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Ryan Bakerink *Chicago 2020*

Texts by Ryan Bakerink, Tim McIlrath
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A time capsule of Chicago, addressing one of the most challenging years in American history

How is it possible to feel immediately at home in a place you have never seen before? This question still haunts photographer Ryan Bakerink twenty years after he first stepped off the train in Chicago, where he continues to live to this day.

This book is dedicated to the city for which his heart beats and describes a journey of self-reflection that ends in a time capsule of sorts. Throughout 2020, he took photographs in all seventy-seven community areas of the American city to trace his fascination for it, to find his place in it, and to understand how it has shaped him. *Chicago 2020* is more than a declaration of love for a city. In a time of social and political turmoil defined by the pandemic, Bakerink discovers hidden treasures amidst the emptiness and the pure beauty of humanity.

From the introduction by Tim McIlrath:

A person that closes their eyes and touches one side of Chicago might find a no-frills, working-class city far from the lights of the American coasts, but with lights of its own. Chicago puts its head down and gets things done, asking for no accolades along the way. (...) Another person might close their eyes and feel our perfect spring weather (...). Keep your eyes closed and touch another side to find a big city with big city problems. You will find stories that are dying to be heard.

From the text by Ryan Bakerink:

The project evolved beyond a journey of self-discovery to also become a time capsule of a great American city during a time of political unrest, economic uncertainty, social injustice, and a pandemic. I expected this project to be a challenge but not in the way that it was. (...) Coincidentally, what I had hoped to learn about myself, happened

precisely because of how difficult 2020 was. (...) This self-discovery helped me realize that the snap decision I made when I first stepped foot in Chicago was what made me the man I am today.

Ryan Bakerink is a photographer in Chicago, IL, focusing on social issues and counterculture lifestyle, specifically within the music industry, off the grid communities, travel, and portraiture. Ryan seeks to stretch his on personal and social boundaries by searching for authenticity in the world around him. The ultimate goal of Ryan's work has been to pull the curtain back and expose the general public to lifestyles, communities, and places that have been overlooked to help provide a greater understanding of human nature.

www.ryanbakerink.com

Tim McIlrath is lead singer and songwriter for the multi-platinum selling Chicago rock band *Rise Against*. *Rise Against* is known for their politically charged music and outspoken social commentary covering topics such as social justice, homophobia, animal rights, economic inequality, and modern warfare. In 2021, Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot proclaimed June 4th to be "Rise Against Day" in Chicago.

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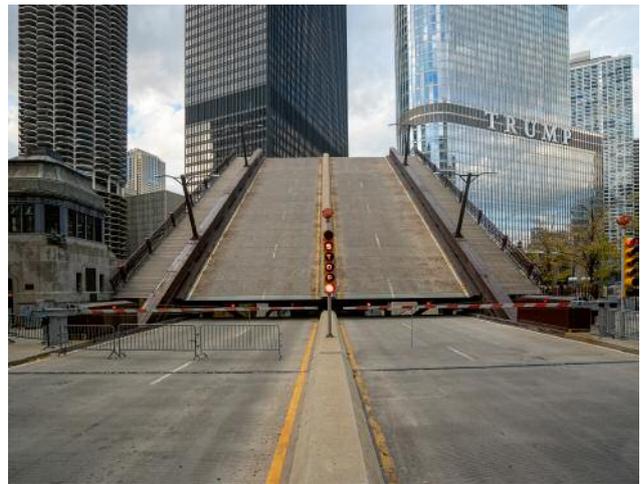
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