered if instead of these paintings, a wall-sized mural of the city's housing projects and immigrant slums were displayed in the Louvre? To what extent does a city's portrayal in art dictate its place in popular imagination?

Detroit struggled with this question in 1931, having established itself as one of America's greatest industrial centers. Then director of the Detroit Institute of Arts, William Valentiner, wanted a work by a prominent artist that showed the city in a celebratory light, establishing it as a place of cultural significance in the world of high art. This came to fruition when he commissioned Rivera.⁵ This longing to represent the city in a meaningful light persists even today. During the 2012 Super Bowl, a Chrysler commercial aired, narrated by musical artist Eminem. The commercial showed the city of Detroit from the perspective of a moving car, revealing carefully selected glimpses of the city—of abandoned buildings and scenic lakeshore, of billowing smokestacks and some of the city's best-known works of art—including Rivera's mural. This visual reference in such a universally accessible medium reflects the power of the mural to define the city's identity even eighty years after it was commissioned. Eminem concludes the commercial, "We're from America, but this *isn't* New York City, nor the Windy City, nor Sin City, and we're *certainly* no one's emerald city—this is the Motor City, and this is what we do".⁶

⁵ Downs, 27.

⁶ "Imported From Detroit", https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SKL254Y_jtc, Chrysler Eminem Super Bowl Commercial - 2012.

This commercial both establishes itself as its own sort of artistic representation of the city, and asserts the lasting relevance of Rivera's interpretation. Eminem sets "the Motor City" apart from other American urban centers, and this sense of "otherness" is heightened by the phrase "imported from Detroit" which appears on the screen at the completion of the commercial. The "motor city" identity is reinforced by the shot of *Detroit Industry* in the commercial. It validates Eminem's claim, "This is what we do," by suggesting that even the city's representational piece of art is directly connected to the automotive industry. The combination of industry and high art supports the aim of the commercial by showing that Detroit has a history of combining the automobile with sophistication and culture. The commercial both alludes to Detroit's established identity as the Motor City, a city of hard working citizens, and suggests that there is something more. In this commercial, *Detroit Industry* helps to characterize Detroit as a place where industry and elegance coexist.⁷

That *Detroit Industry* has acted as one of the most significant artistic representations of the city is today beyond argument. Detroit's identity is connected to auto factories just as that of Paris is connected to elegant riverside parks. However, though the murals' significance is widely agreed upon, there have been many different arguments concerning how they should be interpreted, the relationship between the murals and their audience, and their lasting relevance in a contemporary context.⁸ This essay focuses on the portrayal and role of space in the north wall

⁷ For Chrysler's purposes, the commercial ("Imported from Detroit") suggests that the company's automobiles come from not just from America, but from a unique place in America that has mastered the art of blending cutting industry and sophistication in a regionally distinct way.

⁸ Anthony W. Lee, for instance focuses on Rivera's efforts to convey a sense of "social realism," while Max Kozloff focuses on the audience's response. Understanding both arguments was essential in creating this essay.

Lee, Anthony W. "Workers and Painters: Social Realism and Race in Diego Rivera's Detroit Murals." In *The Social and the Real*, edited by Alejandro Anreus, Diana L. Linden, and

panel, and on the way this impacted the audience. The murals of course represent not an objective or pure representation of Detroit, but of Detroit viewed from Rivera's artistic lens, with his own socio-political background, in a specific time in history.

This essay attempts to place Rivera's choices of spatial representation within the immediate context of the Detroit Institute of Arts and the wider context of suburbanization that became increasingly pronounced in Detroit in the decade before Rivera arrived, largely due to the city's increasing reliance on the car. Rivera's depiction of human-scale workers in the mural and the intimate proximity he establishes between the workers and the viewers went directly against the expectations of the day by eliminating spatial barriers between the classes. In *Detroit Industry*, Rivera presented affluent residents of Detroit and its suburbs with a depiction of the city's multi-ethnic working class. In doing so, he challenged his audience's expectations of the art museum as a *haut monde* space, separate from the plebeian realm of the inner city. By bringing viewers into such immediate, and potentially unsettling proximity to representations of workers, Rivera subverted the usual divisions of space and class in 1930s Detroit.

A New Museum for a New Metropolis

In 1924, William Valentiner became the new director of the Detroit Institute of Arts. Three years later, the museum moved into a brand new beaux-arts style building on Woodward Avenue in the center of the city (fig. 5). This new museum symbolically placed Detroit culturally on par for the first time with cities such as New York, Chicago, and St Louis, which also boasted

Jonathon Weinberg, 201-220. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006.

centrally-located beaux-arts venues at the time. Valentiner was at the helm of a museum that through its architecture evoked ideals of civic life dating back to ancient Rome and Greece through its columns and symmetry. Valentiner clearly wished to establish in Detroit a bastion of high artistic culture. He reinforced this notion by acquiring works such as Brueghel's *Wedding Dance* in 1929 (fig. 6). He was deeply interested in making art accessible for the people of Detroit.⁹

In 1931, Valentiner met Diego Rivera in San Francisco. At this point, Rivera had a reputation in United States art circles because of his role in the widely popular Mexican Muralist movement. Valentiner had great interest in bringing Rivera's talents to Detroit. Rivera in turn, was well aware of Detroit as an industrial center. Upon speaking to Valentiner, he exhibited great fascination in Detroit's role as a bastion of manufacturing, and in the potential of the region's engineers and industrial leaders. Detroit was a city that explored uncharted territory in the early twentieth century, and Rivera was keenly aware of this when Valentiner invited him to create a fresco in the DIA. It is likely that Valentiner envisioned for his museum something similar to Rivera's *Allegory of California* mural, in which the artist celebrates the state's strongest attributes through representational imagery (fig.7).¹⁰

For Valentiner, recruiting a star artist to paint a representational fresco in the museum's interior courtyard was no small victory. With this commission, Detroit would establish itself as a venue that not only displayed but *inspired* great art. However, Rivera was given ultimate freedom over the subject matter of his paintings. He devoted much of his time to studying the city's automotive and manufacturing sites.¹¹ It was this aspect of the city that made the most

⁹ Downs, 22.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 34.

dramatic impression on Rivera. He had long been invested in the Marxist cause, and to him Detroit represented an incredibly industrial society built on the collective efforts of a healthy and diverse working class. Thus Rivera proposed before both Valentiner and Edsel Ford—president of both the Detroit Arts Commission and Ford Motors—not an allegorical romanticization of the city’s frontier origins,¹² but an illustration of its vital automotive industry. This was perhaps not what was hoped for, but Ford and Valentiner continued to support Rivera’s ideas enthusiastically.¹³

In the 1920s, the population of the city of Detroit increased from 990,678 to 1,568,662 by 1930. This growth rate of 57.9% during the decade is indicative of the region’s incredible prosperity due to the expanding automobile industry. To offer some perspective, the city of Houston, considered one of America’s most prosperous cities today, experienced a growth rate of just 26.1% between 2000 and 2010.¹⁴ The automotive industry was such a powerful force in southeastern Michigan that in the 1930s, four out of five cars in the United States were produced within a seventy-five mile radius of Detroit.¹⁵ However, this boom was only one half of Detroit’s story when Rivera arrived there in 1932. Relative to employment levels before the stock market crash of 1929, Detroit’s auto industry employed only half the people at half the wages in 1932. The Motor City was hit hard by the depression, and on March 7, 1932, just weeks before Rivera would arrive, upwards of 5,000 unemployed and hungry Detroiters marched to the

¹² See *Frontier Metropolis: Picturing Early Detroit, 1701-1838* by Brian Leigh Dunnigan for a look at this.

¹³ Downs, 35.

¹⁴ “Reports by States Showing the Composition and Characteristics of the Population for Counties, Cities, and Townships or Other Minor Civil Divisions: Michigan,” US Census Bureau, 1930.

¹⁵ “Detroit,” *Life Magazine*, October 23, 1939. E-book.

https://books.google.com/books?id=AEIEAAAAMBAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false.

River Rouge plant demanding food and work. Company guards responded to the protests by opening fire on the workers, killing five and wounding twenty. Thus it was into this atmosphere of imminently tangible tension between classes that Rivera arrived, determined to paint.¹⁶

Visual Analysis of *Detroit Industry*

To represent the city of Detroit in one of the most trafficked sections of its art museum, Diego Rivera chose to illustrate the city's industrial legacy. He painted twenty-seven fresco panels, focusing on themes including chemical manufacturing and mineral wealth; this essay focuses on the lower central panel on the north wall. In this panel, Rivera illustrated the interior of Ford's River Rouge automobile factory. The factory was famous for its assembly line, and was the world's largest industrial plant.¹⁷ Aside from the immediate foreground of the mural, Rivera takes liberties with the piece's composition and departs from a realist view of the factory, showing multiple areas of the plant condensed into one image. Scenes of workers at various scales are delineated by frames of steel girders and machinery in the background of the panel. The conveyor belt winds through all of the scenes in the mural, unifying them as parts of a cohesive image and reinforcing the importance of the assembly line as a fundamental feature of the plant.

While the background images offer subjects for contemplation upon a longer amount of time spent looking at the fresco, the scene in the foreground demands attention from most

¹⁶ Downs, 30-31.

¹⁷ Downs, 128.

vantage points in the courtyard. The eye is drawn to the laborers aligned along the assembly line. The men are clearly from numerous ethnic backgrounds, an honest representation of the city's diverse working class. The portraits in the fresco consisted partially of men he had seen working in the factory during his time there, including a Bulgarian, Japanese, and a Swedish man among others.¹⁸ Rivera made a distinct choice to depict the ethnic make-up of the city as a whole rather than that of the museum's audience. The men, working closely together along the conveyor belt exhibit richly varied skin tones, from dark brown to a relatively pale Caucasian skin color. Most wear navy blue overalls, though not all. They wear different hats and shirts of different colors. Each worker in the foreground bares unique facial features and appears focused on his labor.

While the men are differentiated by appearance and ethnicity, they are united by their physical closeness and their communal labor. On assembly lines such as the one shown here, each man contributes in a very small and specific way to a larger process—in this case, the manufacture of a car, which is notably absent from this panel.¹⁹ Thus Rivera illustrates that ethnic differences are ultimately superficial in the modern industrial process. It is a system that operates not on the talent and craftsmanship of a single individual, but on the cooperation and combined efforts of a group. Accordingly, the workers are not shown in stoic, classical poses which traditionally celebrated individual gods, goddesses or political leaders. They are instead illustrated as visibly straining from their labors, captured in motion rather than in static. Their motion and strain are indicated, particularly in the center by their bulging muscles, rolled up sleeves, and the leaning, angular posture of their bodies.

¹⁸ Downs, 123.

¹⁹ Though a car in an unfinished stage is visible on the facing panel on the south wall.

The viewer's attention is directed further to the men in the center by a partition composed of a green wood frame and six illustrated scenes. Each scene on this partition reveals aspects of the workings of the plant and the day-to-day life of its workers. In these scenes the workers are monotone, gray, and faceless. In the foreground they stand in lines; they work; they eat their lunch—all against the backdrop of enormous machinery. While creating a barrier between the viewer and the assembly line workers on the left and right sides of the mural, the break in the center emphasizes the complete lack of division between the viewer and the factory workers in this part of the fresco. The receding one-point perspective in the central area of the panel heightens this sense of continuity by further contributing to the illusion that the viewer's space extends uninterrupted into the mural. This quality could be due in part to the time Rivera spent as a youth observing Italian Renaissance frescoes such as those by Giotto. Rivera would have thus been familiar with a tradition of using one point perspective to blend real and fictive space.²⁰

The viewer's conception of space dictates his or her relationship to the mural. Unlike a painting on a wall in which the subject appears in an entirely separate space, set apart by a frame to be admired and contemplated by the viewer, this work makes the images a part of the wall with nothing to separate the space in the painting from that of the courtyard.²¹ The mural juxtaposes two very different spaces—the automobile factory and the art museum—existing in the same perceived space. This is established not only by the one-point perspective and unique venue of the mural, but also by the human scale of the workers in the foreground. Looking at the painting, the viewer is eye to eye with the workers. Furthermore, to look at this mural is necessarily to put oneself in very close proximity with the workers. The notion of estrangement

²⁰ Rochfort, Desmond. *Mexican Muralists: Orozco, Rivera, Siqueiros* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1993), 25.

²¹ As this work is a fresco, the images are *literally* a part of the wall. Downs, 37.

between the space of the courtyard and the space of the factory is dissolved by their shared scale, and by the complete lack of obstruction. By placing the viewer in such close proximity to the representations of factory workers, Rivera forced the viewer to experience at least a glimpse into the daily life of Detroit's working class. The scale of the workers establishes equality between the viewers outside the mural and the representations of workers within. Rivera thus uses the mural to forge empathy between the viewer and the worker.

Reaction

The murals brought about mixed reactions from Detroit citizenry.²² In an article printed in the *New York Times*, the day after the murals were revealed to the public, the work is described from various perspectives as “a stunning interpretation of industrial life,” and in the words of city councilman William P Bradley, “a travesty on the city of Detroit.”²³ Many of the museum's regular visitors were shocked to see the material that now adorned their museum's walls. The interior of a factory was not what they had in mind for the courtyard of their beaux-arts museum. Councilman Bradley claimed further that the murals “completely ignored the cultural and spiritual aspects of the city.” In the following days, the press continued to explore the controversy that had taken over Detroit, and the *New York Times* printed an article entitled “Detroit in Furor over Rivera art.” In this article however, Rivera responds to the criticism of his work. The article explains, “He attributed some of the opposition to his work to the ultra-

²² Downs, 175.

²³ “Detroit Opinion Divided,” *New York Times*, March 21, 1933.

conservatives of Detroit, who, he said, were not in sympathy with his glorification of the working man.”²⁴

Rivera was thus acutely aware of why the people of Detroit were unhappy with his mural. Their negative feelings about the murals dealt not only with judgments of *Detroit Industry's* inherent value or message, but also with the disjunction between the material represented and the space in which it was displayed. The same murals would not have offended Detroit's museum-goers as much perhaps had they been displayed in a setting more disposed to images of industry, such as factories or working class neighborhoods. What frustrated Detroit about these murals was their location in the Institute of Art. This was a space delineated for high, elitist culture. The museum represented the world that well-off Detroiters lived in *as opposed to* the dark interiors of the city's factories. Indeed, in yet another *New York Times* article focusing on the debacle, a committee formed in opposition to the murals called them “grossly one-sided, materialistic and an unfair interpretation of Detroit life.”²⁵ The committee implicitly argued that the “one side” Rivera *is* showing of Detroit is not the side of the museum's clientele, and thus, while Rivera could be quite earnestly have been portraying his own interpretation of Detroit, they deemed it “unfair.” It appears that the fame that surrounded Rivera's name was not worth the challenging and uncomfortable questions his art evoked. One critic went as far as to say, that the garden court, “long a source of delight and inspiration to thousands, has been sacrificed.”²⁶ This claim blatantly exaggerates the significance of the space. The building had only been open for a couple years before Rivera began working on his murals, and the courtyard would have served more as a resting place for tired museum visitors than a space of “delight” or “inspiration.” What Rivera

²⁴ “Detroit in Furor over Rivera Art,” *New York Times*, March 22, 1933.

²⁵ “Detroit in Furor over Rivera Art.”

²⁶ “Assail Rivera Murals in Detroit Institute,” *New York Times*, March 26, 1933.

sacrificed was *not* the garden court, but the illusion of a space that was inherently separate from the industrial side of the city, purely dedicated to elite culture. Rivera sacrificed this ideal when he put the viewer on eye-level with the workers, fundamentally transforming the space.

Explanations for the Reaction

This dramatic reaction to Rivera's work and its relationship to the space in which it is displayed are rooted in issues and trends that transcend Detroit's longing for a truly world-class art museum. The decade before Rivera created the Detroit murals was a time during which people's expectations and conceptions of space were rapidly changing. This was due in a large part to demographic shifts made possible by the automobile, which Detroit loved not only to produce, but also to use, on an unprecedented scale. The move of many of Detroit's elite to far-flung automobile-accessible suburbs like Birmingham or Bloomfield Hills created spatial segregation more rigid than ever before. Now as a factory owner in Detroit, one not only lived in a different *neighborhood* as one's employees, but a different town, perhaps thirty miles away! Thus the interaction between members of different socio-economic classes, not to mention races, was increasingly scarce in the city that Rivera came to paint.

The level of discomfort that many viewers experienced upon being placed in such close proximity with multi-ethnic industrial workers by Rivera's mural reflects their desire to differentiate space based on ethnicity and income. This trend is revealed explicitly through the 1930 census, and the demographic differences between the city of Detroit and outlying municipalities. In 1930, the different categories on the census included "native-born" white (Caucasians born in the United States), "foreign-born" white, and African-American. That year, the city of Detroit was 68.4% "native" white, 25.5% foreign-born white, and 7.7 % African-

American.²⁷ Granted race, even in 1930 was by no means the sole determinant of income. Within the native-born white category were both millionaires and vagrants. However, it is interesting to compare these statistics to those of the new wealthy enclaves at Detroit's periphery.

One such suburb, Birmingham Village, grew by 158.2% between 1920 and 1930.²⁸ This incredibly high growth rate reveals the rapidity and intensity with which wealthy Detroiters redefined their city's notion of space during the 1920s. Indeed, this new municipality and others like it looked a lot different from Detroit proper in terms of ethnic composition. In Grosse Pointe Village, closer to the city than Birmingham but still a separate political entity, 78.6% of residents were native-born white, 20.4% were immigrants, and only .9% of residents were African-American. This reflects the trend of the suburbs to contain a much larger proportion of white, American-born citizens than in Detroit proper. It is also important to bear in mind that not all white immigrant groups were treated the same. An English immigrant in the United States would have held a much different position than a Polish immigrant, for example. Indeed, of the immigrant population of Detroit, 16.6% were of Polish descent, whereas just 1.6% of Grosse Pointe's immigrants were. Furthermore, 2.3 % of residents of the city of Detroit were illiterate, while only a scarcely detectable 0.1% of those living in Grosse Pointe Park were similarly impaired.²⁹ In 1936, Grosse Pointe Village became its own city, as a special measure to further differentiate itself from the city of Detroit.³⁰ The upper class went to great lengths during the 1920s and 1930s to create barriers between itself and the working class.

²⁷ US Census Bureau, 1930.

²⁸ By comparison the City of Detroit grew by 57.9% during the same time period.

²⁹ US Census Bureau, 1930.

³⁰Thompson, Barbara. *Know Your Grosse Pointe*, Grosse Pointe Historical Society, 2002.

In fact, a 1939 article in *Life Magazine* claimed “in recent years, there has been a tendency in Detroit towards decentralization”. The same article features a map that draws an arrow to Grosse Pointe and labels it “the very rich live here” (fig. 7). Thus even pop culture was conscious of the cultural shifts taking place in inter-war Detroit. With a nod to the “very rich” who inhabit Grosse Pointe, the term “decentralization” also implies the changing spatial organization of class and income in the city. It was a process limited to the privileged and the wealthy. Not just anyone could afford to leave the city and *decentralize* (with a *car*) and invest in expensive real estate in an exclusive village or township, at a time when discrimination based on race or ethnicity was commonplace, during the Great Depression at that. Suburbs, similar to the haut couture realm of the art museum, were the domain of the wealthy, and in 1930, generally the American-born white. Rivera’s mural, specifically the central lower panel on the north wall, not only subverted spatial expectations of the art museum, it counteracted the system of spatial segregation solidified in suburbanization. It rejected the desire for increasing physical distance between classes and ethnicities by *eliminating* the distance. The scale, subject matter, and venue of Rivera’s *Detroit Industry* worked together to agitate the museum’s elite clientage by placing them in direct contact with the very people and setting which they had literally moved miles and chartered cities to distance themselves from.

Contemporary Implications

Since Rivera painted the *Detroit Industry* murals, spatial segregation and economic disparity between the suburbs and the inner city have exploded, making Rivera’s statement eerily prescient in Detroit and across the United States. After the Second World War, Federal Housing Administration loans made it easy for returning middle-class white Americans to buy property in

suburbs while trapping working-class minorities in fast-emptying urban neighborhoods.

Highway construction sped this process up, allowing cities like Detroit to spiral into centers of crime and poverty. In Detroit today, 38.1% of residents live below the poverty line, just 12.9% of residents are Caucasian, and the median household income is just \$26,955. In Bloomfield Hills, one of southeast Michigan's more affluent suburbs, only 3.8% of residents live below the poverty line, a whopping 90.7% and the median household income is a stunning \$136,875.³¹

In the organization of space, the United States has chosen homogeneity over diversity and distance over interaction. Today, Americans attempt to organize their spaces so that they *never* have to interact with those of different incomes, races, or professions. The subdivisions, high-end malls, and top-performing schools of Bloomfield Hills are over twenty miles away from central Detroit.³² Today, as in Rivera's day, the Detroit Institute of Art acts as an island of upper and upper-middle class culture in the center of the city. And, today, just as in March 1933 when the mural was unveiled, we are uncomfortable with close proximity between ourselves and those who are different from us.

On December 6, 2014, the Detroit Institute of Art hosted its forty-second annual Noel Night—an evening of art, performances, and general Christmas revelry. This year, however, in light of the recent tension surrounding the death of Eric Garner—a black New York man strangled to death by a white cop—the festival-goers were joined by a crowd of protestors shouting “we can’t breathe!” in the victim’s honor (fig. 8). In defiance of their expectations, Noel Night attendees’ evening at the art museum was not just a time for pleasant contemplation of art and holiday cheer, but an opportunity to experience closeness and interaction with a group of

³¹ American Factfinder, 2010 census, Detroit & Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, US Census Bureau.

³² Distance obtained from Google Maps.

people very different from themselves.³³ One Detroit area news writer described the scene, “The protests didn't appear to significantly disrupt traffic or the celebrations, but they had people looking up from their hot chocolates and talking about the issue, which is what the activists hoped to achieve.”³⁴

This is perhaps not so different from the defiance of spatial expectations Rivera offered through *Detroit Industry* in 1933. One can imagine that he would have loved those who attended the unveiling of the courtyard to look up from their champagne flutes and consider that their lives, their social circles, and their culture was only *one* aspect of the city of Detroit; to realize that they lived among people who looked different and came from different backgrounds, and that it was the coming together of all these different people that made Detroit a great city.

Anthony Nealy, a seven-year attendee of Noel Night from Westland, yet another Detroit suburb, told the M-Live reporter that his favorite part of the evening was “Singing Christmas carols in the middle of the street and drinking hot chocolate,” but conceded after seeing a video clip of Garner’s death, “I'm kind of glad there were protesters.”³⁵ The conversation about spatial expectations and disparity provoked by Rivera’s human-scale workers and assembly line may never be the hot cocoa or Classically-inspired courtyard we often expect and desire, but it is as important conversation today as it was when Rivera spent a year between the garden parties of the Fords and the interiors of their factories.

³³ Which is not merely to say the crowds were largely of different races, but also to say that they had come with different motivations and goals.

³⁴ AlHajal, Khalil. “Detroit protesters voice anger amid cheery Noel Night crowds,” M-Live, December 7, 2014.

³⁵ AlHajal, 2014.

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Figure 1, *Detroit Industry*, north wall, Diego Rivera

<http://trggradio.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/detroit-industry-north-wall-diego-rivera.jpg>



Figure 2, *Paris Street, Rainy Day*, Gustave Caillebotte

http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/17/Gustave_Caillebotte_-_Paris_Street%3B_Rainy_Day_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg



Figure 3, *Moulin de la Galette*, Pierre-Auguste Renoir

<http://www.ibiblio.org/wm/paint/auth/renoir/moulin-galette/renoir.moulin-galette.jpg>



Figure 4, *A Sunday Afternoon on La Grande Jatte*, Georges Seurat

[http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/7/7d/A_Sunday on La Grande Jatte, Georges Seurat, 1884.jpg/1280px-A_Sunday on La Grande Jatte, Georges Seurat, 1884.jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/7/7d/A_Sunday_on_La_Grande_Jatte,_Georges_Seurat,_1884.jpg/1280px-A_Sunday_on_La_Grande_Jatte,_Georges_Seurat,_1884.jpg)



Figure 5, The Detroit Institute of Arts, 1927
<http://www.freep.com/graphics/diatimeline/dia-exterior-1927.jpg>



Figure 6, *Wedding Dance*, Pieter Bruegel
[http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/cd/Pieter_Bruegel_de_Oude - De bruiloft dans \(Detroit\).jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/cd/Pieter_Bruegel_de_Oude_-_De_builoft_dans_(Detroit).jpg)



Figure 7, Life Magazine, October 1939



Figure 8, Noel Night, 2014, Detroit Institute of Arts
http://www.mlive.com/news/detroit/index.ssf/2014/12/detroit_protesters_voice_anger.html