

Placing the City:
An Exploration of John Paskievich's Photographs of Winnipeg's North End as Visual
Cartography

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Abstract

Produced over a forty year span starting in 1976, John Paskievich's photographs of the North End of Winnipeg occupy a distinct space in the photographic history of the city. Ranging from local streetscapes to portraits of community members, this diverse grouping of images take on qualities similar to the 'New Documents,' and use irony and the snap shot aesthetic to construct a renewed topography of his community. Taken during his many walks around the North End, these photographs are phenomenologically local. Drawing from Henri Lefebvre's notion of "the social production of space," and Ariella Azoulay's framing of the photograph as an encounter, this thesis argues that these images engage in a practice of 'placing.' Considering the photograph as an active object with the capacity to both produce space and incite citizenship, this project aims to reframe how we conceptualize photography, urban space, and the agency of the spectator.

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Introduction: Street Photography as Visual Topography



Figure 1 John Paskievich, *Salter and Manitoba Street*

The photograph above [Figure 1], taken some time between 1976 and 1999, situates us at the corner of Salter and Manitoba streets in Winnipeg's North End. Perched atop the street sign that indicates our placement is a young child sitting cross legged and unassuming. As viewers, we are left with very little information from this image. Aside from knowing where we are, it remains unclear how the child got to the top of the sign, who he is, and what he is looking at. This cropped silver-gelatin photographic print leaves much to the viewer's imagination. It does however exemplify the photographic practice of Winnipeg photographer John Paskievich.

Produced over a forty year span starting in 1976, John Paskievich's photographs of the North End of Winnipeg occupy a distinct space in the photographic history of the city. Ranging from local streetscapes to portraits of community members, this diverse grouping of images use humour and chance to render ironic and mythic portraits of the artist's community. Taken during his many walks around the North End, these photographs are phenomenologically local. While most images are named simply after the nearest intersection, many place citizens and the ways in which they occupy the urban environment as their focal point.

John Paskievich was born in 1948 at a displaced persons camp in Linz, Austria, to Ukrainian parents. In 1953, at the age of five, he and his parents immigrated to Canada, living in Winnipeg very briefly before settling in Montreal. A few years later, in 1959, they would return to Winnipeg, to the Point Douglass neighbourhood in the North End. As a young adult, Paskievich enrolled in the Sociology program at the University of Winnipeg. Upon graduation, he worked in Montreal briefly before saving money to travel through Eastern and Western Europe, where he would buy his first camera and begin to photograph things he found interesting

and unusual. Upon returning to Canada, Paskievich enrolled at Ryerson University in Toronto to study photography, while working for the railway to pay for school. In an effort to photograph what he knew, he returned to Winnipeg in 1976, to photograph his hometown. Returning with an interest in the changing demographic of the area and the rich intermingling of cultures, Paskievich took to the streets in 1976 with his Leica camera in tow.

In 1982, while still photographing his community, Paskievich worked with the National Film Board to produce *Ted Baryluk's Grocery*, which used photographs of the North End corner store to compose a portrait of an aging shopkeeper and the legacy of the local institution.¹ The film contains the quality of an old slideshow, using a continuous display of still images with sound effects and dialogue overlaid on top of them. This added dialogue animates the images, and brings humour and atmosphere to the photographs. The film is narrated by Baryluk himself, as he tells the story of his shop, its clientele, and the decline of both his health and his neighbourhood. It narrates a crucial moment in the business's history, when the store's fate rested in the hands of Baryluk's daughter, who wished to leave the North End for Toronto or Montreal. During the duration of film, the viewer can hear the busy chit chat of people in the store, as well as several anecdotes which paint a picture of the neighbourly relationship between Baryluk and his customers. Over one of Paskievich's most well known images of a female customer opening a milk carton to smell its contents, Baryluk says, "I asked her- would you do that in the Safeway? She says, of course not, that's why I come here!"² While many of the images included in

¹*Ted Baryluk's Grocery*, National Film Board, 1982, https://www.nfb.ca/film/ted_baryluk_grocery/

²Ibid.

the film are included elsewhere, in exhibitions and photo books, several of the photographs are exclusive to the film and its storytelling. Through its visuals, personal anecdotes and stories, this film expands beyond Baryluk's corner store to touch on the decline of the Point Douglass area in the North End. At the beginning of the film, Baryluk states, "Here is all kinds of people. Ukrainian, Polish, Slovenien, Phillipino, mixed together just like soup."³ At its close he states, "Everything changes. People change, neighbourhoods change, friends get old, die, sometimes I feel like a stranger here. I hope Helen knows where she comes from, and comes home once in a while."⁴ Paskievich's connection to this institution (both in its presence as a North End business and Ted Baryluk's position as his stepfather) works to create an intimate portrait of a community landmark, and succinctly iterates Paskievich's artistic practice and sentiment towards the North End.⁵

While the literature on photography in Canada is vast, there remains a gap in the critical exploration of photographers working at the local level. Building on existing scholarship in the fields of photography, urban studies and critical theory, this thesis will situate John Paskievich's images within a wider trajectory of so-called documentary photography in Canada while also shedding light on an era of Canadian photographic history that is largely underexplored. Drawing from Henri Lefebvre's notion of "the social production of space," and Ariella Azoulay's framing of the photograph as an encounter, I will argue that these images engage in a practice of

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Other notable films by Paskievich include *The Old Believers* (1988) and *If Only I Were an Indian* (1996). *My Mother's Village* (2001) *Special Ed* (2013) which followed a local North Ender known for his alphabet car and house.

placemaking.^{6 7} In doing so, they demonstrate the capacity of the photograph to critically engage perceptions of the city and to renegotiate the way viewers encounter urban space. The photographic history of the North End, which has been cultivated by Paskievich over the last several decades, has produced a renewed topography of the community, mapped out by his movement through the North End and the subsequent encounters that viewers have with the neighbourhood through his images.

Literature Review

To date, there has been very little scholarly writing on John Paskievich, aside from introductory essays and interviews conducted for a publication of photographs in 2007. A short introductory essay in a rereleased collection of Paskievich's images, *The North End Revisited*, suggests how we may begin to critically engage with his work. The author of the essay, Stephen Osbourne, claims that Paskievich created a "Winnipeg photography" similar to Michel Lambeth's images of Toronto and Fred Herzog's characteristic "Vancouver Photography." Osbourne maintains that Paskievich's photographs constitute a continual return: a renewal in seeing. He states, "the art of seeing as expressed in these photographs is a kind of touching, an active response to the world; these photographs emerge from a phenomenology of the local: they are an embrace, given rather than taken."⁸

⁶Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Malden: Blackwell, 2016).

⁷Ariella Azoulay, *The Civil Contract of Photography* (New York: Zone Books, 2014)

⁸ John Paskievich and Stephen Osbourne, *The North End* (Winnipeg, Manitoba: University of Manitoba Press, 2017).

In her contribution to the joint text, “Imaged Communities: Putting Canadian Photographic History in its Place” (2015), Karla McManus briefly mentions Paskievich’s photographs of Winnipeg’s North End in a comparative analysis centred on representations of Western Canada. McManus’s analysis looks at recurrent themes in the photographs and literature of the Canadian West, focusing on two different accounts of settlement: a professional tourist’s photographs and Paskievich’s images which are rooted in his local community.⁹ In the same essay, Martha Langford describes the North End as a mosaic of eighteen distinct neighbourhoods which are separated from the South by the Canadian Pacific Railway which serves as a social and physical barrier from the rest of the city. She references a “strong tradition of amateur historical and photographic publishing in the West that reflects a fascination and identification with place, local roots, ancestral research and frontier culture.”¹⁰

In addition to the limited publications on Paskievich specifically, this thesis also draws from scholarship emerging from several disciplines including photo studies, urban studies, sociology, philosophy and cultural studies. This range of sources allows me to understand Paskievich’s photographs as forms of visual topography.

While there is a large body of literature discussing street photography in the context of social politics and its efficacy as an indexical record, my research draws from the relatively

⁹Martha Langford et al., “Imaged Communities: Putting Canadian Photographic History in Its Place,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 49, no. 2 (2015): pp. 296-354, <https://doi.org/10.3138/jcs.49.2.296>), 301.

¹⁰ Ibid, 301.

recent literature on street photography and its relationship to the spatial turn.¹¹ In particular, my work builds on the scholarship of figures such as Joan Schwartz and James Ryan, who note a visual turn in geographical practice. Schwartz and Ryan conduct a survey of what they call the visual turn in the discipline of geography, and how the photograph has been used in both colonial expansion and calls for urban renewal in low income neighbourhoods. In *Picturing Place: Photography and the Geographical Imagination* (2009), they state, “the significance of photography in the construction of notions of space and place, landscape and identity may be found at a range of scales, from the sites and sights of popular local urban memory to the image and symbol of the whole earth from above.”¹²

Similarly, Mia Hunt draws on the potential use of urban photographs in the field of cultural geography. In “Urban Photograph: Spaces, Objects, Events” (2014), she looks at the capacity for urban photography to “complement and enhance contemporary enquiries in the field—particularly those that highlight feelings, experience, and textures of place and draw from more-than-representational approaches.”¹³ Hunt’s work suggests how photography might be used to support research concerned with feelings, textures, and experience of urban places. She states,

¹¹Allan Sekula predicated this school of thought in the 1970’s when he released his essay “*Dismantling Modernism, Reinventing Documentary (Notes on the Politics of Representation)*,” 1978. In his theoretical and artistic practice, Sekula complicates the notion of the documentary image as an indexical instrument and conceptualizes it as a tool which is implicated in the mediation of political and social relationships in society which requires, “a larger, encompassing praxis.”

See: Allan Sekula, "Dismantling Modernism, Reinventing Documentary (Notes on the Politics of Representation)," *The Massachusetts Review*, 4th ser., 19 (1978), 863.

¹²Joan M. Schwartz and James R. Ryan, *Picturing Place: Photography and the Geographical Imagination* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2009), 4.

¹³Mia A. Hunt, "Urban Photography/Cultural Geography: Spaces, Objects, Events," *Geography Compass* 8, no. 3 (2014): , doi:10.1111/gec3.12120

“by acknowledging the power and performative capacity of images, geographers may use photographs to destabilize our understandings of place and question established hierarchies.”¹⁴

Additionally, in “Photography, Public Pedagogy and the Politics of Place-Making in Post-Industrial Areas” (2012), Maarten Loopmans considers how public photographic depictions of places and place-based communities contribute to the construction of local identity and community building. The author discusses two case studies: a series of amateur interventions in Ghent Belgium and the professional efforts in Bonny Bridge Scotland which both attempt to encourage citizens to discuss alternative realities of themselves and their neighbourhoods. Loopmans similarly discusses how depictions of place contribute to constructions of local identity and community. He states that “the politics of place making constitutes an arena of the public sphere in which private conceptions of local identity and community are shared, discussed and translated into collective imaginations.”¹⁵

Martha Langford has also written quite extensively on the role of photography and its relationship to place and identity. In her contribution to the co-authored article, “Imaged Communities: Putting Canadian Photographic History in its Place” (2015), Langford refers to the makeup of Canada as a network of photographic knowledge. She states, “the spatial turn is just one example of photography’s uptake through visual culture as it began in the early 1970s and

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Maarten Loopmans, Gillian Cowell, and Stijn Oosterlynck, “Photography, Public Pedagogy and the Politics of Place-Making in Post-Industrial Areas,” *Social & Cultural Geography* 13, no. 7 (2012), <https://doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2012.723734> ,104.

continued with increasing force and disciplinary variation, but photography has been understood as a translator of spatial knowledge since its invention.”¹⁶

In his recent MA thesis “A Study of Photography and Walking through the City in Modern, Postmodern, and Contemporary Canadian Art” (2012), Philippe Guillaume wrote the first extensive study relating the practice of walking to Canadian photographic art. His study focused on his own project titled *Every Foot of the Sidewalk: boulevard Saint-Laurent* (2010-2012), while also analyzing “the relationship between photography and walking through urban space in Canadian art as it has appeared since the middle of the twentieth century.”¹⁷ While this analysis focuses more widely on a range of photographic practices and is not distinct to street photography, it does introduce the productive capacity of the street in contemporary photography.

Finally, In *Placing Memory and Remembering Place*, editors John Walsh and James Opp (and the contributors to their collected volume) discuss the symbiotic relationship between local place, memory, and identity. Featuring essays, oral histories, photographs, maps and postcards, this volume aims to, as Opp and Walsh state in their introduction, “assert the significance of *place* as a site made meaningful by memory and commemorate practices.”¹⁸

¹⁶Martha Langford et al., “Imaged Communities: Putting Canadian Photographic History in Its Place,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 49, no. 2 (2015): pp. 296-354, <https://doi.org/10.3138/jcs.49.2.296>).

¹⁷Philippe Guillaume, “A Study of Photography and Walking through the City in Modern, Postmodern, and Contemporary Canadian Art ,” *A Study of Photography and Walking through the City in Modern, Postmodern, and Contemporary Canadian Art* (2012)), 3.

¹⁸James Opp and John Walsh, eds., *Placing Memory and Remembering Place in Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011)), 4.

The recent scholarship on the spatial turn discussed above is rooted in Henri Lefebvre and Edward Soja's writing on space production.¹⁹ Edward Soja built upon the philosophical beginnings of Lefebvre and Foucault by suggesting the term third space to define how we may begin to rethink the ontology of cities. Put simply, third space can be understood as the lived experiences of those living and working in the city, as it is shaped by the rationale of the city and its representations.²⁰ Of this concept, Soja states, "Reflecting on the uneven development of historical versus spatial discourse, the spatial turn is fundamentally an attempt to develop a more creative and critically effective balancing of the spatial/geographical and the temporal/historical imaginations."²¹

While there exists a diverse range of literature on Canadian photographic history and its correlation with the spatial turn, many gaps persist. While the North End has been written about extensively from sociological and urban studies perspectives, little scholarly attention has been given to Paskievich's images of the community and what they may teach us about the ways that urban spaces are constructed and negotiated via the photograph. Drawing from the existing literature on representations of space, this thesis considers how photography may contribute to the re-visualization of urban space, and how this may be understood as a form of civic engagement. Furthermore, it will contribute to photographic history by providing the first extensive analysis on John Paskievich's photographic practice.

¹⁹See Methodology and Theory on page 10 for an elaboration on Henri Lefebvre's *Production of Space*.

²⁰Edward W. Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publ., 2014).

²¹Edward W. Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real and Imagined Places*, 2014, 12.

Methodology and Theory

Due to the limited amount of scholarship dedicated to Paskievich's images of the North End, much of my understanding of Paskievich's practice and approach towards his community was gathered through an interview with the artist. Conducted in October 2019, this two hour long interview consisted of a series of taped and transcribed questions. While Paskievich provided an ample amount of information surrounding his practice, influences and feelings about the North End, it was his gentle and humorous demeanour which gave me the greatest sense of his approach. This research is also indebted to the generosity of Paskievich, who offered after our interview, to drive me around the North End for an informal tour. During this tour, I was able to witness the spaces in the neighbourhood he placed importance on and felt most inclined to show me, and heard many anecdotal first hand accounts of his youth growing up in the area. While I am not from Winnipeg, I resonated deeply with the layered history of this locale, and the multiple ways it is remembered.

In terms of theory, this project engages three primary theoretical concepts across a range of disciplines. As a large overarching framework, this thesis will use French philosopher Henri Lefebvre's concept of the social production of space. The foundation of Lefebvre's theory is his positing of a spatial triad, which utilizes three considerations of space in order to make lucid the complexities of everyday life. Lefebvre suggests that space is fundamental to our lived experience of the world, and that every experience is comprised of three types of space: real or conceived space, representations of space, and the spaces of lived experiences as they are

informed by representations.²² Through this lens, I will conceptualize Paskievich's photographs of the North End as catalysts for a renewed topography of urban space in Winnipeg.

Secondly, the theoretical model employed in this thesis draws on both Ariella Azoulay's notion of the photographic encounter and Elizabeth Edwards's phenomenological method of photographic analysis. Edwards has written extensively on the nineteenth-century landscape photography, advocating for an analysis of the photograph as a material object. Using what she calls a "grounded ethnographic account," Edwards looks at the "embodied mnemonic practices" of photographic clubs at the turn-of-the-twentieth century. In doing so, she discusses how we may think about "embodiment, historical imagination, and visualization as a mnemonic practice." She states that, "historical imagination and its photographic translation emerged from a profoundly embodied experience of place, marked by movement through time and space."²³ Edwards further asserts her understanding of the photograph as an object to be analyzed far beyond its visual capacity, in the collected volume of her essays, *Photographs, Objects, Histories*. There she states that "photographs are both images and physical objects that exist in time and space and thus in social and cultural experience. They have volume, opacity, tactility and a physical presence in the world and are thus enmeshed with subjective, embodied and sensuous interactions."²⁴ Noting the material and social turns in anthropology and cultural studies, Edwards imagines the photograph as a tangible, socially produced object. Using the

²²Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Malden: Blackwell, 2016).

²³Olga Shevchenko and Elizabeth Edwards, "Out and About: Photography, Topography and Historical Imagination," in *Double Exposure: Memory and Photography* (Transactions , 2014), 178.

²⁴Elizabeth Edwards, *Photographs Objects Histories: On the Materiality of Images* (London: Routledge, 2010), 1.

approaches advanced by Edwards allows us to conceive of Paskievich's images beyond their visual characteristics; instead they hold a physical presence in the history of public consciousness about the history of the North End.

The notion of the photographic encounter was first theorized by Ariella Azoulay in *The Civil Contract of Photography*. Thomas Keenan summarizes Azoulay's argument, stating: "Every photograph bears the traces of the encounter between the photographer and the photographed, and neither party can ultimately control that inscription nor determine what happens to those traces. The photograph, she tells us, fixes nothing and belongs to no one."²⁵ By untethering the photograph from its production, Azoulay argues that photographic authorship, the making of an image, is not the only site of meaning production. In turn, Azoulay asserts that anyone can pursue political agency and resistance through photography.

In addition to Azoulay's writing, this thesis also builds upon Gabrielle Moser's critical scholarship on citizenship practices to frame its analysis. In *Projecting Citizenship*, Moser imagines the resistance and critical capacity of photographic engagement by exploring the British Government's Colonial Office Visual Instruction Committee (COVIC). In her analysis, historical photographs extend beyond their inception to their potential for engagement in the future. She is interested, "in how the temporal lag that photography introduces might open up the possibility for acts of contestation, negotiation, resistance, and reclamation on the part of the

²⁵The MIT Press. "The Civil Contract of Photography." The MIT Press. The MIT Press. Accessed March 9, 2020. <https://mitpress.mit.edu/books/civil-contract-photography>.

viewer.”²⁶ While she argues that complex networks of citizenship should not be limited to the visual, they argue for the productive capacity of viewers to intercept photographic representations and to “gaze disobediently.”²⁷

Chapter Outlines

Chapter One, “Exploring Photographic Representation in Winnipeg,” provides a historiographic analysis of Winnipeg’s photographic history. By discussing the emergence of the photograph to define boundaries of belonging in the twentieth century, this chapter provides a broader conceptual and historical framework through which Paskievich’s images will be examined. Through the rich photographic history in Winnipeg, I provide a context for Paskievich’s knowledge of the complex relationship between the documentary photograph and identity politics. This chapter suggests that Paskievich’s images, while reflecting aspects of work by his contemporaries, stand out from earlier iterations of citizenship in Winnipeg. In doing so, they renegotiate and re-place the North End, taking back--as Henri Lefebvre famously stated--the “right to the city.”

Chapter Two, “Photography as an Embodied Practice,” focuses the analysis more specifically on the North End to establish how Paskievich’s images contribute to the production of space in that neighbourhood. Drawing from theory by both Henri Lefebvre and Elizabeth Edwards, this chapter conceptualizes Paskievich’s photographs as the product of walking, and seeks to explore the productive capacity of the photographic encounter. Like the photograph, the

²⁶Gabrielle Moser, *Projecting Citizenship: Photography and Belonging in the British Empire* (Penn State University Press, 2020).

²⁷Ibid.

North End itself is not an essential locale, but is almost mythical in its ability to exist differently in different contexts. Looking at the names of his images, their subject matter, and their reference to intersections as the site of an encounter, this chapter argues that Paskievich actively produces a version of the North End through his photographs.

Chapter Three, “Re-Placing the North End: A Practice of Photographic Citizenship,” continues the exploration of Paskievich’s visual strategies to re-negotiate some of the long held representations of people in the North End. In doing so, I argue that these images provide a visual topography of the North End paying tribute to a hybrid community in flux, and demonstrates a practice of engaged citizenship in the process. Finally, it also discusses the ways that these photographs are reinterpreted by viewers into the present, and how their complex and nuanced relationship to myth and nostalgia possess the capacity for critical engagement.

Collectively, these chapters analyze a largely unexplored body of work by a Canadian photographer. They consider the capacity of Paskievich’s photographs to re-visualize the North End by responding to a history of photographic representation in the city of Winnipeg. Considering the photograph as an active object with the capacity to both produce space and incite citizenship, this project aims to reframe how we conceptualize photography, urban space, and the agency of the spectator.

Chapter One: Exploring Photographic Representation in Winnipeg

In the *Civil Contract of Photography*, critical theorist Ariella Azoulay states:

The invention of photography offered the gaze an absolute plane of visual immobility, a plane on which all movement is frozen, transformed into a still picture that can be contemplated without disturbance. However, in this picture what has been established — what has been fixed and stabilized — what “was there” is at most a testimony to the moment of the photograph’s eventuation in which photographer, photographed, and camera encountered one another.²⁸

It is through understanding the photograph as an encounter between photographer, camera, subject, and subsequently the viewer, that we can begin to understand the photograph as an active object, malleable and never ending. Drawing on conceptualizations of visual citizenship posed by Azoulay, with attention to its potential limitations, this chapter provides a broader framework through which John Paskievich’s images of the North End will be examined. It explores the ways in which photographs of place occupy all at once, a historiographic document, a testament of belonging and not belonging, and an expressive ode to the city. This chapter argues that citizenship and photographic representations of place have a historic relationship, which is still being unwoven and re-visualized today. By providing appropriate historical and theoretical background, this chapter creates the frame through which Paskievich’s images will be analysed. The importance of grounding this project in the history of photographic representation in Canada, and specifically that of Winnipeg, is twofold. First, the photographs that Paskievich took in the North End contribute to a significant body of photographic representations in the city which reveal changing ideas of citizenship over time. Second, as a

²⁸Ariella Azoulay, *The Civil Contract of Photography* (New York: Zone Books, 2014), 89.

photography student himself, Paskievich was acutely aware of the patterns which persisted in representations of the city, and their bearings on the social fabric. Informing Paskievich's work is an awareness of the weight that the photographic image held during this period, and a desire to both contribute to and complicate this history.

The chapter begins by exploring the relationship between photography and citizenship in the theoretical work of Ariella Azoulay and Gabrielle Moser, as well as some of the limitations of exploring citizenship exclusively through the photograph. Using Henri Lefebvre's notion of produced space, I suggest that the rich photographic history of Winnipeg has produced a version of the North End, and that imagining the photograph as active in this way requires a more nuanced interpretation of photographic citizenship. Next, the chapter explores the specific history of photographic representation in Winnipeg by tracing the photograph in the region since the turn of the twentieth century. Beginning with early photographic depictions of the Red River region by survey and landscape photographers Humphrey Lloyd Hime,²⁹ William Notman and George Hunter, this section will shed light on how photographic renderings of the city's landscape perpetuated an imagined connection between models of an essentialized Canadian identity and the landscape in the early twentieth century. It will also look at the ways that it communicated an ideal Canadian citizenship in relation to the Canadian wilderness and a harnessed control over the land. It will then turn its attention to the further institutionalization of photography as a tool for social reform in Winnipeg. Like the reform photography prevalent in

²⁹While Hime was photographing the West earlier than Notman and Hunter, he is included here with them for his contributions to photographic history in the West. Hime photographed the Red River Region as early as 1858 while assessing the area for settlement.

other cities, Winnipeg had its own prominent local photographer L.B. Foote, who visualized urban growth and its consequences in the early twentieth century. This section will explore Foote's accounts of wealth disparity in Winnipeg, and the ways in which boundaries of belonging were visually constructed in and outside of the frame of the camera.

Visual Citizenship and its Limitations

Before exploring further the history of photographic representation in Winnipeg, it is useful to define what is meant by the term citizenship in this context. At its core, citizenship is described as a state of belonging to a particular nation or community. Conventionally, the qualifications for what constitutes citizenship is thus determined by a governing body or apparatus, lending to marginalized communities to justify their right to be included as citizens of a particular space. Benedict Anderson discussed the phenomenon of the nation state using the term "imagined communities." He states, "it (the nation), is an imagined political community - and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion."³⁰

In recent years, the tendency to define citizenship solely around the notion of the nation state has been challenged. Paula Hildebrandt states that "changing patterns of mobility and connectivity, migration and transnational cultural interconnections all challenge the legal and political boundaries of sovereign nation-states, their legitimacy and capacity to organize and

³⁰Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1982), 6.

provide citizenship.”³¹ Recently, the definition of citizenship has instead been expanded to account for models of belonging existing in and separate from, the nation state. In other words, classifications of citizenship are no longer limited to the boundaries of a nation, but expand beyond to account for an increasingly globalized society. In both scenarios, however, citizenship is understood as a performative and participatory practice in which people practice their identity as a citizen of place on a daily basis. This can manifest in a variety of ways such as through language, political affiliation or cultural ethnicity. Arguably, citizenship is communicated most overtly through visual cues. This can be articulated through visual signifiers such as clothing, architecture and environment, which in the plight of solidifying an “imagined” space, have frequently been circulated with the help of the photograph. Many of these photographic endeavours emerged out of official policies of shaping and defining citizenship in Canada. In these images, photographs carried with them the intention of exuding political and social power, of rendering who was, and more importantly, was not, an ideal Canadian citizen. The voyeuristic nature of these images therefore occupies a political and ethical dimension. As Gabrielle Moser states, “citizenship is used to justify tools of control and surveillance employed by the state for population management, in liberal discourses of social improvement through welfare and education, and as a key for contesting these very practices by their critics.”³²

Citizenship is not, however, limited to the confines of the visual, and in fact becomes restricted when analysis stops here. As Moser and Azoulay both argue, it is in the subsequent

³¹Paula Hildebrandt et al., *Performing Citizenship: Bodies, Agencies, Limitations* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 3.

³²Gabrielle Moser, *Projecting Citizenship: Photography and Belonging in the British Empire* (Penn State University Press, 2020), 1.

interaction with these images and visual cues through which citizenship is most clearly practiced and negotiated. Azoulay refers to this as the “photographic encounter” and asserts that in the practice of looking at the photograph, the viewer engages in a civic event. In her reference to this theory, Moser states:

To see the conditions these photographs depict as contingent and therefore changeable is not a humanist project for Azoulay. It is the enactment of an imaginative viewing practice that recognizes our complicity as citizen-spectators and allows us to confront the ways our political status is intertwined with that of the subjects we encounter.³³

In this way, we may come to understand the ways in which the photograph gets circulated and distributed as an apparatus of citizenship itself. In other words, the photograph may depict a locality and allude to the dynamics of belonging in that space, but the image is always malleable and ever changing. The image’s capacity to continue beyond the initial encounter between a photographer and their subject complicates its ability to render citizenship within the confines of the camera frame. As Mieke Bal and Norman Bryson state, “once launched into the world, the work of art is subject to all of the vicissitudes of reception; as a work involving the sign, it encounters from the beginning the ineradicable fact of semiotic play.”³⁴ As photographs of place travel through time and encounter new contexts and interpretations, it again takes on new meaning. In Azoulay’s words, ““Photography” is a term that designates an ensemble of diverse actions that contain the production, distribution, exchange, and consumption of the photographic image.”³⁵ The active language used in this statement alludes to the myth of the photograph as a

³³Gabrielle Moser, *Projecting Citizenship* (2020), 180.

³⁴Mieke Bal and Norman Bryson, *Semiotics and Art History* (New York: College of Art association, 1991), 179.

³⁵Ariella Azoulay, *The Civil Contract of Photography* (New York: Zone Books, 2014), 81-82.

static interpretation whose meaning is finalized at the release of a camera shutter. In this sense, it becomes rather limiting to stop our analysis at the point of production (shooting and printing), and more effective to explore the larger encompassing praxis of the image, as an object in a world active in its unfolding meaning. In turn, that meaning encompasses more than just visual sensory experience. As Elizabeth Edwards has noted, there is a tendency in photographic theory to focus on the visual, despite the photograph's circulation as a tangible object which is born out of experiential and physical interactions between the photographer and their subject.³⁶

Despite the complicated relationship that citizenship and photography share, it is impossible to disentangle the history of visual citizenship from the photograph. The ways in which the photograph has been used to support social reform, urban revitalization, and as a marketing tool for increased tourism and immigration, for example, demonstrate its performative and didactic nature. Photographs must be understood as important cultural texts, which are not only the product of their producer's intended meanings but also as objects that carry on past their initial production and dispersal. As Moser states in her critique, earlier photographic scholarship "tended to treat photographs as illustrations or symptoms of power relations rather than as active producers of the very relations they are said to represent. These authors' treatments of images as static representations also had the unfortunate side effect of limiting the level of the spectators' affective engagement with the photograph in their analysis."³⁷ In understanding the ways in which Paskievich's images engage with the visual construction of the city, this thesis will draw

³⁶ Elizabeth Edwards, *Photographs, Objects, Histories: On the Materiality of Images* (London: Routledge, 2010).

³⁷Gabrielle Moser, *Projecting Citizenship: Photography and Belonging in the British Empire* (S.I.: Penn Sate University Press, 2019), 19.

from Moser's theory of projected citizenship. Moser argues that citizenship is nearly impossible to pin down into a visual interpretation since it is conferred relationally, is invisible, and is difficult to disentangle from other categories of belonging. Instead she argues that, "critical public pedagogy, in particular, aims to show how notions of difference, civic responsibility, community, and belonging are produced in specific historical and discursive sites, institutions and practices."³⁸ Paskievich's images, I will argue, embody this notion of citizenship in their re-visualization of the city. As Azoulay explains:

Even when the traces of the event of photography express cultural and social hierarchies that organize the power relations between photographer, camera, and photographed person, they never simply echo such relations nor do they necessarily reflect the point of view of the most powerful figure present in the arena at the time the photograph was captured. This characteristic differentiates the photograph from all other forms of documentarian that we know, and renders it a powerful and suggestive source for understanding the political existence of human beings, as well as for investigating their history.³⁹

By grounding his work in a neighbourhood considered to be on the periphery of Winnipeg's growth and success, Paskievich revisits the history of photographic representation in the city and responds with an ambiguous portrait of community. In doing so, the photographer makes no claim to define a linear or stable "North End identity," but rather disrupts earlier attempts to do so. By providing a historical overview of the photograph's shifting relationship to ideas of citizenship in Canada and Winnipeg, this chapter will shed light on the rich photographic history of the city, which when held in tandem with Paskievich's photographs, construct a rich cultural memory of the changing locale. In doing so, this historical survey helps us to understand

³⁸Gabrielle Moser, *Projecting Citizenship: Photography and Belonging in the British Empire* (2020), 4.

³⁹Gabrielle Moser, *Projecting Citizenship* (2020), 22.

how Paskievich's engagement with the visual history of his community depicts the potential for the photograph to assert practices of citizenship.

A Short History of Citizenship and Landscape Photography in the Red River region

Early iterations of citizenship in Canada can be seen visually depicted in images of settlement and development in the early nineteenth century. As Alan Sekula and John Tagg have similarly stated in regard to later social reform photography, "photographic archives do not represent a preexisting reality but are put to work by state apparatuses to constitute a discourse of realism for particular viewers in particular historical moments."⁴⁰ During particularly important moments in the nation's history the photograph has been used as visual documentation of events as well as signifiers of particular values.

The institutionalization of photographs of the Canadian landscape by industries such as the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) for instance, produced specific "realities" about the relationship between Canadian citizens and the natural environment. While these images were frequently taken to record the construction process of the railway, they were also frequently used as promotional material for the advancement of settlement in the West. The view-book was one of the primary means of communicating this information visually, and was typically marketed towards a tourist audience, or for those who didn't have the means to travel but wanted to understand and see the whole of Canada. Frequently used as an institutional tool, the view-book used pictorialist photographs to visualize the nation's natural features. These images often

⁴⁰Gabrielle Moser, *Projecting Citizenship* (2020), 18.

exaggerated the sublime nature of the Canadian wilderness through the use of romantic tones and artful compositions. These images, while not distinctly descriptive in nature, became popular tools for the promotion of the country at the turn of the twentieth century. As Elizabeth Anne Cavaliere states, “the inclusion and use of photography in nineteenth-century publications highlights a key moment in the history of Canadian tourism when travellers and readers were becoming photographically literate and, further still, were being instructed about how to view and understand place through the photographic image.”⁴¹ The circulation of images of vast wilderness and growing industrialized cities, constructed a visual rendering of Canada and instilled values of industriousness, bounty and sublime beauty that people were to associate with the nation.

Canada's Scenic Grandeur, a photographic publication produced by Montreal-based William Notman's Studio, for instance, articulated the vastness of the Canadian landscape while simultaneously promoting the railway throughout the West [Figure 1.1].⁴² At the time, the Notman Studio was the largest commercial photography enterprise in Canada; as such, it was often tasked with documenting construction projects and creating portraits for prominent political figures. The title page of the collection indicates that the photographs had been “furnished by the Canadian Pacific Railway and Wm. Notman & Son.”⁴³ The view book consisted of sixty photographic plates accompanied by an account of the coast to coast

⁴¹Elizabeth Anne Cavaliere, “Canada by Photograph: Instructed Looking and Tourism of the Late Nineteenth-Century Canadian Landscape,” *Histoire Sociale/Social History* 49, no. 99 (2016): pp. 307-325, <https://doi.org/10.1353/his.2016.0004>, 309.

⁴²Stanley Triggs, “William Notman's Studio. The Canadian Picture” Exhibition Text, McCord Museum of Canadian History, Montreal, 1992.

⁴³Elizabeth Anne Cavaliere, “Canada by Photograph,” 316.

adventures the photographers experienced in the process. The introduction to the view book, however, is perhaps the most telling of its perspective towards the nation. Through its claims to the legacy of Canadian travel, it reads, “No country in the world affords more that will interest in beautiful and sublime scenery and in historic and romantic association. The rivers and forests of Canada were the theatre of action of the noble redmen, the gay noblesse, the roving couriers de bois, the adventurous Englishmen.”⁴⁴ This sense of belonging reflects the concept of the “imagined community.” As Joan Schwartz explains, imagined communities are “products of representational practices that transform space on the ground into place in the mind. They are, more broadly, value-laden visualizations of peoples, places and the relationships between them.”⁴⁵

In Winnipeg, the combination of these things was woven into conceptions of the Red River region, which was an industrious trading post in the West. Now known as ‘The Forks’, the meeting point of Red and Assiniboine rivers was a prominent post during the fur trade, and also provided a huge source of water for agriculture. The resources provided by the river made early settlement in the region an obvious choice, and influenced the placement of a major CPR station in Winnipeg and the subsequent growth of the city in the twentieth century. While a large portion of *Canada’s Scenic Grandeur*, the view-book produced by Notman, visualized sublime scenes of farmland in the region, it also contained urban images depicting industry and growth in the city. *Main Street from City Hall, Winnipeg, Man.*, for example, is an aerial view of Main Street from a

⁴⁴Ibid, 316.

⁴⁵Joan Schwartz, “Felix Man’s Canada: Imagined Geographies and Pre-Texts of Looking,” in *The Cultural Work of Photography in Canada*, ed. Carol Payne and Andrea Kunard (Montreal, Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2011), 4.

bird's eye view on the roof of city hall [Figure 1.2]. The image depicts an unpaved street, which runs between several architecturally impressive buildings along Main Street. As one of the fastest growing cities in the nation, Winnipeg was a popular photographic subject in the early twentieth century. According to Cavaliere, "a photograph of a particular place signalled that place as being noteworthy. That consumers understood such signals indicates that they were beginning to recognize and appreciate photography as a device, like text, that relayed valuable information about the importance of a place."⁴⁶ The implications of these grand visualizations of natural and human-made landscapes, normalized the colonial project in Canada in many ways, and, as Andrea Kunard notes, "substantiated the desire for a specific Anglo settler population to populate the nation."⁴⁷

Later in the twentieth century, advancements in photographic technology as well as the rapid growth of cities and suburbs across the country led to a shift in the way that place was represented visually. Urban photography, street photography and aerial photography became much more prevalent. However, the institutionalization of photographs of place was still very common, as the National Film Board of Canada (NFB) became interested in visualizing the national project. Photographer George Hunter for instance, was hired in the 1950s by the NFB's Still Photography Division to photograph Canadian cities and countryside. Hunter had been previously employed for ten years by *The Winnipeg Tribune*. His extensive corpus of images for the NFB makes up a unique record of Canadian urban landscapes in the particular socio-economic context of the 1940s through the 1970s. They encapsulate a long period of urban

⁴⁶Elizabeth Cavaliere, "Canada by Photograph," 310.

⁴⁷Andrea Kunard and Carol Payne, *The Cultural Work of Photography in Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2011), xiv.

growth and led to the publication of two series, *Canada, Cities, Towns, Villages, and Environs: Heritage Images and Communities: To House Industrial Workers*. Hunter soon popularized the aerial photograph as a way to render Canadian place. In a 8 February 1964 issue of *Maclean's Magazine*, a collection of these aerial photographs appeared in an article titled "The Land That Holds the People Together" [Figure 1. 3]. It is evident in these images that the camera's relationship to citizenship was predicated largely on connections to the land and wilderness, specifically when it came to the formation of a Canadian identity. Hunter's images of Winnipeg often consisted of aerial photographs of the urban sprawl, as seen in *The Red River separating St. Vital, Norwood, and St. Boniface from Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1953* [Figure 1.4]. This aerial photograph appears like many others of its kind, yet is identifiable by the arterial form of the Red River. Visually striking, the image depicts a structured and mathematically planned suburb, which was shaped and transformed by the incision of the river through the landscape. Interestingly, this image was taken just years after the devastating flood in 1950, but shows us a view of the river that is contained and in harmony with its surroundings. In doing so, this image worked to visualize the stable harmony between industry, settlement and the waterway through the prairies. While many of these images implicitly promoted urban growth and Canadian settlers' relationship to the land, the images themselves were, in fact, often void of citizens themselves. The focus on wilderness and the built environment as markers of citizenship would continue throughout the history of photography, as many photographers began populating these images with people.

L.B. Foote and the History of Reform Photography in Winnipeg

During the early twentieth century, Winnipeg was one of the fastest growing urban centres in Canada, lending itself as one of the most heavily photographed cities in Canada. In fact, during the height of the city's growth and expansion, Winnipeg had its own local city photographer, Lewis B. Foote (1873-1957). Foote was a commercial photographer who moved to Winnipeg in 1902 from Newfoundland. Foote made his living by picturing urban developments in the city, Royal visits, and portraits of affluent families, all of which visualized the epitome of settler culture in the West. Although not professionally trained, Foote nonetheless earned a reputation as a popular chronicler of daily life in Winnipeg.

Foote's images articulate the promise of the growing city at the height of the 'City Beautiful' movement, which sought to regenerate urban environments through beautiful spaces. At its essence, the philosophy of City Beautiful was simple: a healthy, attractive, vibrant communities attracted and developed healthy, attractive and vibrant populations.⁴⁸ In Winnipeg, this manifested in a boom in building projects and a focus on industry and immigration. Tasked with representing these efforts in Winnipeg, Foote photographed the bustling downtown streets, middle class leisure and high class functions, all which visually articulated the prairie metropolis as the "Chicago of the North." In *Workers on the roof of the Fort Garry Hotel, 1912* [Figure 1.5], Foote captures a group of ten men atop a peak on the hotel, which creates a strong diagonal line through the image. In the background sits Garry Street, and even further in the distance, the Red

⁴⁸"City Beautiful - Part 1: Great Expectations," Part 1: Great Expectations - *Winnipeg Free Press*, September 5, 2014, <https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/city-beautiful/City-Beautiful---Part-1-Great-Expectations-273837201.html>).

River. The grand architectural forms depicted in this, and many of Foote's images, present Winnipeg as an economically prosperous city. However, this visual record of the city also perpetuates a narrative of colonial erasure, which suggests that the city was built from the ground up by immigrants and settlers, denying the continued presence of Indigenous people in the city, and the continued struggle of the Métis nation to remain in the Red River region.

Aside from photographing the growing infrastructure of the city, some of Foote's most recognizable images are those documenting the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919 and systemic poverty in the North End in 1908. While Foote's images of the North End stand in stark contrast to his photographs of urban prosperity in the city, they equally convey the ways in which photographs were used to visualize the dynamic of urban life at the time. Foote's expansive oeuvre of photographs from the North End were regularly taken for circulation among written accounts of the North End in local newspapers. They were also regularly used in religious reform projects by the Methodist church. Considered Winnipeg's official photographer of the time, Foote was tasked with a diverse array of photographic subjects, including photographing crime scenes and convicted criminals. The relationship between these images and the written word are crucial to understanding how images of the North End were read in the early twentieth century. Foote's images were often interpreted alongside historical texts that described the poverty of the North End as the result of rapid urban growth and immigrant populations; paired with such texts, Foote's photographs seemed to reify persistent and commonplace stereotypes about North End poverty.⁴⁹ The Point Douglass neighbourhood of the North End, for example,

⁴⁹Esyllt W. Jones, *Imagining Winnipeg History through the Photographs of L.B Foote* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2014).

was often described in both text and images alike as a “less than civilized” quarter where cheap hotels and bars solicited prostitution, and immigrant families lived in overcrowded housing. The relationship between written accounts of urban life and the visual interpretations of those spaces led to a didactic rendering of place that situated the North End in relation to the rest of the growing city in very specific ways. In these images, it was clearly communicated who did and did not belong as a citizen of the “city beautiful.”

The spaces where these images were circulated and the quality of the images are equally important to note. In 1908 for example, Foote contributed a photograph of the back of a tenement house to the *Winnipeg Free Press* for an article on social reform [Figure 1.6]. In its original publication the image appeared unclear, with diluted spots of black ink which blur the photograph’s subjects into their environment. Regarding this visual strategy, James Opp States:

In these pictures individuals and their environment merged together. Photography served the purpose of documenting the threatening condition that the city had become, but the underlying danger of this environment was conceptualized not in the mere existence of poverty or slums, but rather as a relationship between urban space and the body. This moral ordering of urban space was explicitly and implicitly related to the bodies that occupied it.⁵⁰

After their initial publication, this image was published by the Methodist Church in *The Christian Guardian* and as well as in a statistical report prepared by The All Peoples Mission in the North End. The use of Foote’s photographs by religious reformers in the city is the subject of James Opp’s study of perceptions of moral order in Winnipeg at the turn-of-the-century. Under

⁵⁰James Opp, “Re-Imaging the Moral Order of Urban Space: Religion and Photography in Winnipeg, 1900-1914,” *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association Toronto* 13, no. 1 (September 2006): pp. 73-93, <https://doi.org/10.7202/031154ar>, 85.

the direction of J.S Woodsworth, the mission believed that it had a mission to save the people of the North End, and used Foote's images as evidence of the conditions that had resulted from a corrupt urban environment. Their use suggested that the lack of safe environments for little boys to play would result in their future disobedience and criminality; packed boarding houses would put little girls at risk of sexual violence; and filth and disorder would cause public health crises. As Opp states, "to examine Methodist photographic representations of Winnipeg at the turn-of-the-twentieth century is to witness a re-imaging of the moral boundaries and order of urban spaces."⁵¹ The ways in which these photographs impacted public perception of the city articulates the nuanced relationship that the photograph and conceptions of citizenship have with one another.

A Broader History of Reform Photography in the City

Scholarship on social reform photography is often limited to the work of photographers such as Jacob Riis and Lewis Hine, who both photographed the harsh conditions of the working poor in large urban centres. These photographers purposefully photographed the unsanitary living conditions of the working class to advocate for improved infrastructure and social policy. Intended to provide photographic proof for statistical surveys surrounding urban populations, these projects were typically undertaken under the assumption that the photograph held the capacity for indelible truth. Like Hine's images of child labourers in early twentieth century America, and Riis's social reform photography project "How the Other Half Lives," Canada had

⁵¹James Opp, "Re-Imaging the Moral Order of Urban Space: Religion and Photography in Winnipeg, 1900-1914," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association Toronto* 13, no. 1 (September 2006): pp. 73-93, <https://doi.org/10.7202/031154ar>, 75.

its own slew of photographers who began documenting their communities as a practice of civic reform. Toronto photographer Arthur Goss for instance, was employed by the City of Toronto to become the official photographer of the city, and photographed the slum conditions of Toronto at the request of the Medical Officer of Health, who used the images to promote social and health reforms.⁵² Similar to Riis' images of New York City slums, these images served as documents of urban poverty which had prior to this point, remained invisible in visual representations of Canadian life. Kirsten Schmidt states that these kinds of images, “not only exhibit the social and political problems of the growing modern metropolis, but what is more, reshapes the sense of space in this environment. More than simply a newly revealed urban space, the artist virtually created that space by their particular photographic rendering of it.”⁵³ Martha Langford similarly speaks to the significance of these images in creating a historiographic record of place. She states, “mindful of urbanization and rural depopulation, documentary photographers have complemented the efforts of archeologists, ethnographers, and folklorists by creating visual records of traditional ways and the faces of disappearing communities.”⁵⁴ The use of the documentary image for social reform and urban revitalization has also been viewed in a more negative light, for its voyeuristic and sometimes exploitive nature. Jae Emerling, for instance, states that “the documentary image extended its role in European imperialism and colonialism,

⁵²See: Sarah Bassnett, *Picturing Toronto: Photography and the Making of a Modern City*, McGill-Queens University Press, 2016.

⁵³Kerstin Schmidt, “The ‘Other’ Country in the City: Urban Space and the Politics of Visibility in American Social Documentary Photography,” in *Pictorial Cultures and Political Iconographies: Approaches, Perspectives, Case Studies from Europe and America.*, ed. Udo J Hebel and Christoph Wagner (De Gruyter, Inc., 2011), 254.

⁵⁴Martha Langford, “A Short History of Photography, 1900–2000,” in *The Visual Arts in Canada: The Twentieth Century*, ed. Brian Foss, Sandra Paikowsky, and Anne Whitelaw (London: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 279-311), 287.

into a form of auto ethnography that mixed Victorian sentiment, voyeurism, and at times a sense of genuine social injustice.”⁵⁵ While these images were often left out of the ‘official’ portraits of Canadian life in the press, their absence is equally indicative of the ways that the morality of the city was constructed visually.

Since the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the periodic press in Canada used the photograph extensively as a means of conveying supposedly factual information. At the national level, these photographs were primarily circulated to newspapers and picture magazines, often by the NFB. Operating as a department of the NFB, the Still Photography Division was responsible for the production and distribution of still photographs of Canadian life. These photographs, often disseminated as “photo stories,” formed pictorial accounts of an idealized view of daily life- often with a political, social, or environmental message. These were series of black and white photographs arranged and depicted thematically to tell a story. The subject matter was diverse, but included images of labour, industry, farmland, the Canadian arctic, Canada’s Indigenous people, children, sports and portraiture. Citizenship was articulated in these photo-stories both visually and descriptively through stories of French-English language disputes, immigration, and the cultivation of farmland. Carol Payne states that, in 1967 (and before), “together (these images) provide telling records of government attitudes to class, ethnicity, and linguistic identity. They serve as a self-portrait of the imagined community of Canada at its centenary as the government was beginning to posit new models of normative citizenry.”⁵⁶ In a photostory from September 20, 1960, titled “Spotlight on Manitoba Mosaic,” a

⁵⁵Jae Emerling, *Photography: History and Theory*, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2012.

⁵⁶Carol Payne, *The Official Picture: The National Film Board of Canadas Still Photography Division and the Image of Canada, 1941-1971* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2013)), 136.

two page spread is filled with nine different smiling, costumed figures. The text in the centre of the page alludes to the Folklorama festival which was held in Winnipeg. In referencing the diverse nature of the city and its immigrant identity it states, “colourful costumes, exotic music and intricate dance steps create a kaleidoscope of sights and sounds. Ukrainian kozaks, Polish kujawiaks, Greek kalamitinos and Western square dances fashion part of a mosaic that takes place in Winnipeg's Kildonan Park.”⁵⁷ Another, “Manitoba’s Modern Mosaic,” from January 30 1968, highlights the diversity of the city once again.⁵⁸ However in both of these representations, diversity is presented only so far as to celebrate the multicultural flair of the city. What remained missing from these images were those citizens who occupied the periphery of these celebrations. Instead, images of those living in conditions which did not fit within this arbitrary category were rarely seen in the press outside of reform photography.

Conclusion

In tracing the photographic history of the Red River region, this chapter has provided the appropriate historical context for Paskievich’s work, while also discussing the notion of citizenship and its limitations. It has proposed that recent theory around citizenship and photography can be used to interpret the photograph as an active and performative negotiation of the past. Conducting a historical analysis is important because, as Moser theorizes, photographic representation and the ways that spectators identify and relate to these images is an innate

⁵⁷National Film Board of Canada, “Photostory #268: Spotlight on Manitoba Mosaic,” National Film Board of Canada, October 10, 2019, <https://photostories.ca/explore/photostory-268-spotlight-manitoba-mosaic>)

⁵⁸National Film Board of Canada, “Photostory #461A: Manitoba's Modern Mosaic,” National Film Board of Canada, October 10, 2019, <https://photostories.ca/explore/photostory-461a-manitobas-modern-mosaic>)

process. As she states, “this process is not an inevitable or natural one: it is historically constructed and culturally specific.”⁵⁹ Photography’s contribution to the construction of citizenship and belonging has been vast and diverse; but generally, it has defined Canadian citizenship in relation to wilderness, civic virtue and social justice, as well as economic and industrial prosperity in the city. As art historian Carol Magee states, “Photographs can reflect the excitement, calm, vitality, decay, alienation, and intimacy of urban environments, yet they not only record the city, they create it.”⁶⁰ In the following chapters, this thesis will continue to explore way that place can be visually rendered and negotiated through the photograph, and how John Paskievich’s images of the North End of Winnipeg disrupt those notions by constructing an alternative visual topography of the North End.

⁵⁹Gabrielle Moser, *Projecting Citizenship* (2020), 3.

⁶⁰Carol Magee, “Spatial Stories: Photographic Practices and Urban Belonging,” *Africa Today* 54, no. 2 (2007): pp. 108-129, <https://doi.org/10.2979/aft.2007.54.2.108>, 108.

Chapter Two: Photography as an Embodied Practice

“The city is not a product of processes of industrial production and capital accumulation, but is more or less the oeuvre of its citizens—a work of art constantly being remade. The urban operates as a space of encounter simultaneously encouraging differences to flourish, but also generating possibilities for collective action through processes of spatial production.”⁶¹

Place, as Henri Lefebvre has famously theorized, not only exists through its literal form and characteristics, but also in the ways that it gets experienced through all of its representations.⁶² As discussed in the preceding chapter, the photograph in Canada and its circulation in the popular press has been used in a multitude of ways to construct and uphold the North End, as both a physical and imagined environment. For instance, the relationship between citizens and the city in early photographic depictions of Winnipeg worked to uphold ideas of settler culture and the industriousness of the West, while simultaneously problematizing urban life and its vices. In more recent years, the increased interest in the local and regional histories of Canadian cities has interested scholars who wish to understand the ways in which these spaces have been shaped by their photographic histories.⁶³ By understanding the capacity of the

⁶¹Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (, 2016), 143.

⁶²Philosopher Henri Lefebvre’s *La Production de l’espace, The Production of Space* (1974) has had a profound impact on current urban theory. In his attempt to spatially rethink modernity, he notes that space is produced in three ways: everyday practices and forms, representations, and the spatial imaginary (that is the experience of the space through representation). Space is viewed as a social construction which continually affect spatial perception.

⁶³See: James Opp, “Re-Imaging the Moral Order of Urban Space: Religion and Photography in Winnipeg, 1900-1914,” *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association Toronto* 13, no. 1 (September 2006), and Martha Langford et al, *Imaged Communities: Putting Canadian Photographic History in its Place* (2015).

photograph to create and define space, this scholarship has suggested the potential impact of local photographers in renegotiating the history of the city.

Through an exploration of John Paskievich's artistic practice, this chapter will examine the capacity of his images to re-visualize the North End. Using Lefebvre's theory of the social production of space and Elizabeth Edwards's notion of embodied topography as guides, I will argue that these images may be conceptualized as traces of an embodied practice which evoke an imaginative and critical reworking of the past.⁶⁴ In this chapter, I will look at a specific grouping of photographs by John Paskievich of Winnipeg's North End, taken between 1970 and 2000. Grounded specifically in the North End, these images are best understood as traces of experience rather than material historiographic objects. Doing so, I will argue, evokes an imaginative viewing practice which accounts for the layered nature of place.

The chapter begins by introducing this collection of images and discussing how they fit within Paskievich's larger artistic practice, and the aesthetic strategies of the "new documentary" photographers in the United States. Next, it will briefly explore the social and cultural makeup of the North End in order to conceptualize the distinct properties of the community alluded to in Paskievich's photographs. Following this context, I will analyze some of these images to indicate how their reference to local infrastructure and business situate the viewer in the community and stand as traces of an embodied encounter between the photographer and his subject. Lastly, it will explore how the embodied quality of these images creates a visual topography of the North

⁶⁴Olga Shevchenko and Elizabeth Edwards, "Out and About: Photography, Topography and Historical Imagination," in *Double Exposure: Memory and Photography* (Transactions, 2014).

End which has reframed how the space is experienced visually, and as Lefebvre would claim, also how it exists in the world.

Paskievich New Documentary Photography

As mentioned earlier in this thesis, John Paskievich's practice is largely interdisciplinary. His background in sociology and filmmaking, his overt denial of himself as a photojournalist, and his personal history and familiarity with the North End invoke specific qualities into his work. Most notably is the personal nature of the images and the sensitivity and reverence that he provides his subjects. As John Osbourne has stated of Paskievich's images, "the camera (in this case), does not pry."⁶⁵ Paskievich's engagement with his subjects is frequently negotiated. Some images maintain a respectful distance, while others imply a familiarity and collaboration with the subject. Nonetheless, all of these images rely heavily on the visual strategy of irony and whimsy, which Paskievich borrowed from the so-called New Documentary photography emerging in the United States.

The term "New Documents" dates from a 1967 exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York featuring the work of Garry Winogrand, Diane Arbus, and Lee Friedlander, curated by John Szarkowski. In a proposal from 1966, Szarkowski states, "this exhibition describes the work of those younger American photographers who have adopted the aesthetic of documentary photographers and used it toward ends which are fundamentally non-social, non-horatory and

⁶⁵John Paskievich and Stephen Osbourne, *North End Revisited: Photographs* (Winnipeg, Manitoba: University of Manitoba Press, 2017).

personal.”⁶⁶ As opposed to conventional documentary photography, that which made claim to a certain indexicality, the new documents were prided for their personal and nuanced approach to the style and their soft refusal to view the documentary image as a vehicle of indexical truth. Earlier documentary photography typically emphasizes the image as proof with the intention of, as Philip Gfelter states, “exposing the worlds ills and generating interest in fixing them.”⁶⁷ He states, “the New Documentary instead possesses a vernacular quality (“snap shot” aesthetic), which obscures any clear or literal meaning.”⁶⁸ For these photographers like Arbus, Winogrand, and Friedlander, the camera was not merely a descriptive tool but was also a way of mediating their own engagement with the city and its photographic history. Their aim, Szarkowski writes, “has not been to reform life, but to know it.”⁷⁰ As Winogrand famously put it, “I photograph to see what the world looks like photographed.”⁷¹

In Canada, other street photographers such as Fred Herzog began photographing the streets of Vancouver in coloured Kodachrome film.⁷² What sets this era of photographers apart from their predecessors was an innate interest in artistic experimentation. While both intended to

⁶⁶John Szarkowski, “Exhibition Proposal ‘New Documents.’ Department of Photography” (New York, May 9, 1966).

⁶⁷Philip Gfelter, “The Exhibit that Transformed Photography,” *The New Yorker*, March 22, 2017.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Garry Winogrand and Lee Friedlander were also included in the 1966 exhibition *Towards a Social Landscape*, at the George Eastman House. The snap shot aesthetic was similarly used by curator Nathan Lyons to describe this work.

See: Nathan Lyons and Bruce Davidson, *Towards a Social Landscape* (New York: Horizon Press for the George Eastman House, 1966).

⁷⁰“New Documents,” The Museum of Modern Art, n.d., <https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/3487>).

⁷¹Philip Gfelter, “The Exhibit that Transformed Photography,” *The New Yorker*, March 22, 2017.

⁷²Fred Herzog’s career photographing Vancouver spanned from approximately 1953 well into the 2000s. However his most known work was between the 1950s and 1970s.

visually render the city, the so called “new documentary” photographers were less interested in provoking social change and more interested in the natural forms and compositions which existed in the city. While this shift occurred gradually and must not be overly simplified, the outcome of this new photographic style was the complication of urban archetypes perpetuated in the press. By exploring the urban experience with aesthetics, irony, and nuance, these photographers complicated earlier distinctions of documentary and art photography which permeated public consciousness since the inception of the medium. Yet the images produced by Paskievich, Herzog, and others, all straddle a fine line between expressive moments of human life and urban living, and the presumed truthfulness of the photograph. While these street photographs contain the same voyeuristic properties and documentary aesthetic as those they took inspiration from, they differed in one particular area. Paskievich and Herzog, as well as other photographers, were not engaged with social reform or national building programs. Instead, they disrupted earlier notions of citizenship and belonging, which typically generalized belonging to the nation state. While they undoubtedly produced their own messages about citizenry in the city, they did so in more nuanced and convoluted ways which complicated earlier boundaries of belonging and not belonging. The sense of order implied in earlier images of the city were denied by these photographers, who instilled their images with a certain sense of ambiguity. The turn to the local in these photographs attempted to document shifting demographics and local issues which were absent and excluded from earlier depictions of Canadian cities.

In his attempt to “take back the city,” Paskievich adds nuance to earlier images of the North End, which circulated in both historiographical accounts and visual renderings of the

growing city of Winnipeg. Through his ironic and ambitious images of his North End community, Paskievich challenged the ways that citizens of the North End were used to seeing themselves pictorialized in the popular press by photographers such as Foote. Rather than visually cordoning off the North End of Winnipeg, Paskievich's images instead situate familiar renderings of urban life and citizenry directly within the spatial geography of the North End. By re-placing the North End as a vibrant and diverse community in part through irony, Paskievich is able to articulate a distinct visualization of belonging which is at once local yet disruptive. While earlier social reform photography of the city, for example, sought to define and describe social conditions, the *New Document* evokes an interest in the modern. Defining what it means to simply be out in the world taking pictures, these photographers—including Paskievich—conceptualize their work as the product of walking through place and engaging with it. The photograph can in this instance be seen as a spatial portrait of the relationship between an individual and their locale. Rather than reform, these photographers sought to know. Elizabeth Edwards states that “the image is affected as much by the body behind the camera as those before it.” According to Edwards, images can “reveal the walking experiences and historical imaginings from which the photographs had emerged.”⁷³

By conceptualizing these images in affective terms, we acknowledge the relational capacity of the photograph. Paskievich engages in a series of interactions, negotiations, and decisions which impact the photographs he captures. In doing so, he embarks on an embodied excursion through the city which would create a new topography of place for his viewers. While Paskievich has been photographing this community for almost fifty years now, there is a

⁷³Olga Shevchenko and Elizabeth Edwards, “Out and About: Photography, Topography and Historical Imagination,” in *Double Exposure: Memory and Photography* (Transactions , 2014), 180.

specificity of time and place in his images which situate them in history. By referencing local businesses and institutions, intersections, religious landmarks, and billboards, the viewer is able to situate the images in a local history of the North End. Before analyzing these references, it is necessary to establish a brief social and cultural history of the North End.

The North End as a Locale

As a locale, the North End carries with it an alluring and rich history of multiculturalism, activism, and culture. However in the Canadian imagination, the neighbourhood with the vague name “the North End” is known to be a rougher part of town, one with increased levels of crime and poverty, and an unfortunate example of the decline of Canadian inner city neighbourhoods. In fact, the North End occupies a space in between these two narratives, and has a unique history at the intersection of immigration, labor disputes, socialist politics, migration, and Canadian industrial development.

Nestled on the Northern side of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) in Winnipeg, the North End consists of eighteen blocks which sit physically and socially separated from the Southern parts of Winnipeg by the (CPR) and its yards. Established in the early 1800s as part of the Selkirk Settlement or the Red River colony, the North End became a largely working-class area after the influx of immigrants settling in the 19th century, and was distinguished by other Manitobans by its “foreign character.” A 1912 publication, for example, described the North End as “practically a district apart from the city,” adding that “those who located North of the tracks were not of a desirable character.”⁷⁴

⁷⁴Jim Silver, “Winnipeg’s North End: Yesterday and Today,” *Canadian Dimension*, January 7, 2010.

Between the 1870s and the First World War, Winnipeg grew at an exponential rate as a result of the influx of immigrants. Improvements in external transportation, the eventual closing of the American frontier, and a vast advertising campaign aimed at Europe, the United States, and eastern Canada were factors in the increase of immigrants.⁷⁵ The building of the CPR rail lines through Winnipeg came after the defeat of Prime Minister Alexander Mackenzie and the Liberals in 1878. As Alan Artibise states, “the decision that the main line of the C.P.R. would pass through Winnipeg seemed to guarantee that the city would become the hub of commercial activity in the Northwest. In the years following 1881 this prospect was more than fulfilled as Winnipeg rapidly became the most populous and prosperous community in Western Canada.”⁷⁶ The establishment of a main rail line through the city inhibited the flow of traffic within the city. Some of these problems were eventually “solved” by the building of overhead bridges but in general Winnipeg remained a city “compartmentalized by its railways.”⁷⁷ Although eventually connected by bridges and walking paths, the North End became “unofficially” established at this point as a distinctive neighbourhood physically and symbolically segregated from the rest of the growing city. This segregation became further defined during periods of growth which saw housing projects expand the territorial boundaries of the city. A series of maps of Winnipeg from 1860-1972 which were annotated by Artibise and Edward Dahl, saw the communities take shape on paper and in language. It states, “To the south in Wards 1 and 2 the more affluent and chiefly Anglo-Saxon elements of the population resided; to the west in Ward 3 a large middle class area

⁷⁵Alan F. J. Artibise, *Gateway City: Documents on the City of Winnipeg, 1873-1913* (Winnipeg: Manitoba Record Soc., 1979), 6.

⁷⁶Alan F. J. Artibise, *Gateway City: Documents on the City of Winnipeg, 1873-1913*, 11.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 11.

of somewhat more mixed composition; and to the north in Wards 5, 6 and 7 the working class and “foreign ghetto.”⁷⁸ The city’s attempts to attract immigration and expand the metropolis was successful and in only forty years Winnipeg grew from a small fur trading post with less than 2,000 inhabitants to a sprawling metropolis one hundred times that size. The onset of the First World War had a profound effect on the number of immigrants coming into Winnipeg, and saw the city's growth come to a halt.

Many of these immigrants came to Winnipeg from Eastern Europe, and because of the affordability of housing in the area, moved to the Northern side of the CPR rail-line, taking up jobs in the industrial sector of the growing city. The largest ethnic groups to settle in the North End were Ukrainian and Jewish immigrants. When the First World War broke out in 1914, there were 170,000 new Ukrainian–Canadians in the three Prairie provinces.⁷⁹ Upon arriving in the North End, many Eastern European immigrants were met with less than satisfactory living conditions. A 1913 study by J.S Woodsworth, director of the All-Peoples’ Mission, found that those living in the North End made less than half of what was then considered a “normal standard of living.”⁸⁰ However, despite these unadvertised conditions of moving to a Canadian metropolis, the cultural fabric of the North End thrived as a rich mosaic of differing cultures. As Jim Silver describes:

Selkirk Ave. was a thriving commercial street with a dazzling variety of shops and stores whose owners typically spoke several Eastern European languages. A rich and varied cultural life characterized the North End: newspapers published in many European

⁷⁸Alan F. J. Artibise, *Gateway City: Documents on the City of Winnipeg, 1873-1913*, 19.

⁷⁹Vladimir J. Kaye and Vladimir J. Kaye, “Ukrainian Settlements in Manitoba,” in *Dictionary of Ukrainian Canadian Biography: Pioneer Settlers of Saskatchewan-Assiniboia, 1892-1904* (Winnipeg, MB: Published by East European Genealogical Society, 2018), xxii.

⁸⁰Jim Silver, “Winnipeg’s North End: Yesterday and Today,” *Canadian Dimension*, January 7, 2010.

languages; literary associations, drama societies, and sports clubs; a wide range of alternative schools; and according to one author, “a music teacher in every block in the North End to give the Jewish, Ukrainian, and Polish kids massive degrees of musical instruction weekly.” There was a thriving co-op sector, mutual aid societies, a labour temple, and radical politics of a bewildering variety of kinds.⁸¹

This is not to say that all was well in the North End as racism, segregation, class and economic struggles continued to characterize the community. However, the development of local newspapers and a labour temple in the North End, as well as the leftist politics that immigrated along with the Ukrainian and Jewish citizens, contributed to growing frustrations around working conditions in the interwar period.⁸² The 1919 Winnipeg General Strike for instance was largely rooted in the socialist grassroots organizations in the North End; while unsuccessful, the strike cemented the character of the North End as politically engaged and socially informed. What emerged during the 1919 General Strike was the long awaited unification of working class people in Winnipeg’s lower class. At the centre of this unification were municipal politics and local organizations. Organizations such as the Ukrainian Labour Farmer Temple Association (ULFTA) became hubs for community activism and social organization. As Stefan Epp-Koop states, it was in the municipal political arena where the Independent Labour Party and the Communist Party of Canada would establish an alternative vision for the city. He states, “fostered by deep divisions in Winnipeg between the business and professional elite and the working class, municipal politics became a struggle for control of the city.”⁸³

⁸¹Ibid.

⁸²Alan F. J. Artibise, *Gateway City: Documents on the City of Winnipeg, 1873-1913*, 17.

⁸³Stefan Epp-Koop, *We’re Going to Run This City Winnipeg’s Political Left after the General Strike* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2015), 146.

Cultural diversity and political engagement continued to characterize the North End throughout the Second World War, as the community's boundaries and infrastructure became defined by its immigrant inhabitants and their social values. In the post-war period, many Ukrainians and other Eastern European immigrants found themselves able to afford better housing and relocated out of the North End to the suburbs on the South side. With the cost of housing in inner city areas plummeting from the exodus of citizens moving to larger suburban areas, many Indigenous communities began to move into the North End. Historian Russ Gourluck states that it is still an open question whether this tradition of "moving on up" will continue, or if the reality of racism and discrimination towards Canada's Indigenous communities will keep them in the North End. Gourluck acknowledges that the area is now severely challenged by the poverty of its inhabitants, but he still finds examples of local people who are showing the ambition and energy that has always characterized the community.⁸⁴ In the popular imagination, the North End has become known to many in and outside of Winnipeg, as a "rough part of town." Poverty still persists in the area, and substance abuse and crime have reportedly risen in the district. The North End in popular imagination, like many other inner city neighbourhoods of its kind, occupies a periphery outside of popular conceptualizations of the Canadian West.

The nature of the North End as a transitional space somewhere between a place to land and somewhere to grow out of, became a common archetype of the neighbourhood. It has become a contact zone for cultural exchange and has been permanently marked by its layered

⁸⁴ Russ Gourluck, *The Mosaic Village: an Illustrated History of Winnipeg's North End* (Winnipeg: Great Plains Publications, 2010).

and multicultural history. John Paskievich's photographs serve as witnesses to these shifts, but also evoke a sense of the continued humility in the North End. As Karla McManus states, "Paskievich's photographs represent this period of significant social shift while also showing a place that does not much change, one made up of small A-frame houses, big farmers' gardens, corner stores, churches, and, most of all, people without much money trying to find their place in a new environment."⁸⁵

Main Street and Redwood Avenue

While the North End's distinct character can largely be attributed to its multicultural roots, much of the ways that the neighbourhood gets framed in public consciousness can be attributed to the history of photographic representation discussed in Chapter One. As Henri Lefebvre asserts in *The Production of Space*, "representations of space have a substantial role and a specific influence in the production of space. Their intervention occurs by way of construction - in other words, by way of architecture, conceived of not as the building of a particular structure, palace or monument, but rather as a project, embedded in a spatial context and a texture which call for 'representations' that will not vanish into the symbolic or imaginary realms."⁸⁶ Put simply, these photographs, as objects which are embedded in the social structures of the city, can provide invaluable information about the North End as a locale. In *Main Street and Redwood Avenue, 1985* [Figure 2.1], Paskievich photographs several figures at a main

⁸⁵Martha Langford et al., "Imaged Communities: Putting Canadian Photographic History in Its Place," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 49, no. 2 (2015): pp. 296-354, <https://doi.org/10.3138/jcs.49.2.296>, 314.

⁸⁶Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (London: Blackwell, 1991), 42.

intersection in the North End. This image, rich in visual information, alludes to the North End's large Ukrainian heritage, while also giving the viewer a sense of the photographic encounter. To the right stands a heavy set man on a bicycle whose shirt has been dirtied. To his right is a well-dressed woman waiting to cross the street, where an Arby's restaurant sits in line with the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. What appears to be an everyday scene in the city has an unusual disorder to it. There are no signs of cars in the image and instead an uncanny composition of four figures, none of which acknowledge the others' existence are found in the same space as Paskievich and his camera. The man on the bicycle faces the camera, seemingly curious and put off about being photographed. Despite the grainy, two-tone colouring of the image, the diagonals and depth of the image create a sense of dynamism that draws our attention to the almost overbearing cathedral in the background. Framed by the two pedestrian streetlights, and the diagonal created by the three figures closest to the right, our eye is drawn to the five onion shaped domes across the parking lot. It is this architectural element and the name of the intersection which geographically situates the viewer in this specific locale. Paskievich has returned to this intersection on many occasions over the last several decades, leaving the viewer to date the image themselves using only visual cues in the environment. The lack of formal information provided to the viewer in this sense suggests that the image need not be analyzed as a historical document, but as a record of a personal encounter between the photographer and his community.⁸⁷

⁸⁷This is further alluded to in that the intersections given in the titles are based on Paskievich's memory. During an interview with John in October 2019, he stated that had he been a photojournalist he would have written down exact locations.

By alluding to intersections and referencing local landmarks, Paskievich maps his movement through the North End, giving the viewer a sense of the spaces he walked through, and the ways that citizens of the community interact with their environment on an everyday basis. I open with this visual analysis to signify the ways that location is articulated as an important visual signifier in these photographs, and the myriad ways that the locale gets produced visually. The notion of situating his images geographically through their titles and local landmarks therefore becomes a strategy through which Paskievich is able to “take back” and “replace” conceptualizations of the neighbourhood.

Location, Location, Location

In his practice, Paskievich uses local landmarks, architecture, business and street names to ground his photographs in the North End specifically. The most frequently recurring landmarks in Paskievich’s images are the five onion shaped domes atop of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. While some images such as *Main Street and Flora Avenue (St. Ivan Suchavksy Ukrainian Orthodox Cathedral)* [Figure 2.2], reference the omnipresent existence of the cathedrals in the urban landscape, others reference the institutions mostly, and sometimes exclusively, through their titles. In *Burrows Avenue (St. Mary the Protectress Ukrainian Orthodox Cathedral)* [Figure 2. 3], for instance, an elderly woman wearing a khustka, bends down to pick something out of the grass between a suburban sidewalk (seemingly along Burrows Ave) and the street, in front of a car. A row of houses lines the sidewalk behind her and very subtly in the background of the image, sits five domes. The image is located both in time and place through the vehicle and the cathedral. The cathedral peaking between a row of trees in the

background of the image is indeed St. Mary the Protectress Ukrainian Orthodox Church, which suggests that Paskievich knew the area well, and knew what church would have sat at the particular locale in the background. The title not only situates the image in space and in relation to an institution, but is also playful, as it suggests that perhaps the figure in the foreground is to us, the protectress.

Religious architecture, however, is not the only element which places these images in the North End. Wide angled photographs of intersections, murals, and the several pedestrian pathways and bridges which connect the north end to the rest of Winnipeg further put these photographs in place. In *Salter Street Bridge overlooking CPR yards (Arlington Street Bridge in background)* [Figure 2. 4] the viewer is positioned considerably distant from a cyclist who has stopped to look over the railing at the CPR yards. Behind this railing sits what looks to be a postindustrial landscape of tracks, sheet metal and railcars. The vastness of the yards is evoked quite clearly in this image, as is the physical separation of the North End from the rest of the city.

Another image, *Jarvis Avenue near Arlington Street bridge* [Figure 2. 5], shows this infrastructure from a vastly different angle. The viewer is placed on the ground, walking closely behind a man with a can who carries a painting of a mother polar bear protecting its young on his back. The practice of walking through the grass carrying a heavy painting is juxtaposed with the vast landscape of industrial wasteland behind the viewer. While both of these images situate the viewer in the North End and allude to the neighbourhood's physical separation from the rest of the city, they do so in very different ways. Whereas the first image practiced a considerable

distance and birds eye view from the city, the second brings us back down to the ground and imagines us walking along the sides of the track with this unidentified figure.

Recurring references to local business also ground the images in the North End. Many images for instance capture the prevalence of the corner grocery store as a community hub. These stores, as Paskievich asserts, were formative institutions in the North End. While the community is void of any particular region known as “little Ukraine,” there are particular businesses in the neighbourhood that were a direct product of immigrant settlement in the area. Often family-owned and operated, the corner store usually consisted of a ground floor grocery below the family’s second floor living quarters. A typical store, according to historian Russ Gourlock, had floor to ceiling shelves stocked with cans, boxes, and bottles of various household items.⁸⁸ While several of Paskievich’s images depict the facade of these stores, a series of images brings us inside of Ted Baryluk’s grocery on Euclid Avenue and Austin Street. This shop, which is also the subject of Paksievich’s 1982 NFB film of the same title, was a prominent community gathering place and the epitome of North End business.⁸⁹ The interior of the store with its floor to ceiling shelving, serves as the backdrop for a number of Paskievich’s images. Interestingly, all of the images taken in the shop have the same title—*Euclid Avenue and Austin Street (Ted Baryluk’s Grocery)*—but vary in subject matter. One of the more telling of these images depicts a young boy standing at the cash equipped with a Hallowe’en mask and a toy

⁸⁸ Russ Gourluck, *The Mosaic Village: an Illustrated History of Winnipeg’s North End* (Winnipeg: Great Plains Publications, 2010).

⁸⁹This very subject was the focus on Paskievich’s NFB film, *Ted Baryluk’s Grocery* in which he explored the local institution of the corner store, the people it meant the most to, and those who kept it going.

pistol. The boy leans over a counter display of Bazooka gum to point his weapon at an unassuming Ted Baryluk, who stares out the front window with a cigarette in hand [Figure 2.6]. The viewer is situated where Paskievich is assumed to have been, to the left of Baryluk. The image, despite its reference to violence, is calm and sentimental. There is an innocence and playfulness alluded to in the child's behaviour and Baryluk's unconcerned demeanour, alluding to the dynamic of their relationship. While the photograph is undated, it is clear that the image was taken before 1982. The carefree and playful sentiment in this image gives itself over easily to a sense of nostalgia. The situated and temporal quality of the image places the viewer where Paskievich stood, and allows us to imagine being in a place and time where children roamed free in Hallowe'en costumes, aging shopkeepers smoked at the register filling the space with the smell of tobacco, and Bazooka gum could be found in every shop.

The specificity of these images in a particular space and time incites an imaginative viewing practice where the photograph may be reimagined as not only a material object, but as an embodied encounter. While the dates of these photographs aren't given, they can be roughly assumed based on the clothing, vehicles and billboards which colour the streets. The importance placed not only on grounding the images in the North End but also making clear the approximate spot in which the image is taken, brings the viewer into a moment where the photographer and subject came into contact with one another. As Elizabeth Edwards states, "historical imagination and its photographic translation emerged from a profoundly embodied experience of place, marked by movement through time and space. This cannot be reduced to the abstract space of an objectifying and appropriative gaze of landscape; space is rendered not as a mere container of

action, but is instead the medium for a deeply humanized experience.”⁹⁰ These images also allow us to map out the ways that Paskievich moved through the community. Giving the viewer a sense of his movement, Paskievich creates humorous, sensitive, vibrant portraits of the North End that are redolent of the work of “new documentary photographers” such as Garry Winogrand and Lee Friedlander. As Allison Gilmer states, these “streetscapes have an aura of the unusual, even a touch of the fantastical. They seem like moments that may have never existed.”⁹¹ The complexity and nuance in this community, and the layering of history which has shaped it resembles the equally convoluted nature of the photograph itself. As Lars Frers states, “street photography is a producer that connects daily life to representation and thus is characterized by what photographer Lee Friedlander calls an ‘excess of fact.’ The complexity of any site generates a photographic space that leads to the proliferation of meaning in much the same way that urban life is not fixed, but constantly in motion; Both represented and unfinished.”⁹² By conceptualizing these photographs as the traces of embodied encounters, we are better able to interpret how they work to, as John Roberts states, “bear witness, with all its contingencies, to the endless production and reproduction of space.”⁹³

⁹⁰Elizabeth Edwards, “Out and About: Photography, Topography, and Historical Imagination,” in *Double Exposure: Memory and Photography*, ed. Olga Shevchenko (Transactions, 2014), pp. 177-209), 148.

⁹¹John Paskievich et al., *The North End Revisited* (Winnipeg, Manitoba: University of Manitoba Press, 2017), 72.

⁹²Lars Frers, *Encountering Urban Spaces: Visual and Material Performances in the City* (Routledge, 2016), 10.

⁹³John Roberts, *Photography and Its Violations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 155.

Conclusion

Using a phenomenological approach, this chapter has framed John Paskievich's photographs of the North End as an embodied practice. While he draws on the visual techniques of the new documentary photographers in photographing what he knows and what is interesting, the situated quality of his images places them unmistakably in the North End. As a locale, the North End can be characterized by grand demographic changes and periods of struggle and activism. While the physical space of the North End already gets contested in public memory, the reproduction of the space in photographs creates even more layers through which the community may be viewed. As Henri Lefebvre has expressed, "representations of space have a substantial role and a specific influence in the production of space."⁹⁴ By conceptualizing his photographs as traces of embodied experience, we are able to better understand the layered nature of place and the way that the photograph and our reception of it is engaged in a constant renewal of seeing. As Edwards states, "the uses of photography that engage us here are not only a naturalized ambience of a sense of the past, but self-conscious and imaginative acts of inscription in response to the corporeally experienced material traces of the past."⁹⁵

⁹⁴Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (London: Blackwell, 1991), 42.

⁹⁵Elizabeth Edwards, "Out and About: Photography, Topography, and Historical Imagination," in *Double Exposure: Memory and Photography*, ed. Olga Shevchenko (Transactions, 2014), pp. 177-209), 179.

Chapter 3: Re-Placing the North End: A Practice of Photographic Citizenship

In her discussions of citizenship, Gabrielle Moser uses the term “resistant historiography” to describe “a mode of rewriting history that looks in the wrong places, gazes disobediently, and imagines alternate encounters between the citizens of photography.”⁹⁶ While Moser’s concept is largely directed at historical research, arguably it can be applied to image making. In this case, Paskievich revisits the past photographic tellings of the North End’s history to create an alternative rendering of the neighbourhood himself. The concept of “resistant historiography” can help to conceptualize how John Paskievich’s images both re-place and reimagine photographic representations of the past.

In the last two chapters, this thesis has discussed how Paskievich’s images may be understood as encounters. Using a phenomenological approach, I have explored how the images were specifically situated in the North End through references to geographical markers and the embodied practice of walking through the neighbourhood. Building on the embodied nature of these photographs, this chapter will continue to look at the visual strategies Paskievich used to create an alternate topography of the North End. It will argue that these images complicate earlier iterations of belonging while also evoking embodied and imaginative viewing practices. By recognizing the embodied exchange which informed these images, this chapter will draw attention to the ways in which that process had profound effects on the way that the images, and the North End, are remembered by viewers. In doing so I will posit that through his creation of a renewed topography of the North End, Paskievich has both engaged in and evoked a series of citizenship practices.

⁹⁶Gabrielle Moser, *Projecting Citizenship: Photography and Belonging in the British Empire* (Penn State University Press, 2020), 124.

The chapter begins by discussing the ways in which Paskievich's collaborative engagement with his community and use of irony have disrupted the dominant narratives reproduced in the city's photographic history.⁹⁷ By imbuing his subjects with a sense of agency and complexity while introducing irony into these urban environments, Paskievich uses his practice of walking through the North End to disentangle stereotypes which have pervaded the photographic history of the community. The specificity of time and place as well as the embodied quality of these images often work to evoke a nostalgic response in viewers. Drawing from Henri Lefebvre's theory around the production of space, and Elizabeth Edwards affective approach to photography, this chapter maintains that Paskievich's images are active agents in the social production of the North End. This chapter finishes with a brief look at the reception of these images and how this reception is equally engaged in the layered practice of place making.

Renegotiating Visual Belonging

One of the primary ways in which Paskievich's images practice citizenship is in their reinterpretation of belonging to the city. The most widely disseminated images of Winnipeg, such as those by L.B. Foote, often portrayed the conditions in the North End as a side effect of urban sprawl. These impersonal representations visually dismissed the people living in the North End and naturalized poverty and crime as unfortunate yet inevitable problems. Through various aesthetic strategies, Paskievich is able to engage with and negotiate the history of photographic representation in the city of Winnipeg. As discussed in Chapter One, the North End was often represented as the underbelly of the city. Depictions of the city's Indigenous people, for example,

were often limited to images of ceremonies or meetings between city officials and Indigenous leaders. The built environment of the North End was typically only pictured in relation to crime or unrest during the general strike. By taking an approach that draws on visual strategies made famous by the New Documentary photographers, Paskievich complicates and negotiates earlier visual interpretations of citizenry. In *Dufferin Avenue at Salter Street* [Figure 3.1], for instance, Paskievich photographs a procession of Indigenous people marching down the middle of the street. They stand in front of an auto body shop with a sign on its roof reading, “Welcome to the North End, People over Profit.” This phrase is repeated on signs and buildings across many Paskievich photographs depicting the borders of the North End; they are markers of the community’s working class solidarity. The fusion of the neighbourhood’s leftist roots and more recent Indigenous activism indicate the agency and perseverance of the people of the North End, both in their political and cultural affiliations.

Made while walking around his community, most of Paskievich’s images centre around the demographic shift in the North End as Indigenous people moved into houses left abandoned by waves of earlier immigrants. As a result, over time his photographs have come to contain an increasing Indigenous presence which reflect these changes. These images not only defy several stereotypes perpetuated about Indigenous people; but they also assert an urban Indigenous presence. One of the more concerning effects of earlier representations of the North End, for example, is the way in which Indigenous people were represented either as naive victims of urban development or as token individuals at local events. In addition, Indigenous peoples were often simply erased from view. Their absence within many visual representations of the city worked to deny the sustained presence of Indigenous people in Canada and to naturalize

practices of settler colonialism, which is —according to Patrick Wolfe —built on the elimination of Indigenous cultures.⁹⁸ In contrast, Paskievich’s photographs of the demographic shift in the North End work to affirm Indigenous presence in the community and call attention to the circumstances that led them there.

By referencing local Indigenous institutions that have arisen in the North End, Paskievich calls attention to the continued perseverance of his neighbours in adjusting to conditions of poverty, racism and crime. One of Paskievich’s more recent images *Selkirk Avenue and Powers Street (Bear Clan Patrol)* [Figure 3.2], for example, shows a young Indigenous couple outside of an Indigenous healing centre. The image was taken seconds before Paskievich joined the Bear Clan Patrol, a volunteer group that promotes safety in the community, for a walk to remember missing and murdered Indigenous women from the North End. While Paskievich has photographed Indigenous citizens of the North End for many years, the images taken on this particular excursion are distinct. The mural behind the couple alludes to the changes that the built environment of the North End has undergone since the influx of Indigenous people to the neighbourhood. The roadside memorials in front yards and on familiar tree-lined streets are indicative of persistent violence within the community. Notably (and unlike Paskievich’s earlier work), these images are often devoid of people. Paskievich also seems to insert a sense of distance between himself and the Indigenous community; he walks with them in solidarity and provides visual cues that he is a settler and outside their community. In doing so, his images represent the complexity of settler culture by maintaining respectful distance, and indicate a shift

⁹⁸Patrick Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (2006): pp. 387-409, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623520601056240>).

in his sense of belonging to the community. Nonetheless, in these images and many others, Paskievich's subjects are visualized with a certain complexity and tension. In images similar to those analyzed above, Paskievich highlights narrative ambiguity. The photographs leave the viewer with more questions than answers. Of this ambiguity, Paskievich states, "the people in these photographs become larger than life because they represent the spirit of a place, or the mysterious interaction between environments and how people do or do not reflect them."⁹⁹

A Shift in Visual Representation

Paskievich's photographs of his North End community stand in stark contrast to L.B. Foote's iconic early press images of Winnipeg. While many of the differences can be attributed to changes in technology and visual style, Paskievich's images are distinctive in their personal temperament and relatable quality.

The second half of the twentieth century saw a shift in representation which moved away from grand commissioned images of the city to a more embodied street photography. This shift can of course be widely attributed to technological changes, which saw an increase in the volume of portable handheld cameras like the Leica, which allowed photographers to transport their equipment more easily and engage more spontaneously with the sights of the city. Urban images published by the *Winnipeg Free Press* in the early twentieth century often employed elevated

⁹⁹ John Paskievich, *The North End Revisited: Photographs by John Paskievich* (Winnipeg, Manitoba: University of Manitoba Press, 2017).

vantage points, such as from the top of The Fort Garry Hotel, for instance.¹⁰⁰ These images depict novel views for newspaper readership. While these photographs speak to the excitement and optimism that engulfed the growing city at the turn of the century, they did so from the perspective of the builders, movers and shakers in the city. The ‘bird’s eye view’ presented to the viewer valuable perspectives on urban growth in the city, but did little to account for the tactile experiences that people were having with this new space.

The introduction of the 35 mm camera (including the Leica) in the 1920s and the subsequent popularity of street photography, provided photographers (including Paskievich) a tool with which to access the city more directly and at street level. The snapshot aesthetic which developed out of this approach was largely rooted in scenes of the familiar.¹⁰¹¹⁰² These scenes of walking the streets of the North End were strikingly familiar to residents, both in the geographical orientation of the streets and in the faces and places pictured. Of course, even the most *seemingly* candid and neutral photograph has a complex relationship with truth; yet, the snapshot photograph in all of its ordinariness, resonated with viewers as being more believable and relatable.

¹⁰⁰See: Chapter One Figure 1. 6.

¹⁰¹In the 1940s, Lisette Model was one of the first artists to defend snapshots—photographs that are (or appear) uncomposed, loose, or impulsive—as important and powerful images. By the 1960s, the snapshot had come to be a popular art form, in particular through the gritty, spontaneous street photography of the new documentary photographers: Diane Arbus, Lee Friedlander and Garry Winogrand. “Snapshot Aesthetic,” Artsy, <https://www.artsy.net/gene/snapshot-aesthetic>

¹⁰²Robert Hirsch and Nathan Lyons, “Nathan Lyons on the Snapshot ,” *Center for Exploratory and Perceptual Art*, 1993, <https://lightresearch.net/interviews/lyonssnapshot.pdf>.

Images of poor tenement houses in the North End taken by L.B. Foote on assignment on the other hand, did very little to resonate with the people living in the North End at the turn-of-the-century [Figure 1.6]. Because their intention was to call attention to the derelict state that poor communities had succumbed to through the growth of the city, the likeness of figures was unimportant. The dark, grainy quality of these images differed greatly from Foote's other photographs of the city. While they effectively communicated the conditions they were meant to, the lack of recognizable faces or names greatly impacted the ways that those being represented in the images related to them. The quotidian character of Paskievich's images were not as focused and intentional as the assignments given to photographers such as L.B. Foote, who—as discussed earlier—photographed the city and its inhabitants for specific purposes and to focused ends, often aimed at providing a view of the North End to those not from there.

In contrast to Foote, Paskievich saw his photographic practice as more of a homage to his own community. His orientation as a fellow community member had profound effects on the level of accessibility that he had to his community, and in the sensitive manner that he was able to portray his neighbours, some of whom he had known his whole life. By photographing people in the street, Paskievich is able to provide nuance to the relationship that citizens have with the city, while also capturing the ironic happenstances of urban life. As a locale, the North End exists as a layered and diverse space. While Paskievich doesn't photograph the neighbourhood with narrative intention, he does justify his decision to become a street photographer to be the result of the economic make-up of the community. He has stated that people took to the street largely because their homes were smaller, and often shared with multiple generations. In regard to the placement of his subjects outside, Paskievich says, “corner stores and movie theatres are now

gone, replaced by pharmacies that seem to dispense drugs like candy. There are still people, young and old, and in between, on the streets on the steps, in the laneways, and these people still seem to be going from one place to another. In other neighbourhoods people have cars so the street life is not there. Life is more out in the open.”¹⁰³ As a resident of the North End himself, Paskievich possesses an intimate familiarity with that neighbourhood and its inhabitants. The personal and subjective way in which he photographs the community has had continued effects on how they are received by viewers.

As Henri Lefebvre has discussed, representations of space can have just as much bearing, if not more, on how a space is conceived and constituted in public imagination. As stated before, Lefebvre asserts in his theory of space production, that "representations of space have a substantial role and a specific influence in the production of space. Their intervention occurs by way of construction, as a project, embedded in a spatial context and a texture which call for 'representations' that will not vanish into the symbolic or imaginary realms.”¹⁰⁴ While images of the North End produced at the turn-of-the-century, for example, capture the physical layout of the North End, they did not engage with the ways that that environment came into contact with its inhabitants on a daily basis. These interactions and their representation have bearing on the way that North End exists in popular imagination. This process of remembering is also in constant relation to the passing of time. Elizabeth Edwards argues that in order to understand these images as situated encounters we must, “re-embed the resulting photographs in the networks of bodies, movements and sociabilities in which they originated, demonstrating that

¹⁰³ John Paskievich, *The North End Revisited* (2017).

¹⁰⁴ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (London: Blackwell, 1991), 42.

any effort to understand these images as ways of partaking in local histories to start from reconstructing the bodily experiences of walking, surveying, seeing, and imagining that surrounded their creation.”¹⁰⁵ By conceptualizing these images as encounters that the photographer had with the city and its residents as we walked throughout it, we are able to better grasp the context through which these images are made. As Robin Kelsey states, “photography’s reputation as a realistic and objective recording device is grounded not in any intrinsic agreement between its images and reality but rather in its systematic conformity to the reality upholding social uses to which it has been assigned.”¹⁰⁶ In other words (and as applied to Paskievich’s work), the photograph’s claim to objectivity rests more in its ability to visualize the social dynamic between the citizens of the North End, their environment, and the camera, than to providing a visual record that sustains an objective narrative of poverty in the city. While all of the representations of the North End make up its identity as an urban locale, it is the visual strategies of irony and playfulness which encourage an imaginative viewing practice.

Aside from his community-centred and personal approach to photographing the North End, Paskievich’s images also differ from earlier images of the neighbourhood in their use of aesthetic playfulness and humour. I wish to make clear that my assertion of Paskievich’s photographic style is not to claim that earlier representations of the city were without aesthetic merit, but instead to shed light on the ways in which Paskievich specifically used aesthetic strategies to upset some of the stereotypes of the North End which permeated the press photographs of the twentieth century. Paskievich’s images are firmly rooted in aesthetics, and a

¹⁰⁵Olga Shevchenko, *Double Exposure: Memory and Photography* (Taylor & Francis Ltd, 2017), 12.

¹⁰⁶ Robin Kelsey, *Photography and the Art of Chance* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2015), 276.

deep knowledge of form and composition. His education at Ryerson during the peak of documentary-style photography equipped him with a formal knowledge of composition and style. Picking up on the conscious irony employed by a new generation of documentary photographers appearing in the United States at the time, Paskievich saw his photographic practice as way to utilize these tools in his own community. From the time he began photographing the North End in 1976, Paskievich exhibited and published his images. None of them were dated, captioned, or amended with technical information. As George Melynk states, “when photos are not identified, they become self focused, framed by their very content. They become mythic sites of invented stories.”¹⁰⁷ Approaching the North End as a mythic site, Paskievich was never interested in telling photojournalistic stories. Instead, his lack of notes about precise locations, his eye for the peculiar and fantastical, and the framing of his images as art objects, all made evident the complex relationship these images had with the concept of ‘objective truth.’ Instead, Paskievich hoped to create a tension in his images, which would leave viewers with more questions than answers. One way of doing so was his eye for the unusual, and the myriad of ways that people and their built environment could come in contact with one another in moments of curious circumstance.

Irony as Visual Strategy

Paskievich’s inclination toward irony in his photographs of the North End marks one of the most striking ways that he renegotiates with previous representations of the North End. In a statement against the necessity of the photograph to possess a visual narrative, John Szarkowski asserted in 1965 that, “the photograph need not tell cohesive narratives but produce individually

¹⁰⁷Paskievich, *The North End Revisited* (University of Manitoba, 2017).

memorable pictures.”¹⁰⁸ While Paskievich’s intention may not have been to explicitly draw from his predecessors, or have a conscious intention to join the ranks of the “new documentary” photographers of the United States, his photographs unequivocally borrow from their use of the snapshot aesthetic and visual irony. Robin Kelsey states, “new documentary photos were about offering a distinctive angle on social experience and its material circumstances.”¹⁰⁹ Unlike earlier representations of the North End with their focus on criminal activity and tenement housing, these images inject humour into life in the North End. In “Picturing Irony,” Biljana Scott defines irony as “a visual strategy made up of five main components. These components are an element of obliviousness on the part of one or more of the involved parties, an awareness on the part of the ironist and their audience, an ideological component, which sets two orders of reality and associated belief systems into conflict with each other, a dissembling component, and an incongruity.”¹¹⁰ This robust definition encompasses the complexity of irony, as a style predicated on the distrust of meta-narratives and dominant representations. The self-questioning and self-referring style is used, according to Scott, “not as a definitive record of reality but as a conspicuous artifice.”¹¹¹ Paskievich’s strategy to photograph evocative instances of tension in the city led to a body of work which is both sensitive and cruelly ironic. Drawing on the compositional elements of the built environment, Paskievich has an eye for ironic humour in his surroundings, often built upon a discrepancy between what our expectations are and what we are

¹⁰⁸John Szarkowski, *The Photographers Eye* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966).

¹⁰⁹ Robin Kelsey, *Photography and the Art of Chance* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2015), 278.

¹¹⁰Biljana Scott, “Picturing Irony: The Subversive Power of Photography 1,” *Visual Communication* 3, no. 1 (2004): pp. 31-59, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1470357204039597>, 35.

¹¹¹Ibid.

shown. These evocative pictures, sometimes funny and other times concerning, imbue a personal reverence for his subjects. Where earlier images that captured people in relation to their physical environments did so in a way to tell a story of urban poverty or development, these images made no claim at the time to tell a story. The primary interest for Paskievich is the ironic potential of a photograph, and the capacity for tension.¹¹² In fact, many have discussed Paskievich's images as mythologizing the North End. As Melynk, for example, states, "there is something else in the photos-something foreboding, arresting. A soulfulness that grabs us and makes us want to linger. From the perspective of today, the faces and streetscapes have an aura of the unusual, even a touch of the fantastical."¹¹³

In *Higgins Avenue at Main Street* [Figure 3.3] for instance, Paskievich pictures an unidentified person taking a nap on a park bench. The bench displays an advertisement for a local realtor reading "Need a realtor? Check your local bus bench for specialists." The realtor pictured on the bench lays facing the viewer, the man on the bench echoing his posture. The juxtaposition between the text and the man on the bus bench is at once curious and ironic. An advertisement intended to sell homes becomes obstructed by the homeless, and the notion of specialists becomes ironic and playful, while also containing layers of political messaging. Kathryn Mussallem states that the new documentary photographers, "share a photographic aesthetic that is in opposition to idealism, an aesthetic free of sentimentality and romanticism and full of criticism and pointed humour."¹¹⁴ While it hasn't been said explicitly in regards to this

¹¹²Paskievich, *The North End Revisited* (2017), 156.

¹¹³Ibid.

¹¹⁴Kathryn Mussallem, "From the Subtle to the Hyperbolic: The Rise of Irony, Camp and Kitsch in 20th Century Photography" (dissertation, 2000), 6.

image, Paskievich has asserted that many of his images are the result of a negotiation or collaboration between himself and the sitter. He states, “if there’s something really interesting that I think would make a portrait, I’ll ask if I can take a picture of them as they are, or maybe even move them here or there. Sometimes there’s a lot of collaboration.”¹¹⁵ It can be speculated that this man was already laying on the bench, but perhaps not in a way which mirrored the advertisement. In this image, irony is used as a vehicle through which to point out the inconsistencies of urban life, through the ways that citizens interact with their environment in unusual ways. As Brett Abbott explains, “stylistic choices are made not as meaningless garnish to enliven the presentation of subjects but as an integral part of the photographer’s interpretive program, helping to endow the stories with experiential significance.”¹¹⁶

In *Stella Avenue at Salter Street* [Figure 3.4], irony is conveyed by an image of a child climbing over a fence with a wooden placard saying “God now commands all men to repent from sin.” The directed gaze of the child towards the viewer invites us to relate to him; we enjoy his energy and disregard for harsh religious judgements indicated by the sign. Climbing up over the fence, the child carries a sheepish expression which evokes a sense of naiveté and mischief. As the viewer, we are complicit in his escape into the street, and aware of the warning of sin which one must avoid at all cost. This sense of mischief is further complicated when considering the moral implications of photographing children in the street decades earlier. James Opp asserts that photographs of children were often used in early press photographs of the city to express the immorality of urban environments. He states, “to place children photographically in the street

¹¹⁵Paskievich, *The North End Revisited* (2017), 159.

¹¹⁶Brett Abbott, *Engaged Observers: Documentary Photography Since the Sixties* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2010), 25.

was to document the moral boundaries that threatened the nation. The streets of the city were defined as a moral space that produced criminal bodies, an area that threatened the health of boys in particular for they couldn't play in nature to unleash their outlaw tendencies."¹¹⁷ Paskievich's visual references to childhood, sin, and the overt escape of the child into the street is both clever and ironic in its nod to the history of moral order in the North End.

Paskievich often evokes imagery of children in his work, usually engaged in some sort of unruly behaviour. In *Pritchard Avenue* [Figure 3. 5], a child is seen holding a toy gun behind his back while another boy leans through the window of a police car to chat with an officer. The juxtaposition between children, violence and sin in Paskievich's images depict a tension that raises many questions for the viewer. While the images do not negate the fact that children could find trouble in the street, they do celebrate the children as active agents in this narrative, and evoke a sense of tension. This ironic ode to the past and the juxtaposition between danger and moral order are frequently taken up by the image of the child.

Irony is also used in these images to call attention to the element of chance in the photograph. In *Lorne Avenue* [Figure 3. 6], Paskievich photographs a middle aged woman adorned in an abstract, floral pantsuit evocative of the 1970s. Her hair is up swept and she stands aside the sidewalk in front of a well-kept tree lined street. It appears to be summer from the amount of plants and foliage that decorate the lawns around her. Appearing to be just leaving home for a day out, the woman poses for Paskievich on the quiet street. But this otherwise mundane photograph is disrupted by the appearance of a young boy lying belly down on the

¹¹⁷James Opp, "Re-Imaging the Moral Order of Urban Space: Religion and Photography in Winnipeg, 1900-1914," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association Toronto* 2002 13, no. 1 (September 2006): pp. 73-93, <https://doi.org/10.7202/031154ar>, 86.

sidewalk and looking into the camera. The boy, unlike the well-dressed woman, is wearing no shoes. The lack of concern or interest in the half clothed child on the street as well as the absence of any other figures or cars brings a multitude of questions to the viewer, but provides no clues to answer them. Perhaps we could read that the child, like the woman's flashy pantsuit, stands in for a kind of free spirited safety of the 1970s, where children treated the sidewalks outside of their homes like intimate play yards. The image brings the viewer into the scene, allowing them to feel like they are part of an inside joke. The woman posing for her portrait, is not aware that she is being interrupted by a child apparently having a tantrum. We are also made aware, in this instance, of Paskievich's implicit presence in the encounter. The triangulated gaze shared between the child, Paskievich, and the woman being photographed creates the sense of a closed encounter, which enables us to imagine Paskievich as a subject of the photograph himself. Robin Kelsey states, "whereas in a traditionally deliberate art form, such as the novel, chance comes across as something contrived, in photography it comes across as something encountered."¹¹⁸

Paskievich's use of irony as a visual strategy allows us to engage with the irregularities of the city. By calling attention to both his own implicit role in the images and the layered, nuanced nature of the neighbourhood, Paskievich asks us to consider the ways that spaces can be reimagined through citizen engagement. These photographs of the North End have, over time, encouraged a response by viewers to see their community in a nostalgic light. As Ariella Azoulay states, "it is in the further reception of these images-in their public life and not just their inception, where citizenship is practiced and history explored."¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸Robin Kelsey, *Photography and the Art of Chance* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2015), 1.

¹¹⁹Ariella Azoulay, *The Civil Contract of Photography*, ed. Rela Mazali and Ruvik Danieli (New York: Zone Books, 2014).

Reading Paskievich's Urban Images

As discussed, the photograph's ability to create a sense of belonging is impacted by the ways they are circulated and contextualized. It is important to understand that at the time of their making, Paskievich's images were presented as aesthetic objects. While Paskievich started his photography career freelancing for local periodicals, his images of the North End were primarily understood as photographs taken by a local artist. In a 1982 *Winnipeg Free Press* article, an image of Ted Barulyk's grocery was used to contextualize Paskievich's NFB film on the local institution.¹²⁰ Another, titled "Would be Richler captures North End his way" from 1978, makes a connection between Paskievich and the Canadian writer Mordecai Richler, who was known for his quick wit and insight.¹²¹ While the positioning of these images in the press were largely in relation to their identity as art objects, they were occasionally used to visualize the experiences of immigrants in the North End [Figure 1.6]. In a 1992 issue of *Prairie Fire* entitled "Echoes from Ukrainian Canada," Paskievich's images are used to showcase the large Ukrainian presence in the city.¹²² I bring these articles into context here in order to demonstrate the frames which were imposed on these images during the time of their initial dispersal. While these images may be read as historical records today, at the time of their creation they were framed as art objects. Recognized for their humour and personality, these images were never discussed as furthering the social causes or plight of the North End, and were distinct from the press photographs who continued to document crime and current events in the community. This context is necessary in

¹²⁰ "Tale Behind the Story," *Winnipeg Free Press*, 1982.

¹²¹ "Would Be Richler Portrays North End His Way." *Winnipeg Free Press*. 1978.

¹²² "Echoes From Ukrainian Canada," *Prairie Fire*, 1992, 13 edition, sec. 3.

order to understand and unpack the ways that these images are related to and re-negotiated in the present.

Through their reception as art objects infused with irony, Paskievich's photographs of the North End persist today as traces of the past rooted in nostalgia. George Melynk relates to "Main Street at Redwood Avenue" for instance saying, "my mother spent her final year of life on that corner, at the Ukrainian nursing home named Holy Family. The Orthodox church in the background is the place where my mother put on her only solo concert as a singer. I took tickets at the door."¹²³ The provocation of a memory at the site of a particular locale is one of the most prevalent ways that people relate to and through Paskievich's image of the North End. The recognition of a prominent shop or movie theatre, or an advertisement that evokes memories of products consumed as a child in the North End. Paskievich's images evoke nostalgia and remembering through his sensitive and nuanced portrayal of the neighbourhood. While still recording social inequities, these photographs also privilege the humour and tension in the city, rather than illuminating a narrative of urban poverty upfront.

The sense of pride imbued in the images and their characterization of North End citizens as persevering, hardworking Canadians also imbues Paskievich's images with an optimistic quality. However, this nostalgic connection to place cannot be discussed without understanding the photographs' intricate relationship to time. As Paskievich states, "somebody once said after twenty years every photograph becomes a good photograph because it has something that current photos don't have, and that thing is nostalgia for another time."¹²⁴ The continued return to these

¹²³ Paskievich, *The North End Revisited* (2017), 71.

¹²⁴ Paskievich, *The North End Revisited* (2017).

images and the response that they incite in viewers is both a result of the ways in which they were originally seen, as visualizations of a strong and hardworking community, and also the passing of time. By re-placing the North End in the imagination of its citizens, it can at once be a place to be remembered by citizens and also as an objectively unsafe area in the present.

Paskievich's images are nuanced in that they depict the sometimes violent, derelict conditions of the North End, but also give light to the positive affiliations that he and others have with the space. That it may be remembered with rose coloured hues is not an argument of whether these photographs represent reality or myth, but that their reality and geography are slowly made up over time through viewer's relationship to them. In other words, Paskievich creates a visual topography of the North End which pays tribute to a diverse community in flux, and provides nuance to a space constructed equally of history and nostalgic myth. George Melynk states, "I was not there when John took the photo. The story I project on it is my story and it is a fiction. Only John knows what happened next. My thereness is of a different quality than his. My thereness is a vague similarity based on different memories of the same locales. And how are others who see the photographs also "there."¹²⁵ As Melynk makes clear here, the stories and projections we can place on Paskievich's images are endless, yet all are based on the visual cues presented in a singular frame of the camera. Paskievich's encounter with the people and places in his community become confined to a small fraction of data from decades ago. While his images evoke an engagement and a practice of citizenship, the ways that viewers absorb and relate to the images today are of an entirely different nature. Nostalgia in this scenario possesses a critical capacity which is capable of troubling exclusionary narratives. In her discussion of immiscible time and the temporal layering of space, Bliss Cau Lim asserts, "places have long memories;

¹²⁵Ibid.

space is neither static nor solid, but vibrates with both permanence and becoming.”¹²⁶

Paskievich’s current images do not only strive to represent the North End through rose coloured glasses, but instead lend themselves to the complex relationship between photographs and their spatial and temporal properties. Lim argues for the recognition of “immiscible times,” which she defines as “discrete temporalities incapable of attaining homogeneity with or full incorporation into a uniform chronological present.”¹²⁷

Remembering the North End

As I drove through the residential neighbourhoods and main streets of the North End last fall with John Paskievich, it became clear that he experienced the locality in layers. While we drove by vacant lots which once held community gardens, and turn of the century architecture which now held pharmacies, Paskievich was still able to tell me what street used to grow the best plum tomatoes in the summer. He reminisced about the abundance of movie theatres and hotels, which used to line the main streets, as well as the corner stores which were scattered through the neighbourhood on almost every street corner. However, at the same time, he also spoke about recent vandalism at the old Communist Hall, or the time when several local teens took the head off of a statue of St. Volodymyr, the first Ukrainian Christian Catholic Prince, only to later return it to the steps of the church.¹²⁸ He spoke of the opioid epidemic, which had swept through the

¹²⁶Reilley Bishop-Stall, “Laying Tracks and Tracking Change: An Interrogation of Nostalgia, National Identity, and the Railway in Contemporary Photography,” *Canadian Review of American Studies* 44, no. 2 (2014): pp. 320-344, <https://doi.org/10.3138/cras.2014.s07>, 327.

¹²⁷Ibid.

¹²⁸Shane Gibson, “Stolen Statue Head Returned to Winnipeg Ukrainian Catholic Church,” *CBC News*, May 25, 2019, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/winnipeg-saint-statue-decapitated-returned-1.5150172>).

neighbourhood; yet, at the same time, he showed me a gold statue of Ukrainian poet Markian Shashkevich, which was erected by early immigrants. As we drove up and down the quirky, angular streets of Point Douglass (the oldest part of the North End, and where John grew up), the multiple layered histories of the space were penetrable. While the neighbourhood had transformed physically and demographically in the last few decades, there were still traces of a North End from the past. While Paskievich reminisced about “the better days” of the community, he accepted that this idea of the past was highly mediated by his own personal connection to this place, and the distance he now felt. The ways in which this space gets remembered is therefore nuanced and ever changing. The North End went through phases of growth and decline, and immigration and emigration. Miriam Paeslack states that these kinds of swift changes end up “impacting the space-marking sites and scarring others, forming as Andreas Huyssen put it, a palimpsest, a sense set of literal and metaphorical layers.”¹²⁹ The myriad forms that construct this space and how it gets remembered are central to this analysis. By conceptualizing Paskievich’s photographs as encounters, which are situated in a specific time and place, we are able to have an imaginative viewing practice which encourages us to understand Paskievich’s photographs as an exercise of engagement with his community.

Conclusion

Paskievich’s photographs of the North End of Winnipeg are distinct from earlier representations of the city both through their reception as art objects, their personal approach

¹²⁹Miriam Paeslack, auth, Fisher, Jaimey, and Barbara Mennel, eds. “Subjective Topographies: Berlin in Post-Wall Photography.” In *Spatial Turns : Space, Place, and Mobility in German Literary and Visual Culture*, 397–420. Brill, 2010., 403.

towards subjects, and their playful and ironic compositions. Never claiming to visualize a cohesive narrative, these images instead found interest in the evocative forms and tension inherent to the snapshot photograph. This chapter has discussed the ways in which Paskievich's approach to photographing the North End has produced a visual topography of the community which challenges earlier representations. He achieved this by giving complexity to his subjects, involving them as agents in the photographic process, and using irony to call attention to the ambiguities of the city. The subsequent reception of these images has been largely nostalgic. This chapter has discussed how the North End is not only created through its physical qualities or its representations, but how it is remembered as a product of the two. As Henri Lefebvre states, lived experience in the city is "directly lived through its associated images and symbols."¹³⁰ The embodied practice of the photographic encounter and the images which were produced out of it have challenged and repudiated the way that the North End has been experienced as visualized, by citizens and has evoked an imaginative viewing practice which continues to negotiate how that space exists.

¹³⁰Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Malden: Blackwell, 2016).

Conclusion

“It’s automatic-when you walk-on these words-you are walking in the community-you are part of this community”

Sidewalk graffiti,
Jarvis Avenue and Main Street, Winnipeg [Fig 4.1]

On the first page of Paskievich’s *The North End Revisited* a gelatin-silver print records graffiti inscribed on a sidewalk on the corner of Jarvis Avenue and Main Street. This photograph, unlike many of Paskievich’s other images, shows no people, but instead evokes the act of “walking through” as a means of belonging in the North End. Paskievich’s photographs, spanning a course of fifty years to date (1976-present), capture the demographic, social and political changes of his community over time. Ironic and playful in their composition, these images draw audiences in with their curiosity and leave them at the intersection of a layered community and a sense of the man who photographs it.

Drawing in part from Henri Lefebvre’s theory around the social production of space, this thesis has argued that John Paskievich’s photographs of the North End engage in a practice of ‘placing’ which complicates earlier readings of the Winnipeg neighbourhood. By using an affective approach and tracing Paskievich’s movement through the North End, this thesis has also drawn on the work of Ariella Azoulay and Gabrielle Moser to reimagine the photograph in terms of citizenship, while arguing for a more phenomenological approach to the subject.

Through their reference to time, place and the layers of history in the North End, these photographs evoke an imaginative viewing practice which collapses time and brings the viewer towards the physical encounter which occurred between the photographer and his subject. As Lefebvre states, the city is “directly lived through its associated images and symbols.”¹³¹ The

¹³¹ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Malden: Blackwell, 2016).

photographs, which were produced during Paskievich's many journeys walking through the North End, have renewed and negotiated how that space exists.

In Chapter One, "A History of Photographic Representation in Winnipeg," I discuss the ways in which the city and the North End in particular have been shaped by their photographic history. Tracing the history of photography in Winnipeg from early images of settlement to photographs of industrial growth by city photographer L.B. Foote, this history provides a contextual framework through which Paskievich's images can be analyzed. This chapter also introduces Ariella Azoulay's notion of visual citizenship, and how the challenge to define citizenship photographically suggests that an embodied and phenomenological approach is more appropriate in articulating how the photograph produces space and our belonging to it.

In Chapter Two, "Photography as an Embodied Practice," I explore the North End as a distinct locale, and Paskievich's use of the New Documentary approach to photography to re-visualize his neighbourhood. Using an affective approach and drawing on theory by Henri Lefebvre and Elizabeth Edwards as frames, this chapter traces Paskievich's journey walking through the North End and stresses the embodied quality of his images which are rooted in the photographic encounter.

In Chapter Three, "Re-Placing the North End: A Practice of Photographic Citizenship," this thesis culminates in close readings of Paskievich's photographs. I explore his photographic style, the reception of his images as art objects, and their relationship to nostalgia. Through his personal, playful and ironic approach to the North End and its residents, Paskievich renders a renewed visual topography of the North End. The chapter closes with a discussion of the North

End today, and the layering of histories that continue to impact how its citizens relate to and negotiate their belonging to the community.

By conducting the first critical study of John Paskievich's photographic practice, this thesis contributes to Canadian art history and visual culture studies by shedding light on an overlooked artist and his contributions to the field of Canadian photography. Furthermore, by conceptualizing photographs phenomenologically as encounters, this thesis contributes to a growing body of work at the intersection of art history and urban studies. It also aspires to expand the ways in which we may come to understand street photography beyond the visual.

While this thesis has provided an extensive scholarly analysis of Paskievich's work, there remains a large amount of research to be done. While this study focuses on one particular body of work by Paskievich, there is little scholarly work done on his other photographs and films. Also, as Paskievich continues to photograph in the North End, later research may be done on the development of Paskievich's style and attempts to visualize the neighbourhood as its dynamics shift. In terms of viewing urban documentary photographs from a phenomenological perspective, many questions remain around the impact of these images on both the memories and identity of former residents of the North End, and the wider public perception of the community. Further research may be done on community reception to these images.

Although the ongoing nature of this subject lends itself to further research, the analysis of Paskievich's photographs of the North End that I have conducted, suggests that these images are engaged in a practice of 'placing.' As the introductory chapter's literature review has suggested,

scholarship on photographers working at the local level and their relationship to the cities they photograph remains underdeveloped in the history of Canadian photography. This thesis has begun to fill this gap by exploring the work of Winnipeg photographer John Paskievich and his engagement with his city, and has aimed to reframe the way that photography and urban space are conceptualized.

At the beginning of this thesis I referenced an image, which depicted a young child on top of a street sign at the intersection of Salter and Manitoba Streets [Figure 5.2]. This image, as stated earlier, is quite emblematic of Paskievich's photographic practice as a whole in terms of its irony and subject matter. However, it also brings to mind the apt metaphor of the intersection. Paskievich's photographs, through their continued reference to converging streets and meeting points, bring together the multitude of histories which have shaped the North End, and merge the past and present in a playful and nuanced fashion. This analysis has followed a similar trajectory, meeting at the intersection of art history and urban studies, to investigate the capacity of the photography to exist both visually and affectively. As Stephen Osbourne states eloquently, "Paskievich leads us precisely to the surprise of the ordinary, of that which becomes invisible to the people who live it, and which Paskievich the photographer is able to retain, or recover: the fresh view. He sees for the first time: the now remains fresh for him. The art of seeing as expressed in these photographs is a kind of touching, a tactile response to the world; these photographs emerge from a phenomenology of the local: they are an embrace, given rather than taken."¹³²

¹³²Stephen, Osbourne and John, Paskievich, *The North End*. Winnipeg, Manitoba: University of Manitoba Press, 2007, xv.

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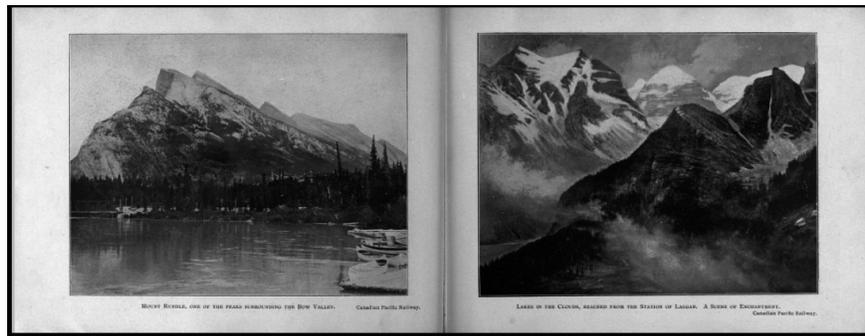


Figure 1.2 *Main Street from City Hall, Winnipeg MA*. Photograph. Canadian Pacific Railway Company; William Notman & Sons. *Canada's Scenic Grandeur: Four Thousand Miles Across Canada*. 1901. University of Toronto Public Library, 2008. <https://archive.org/details/canadasscenicgra00canauoft/page/35/mode/2up>



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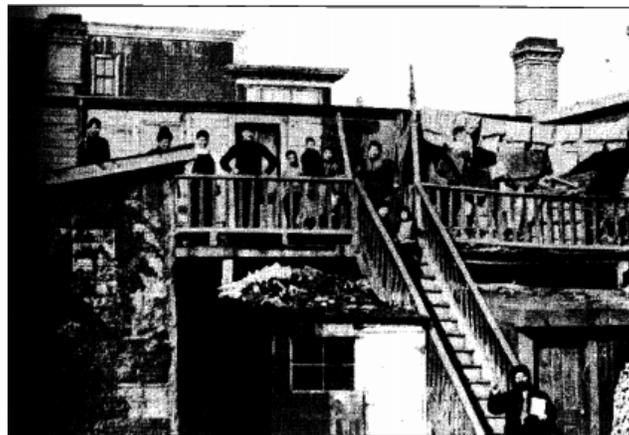


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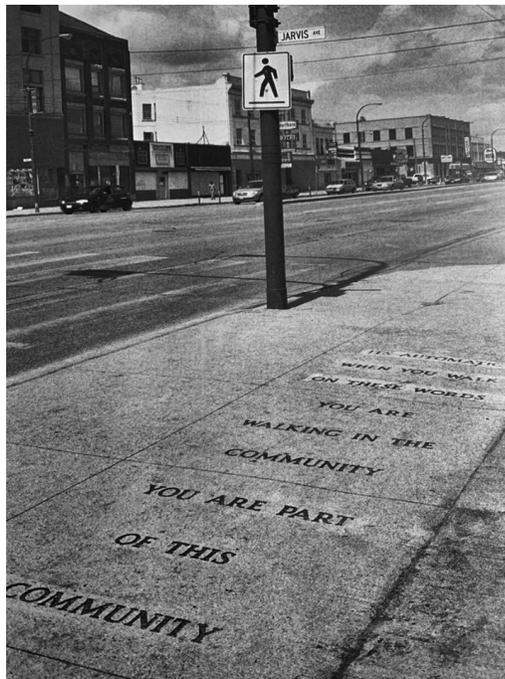
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