

Over the past ten years, the films and photographs of Montreal-born, Philadelphia-based artist David Hartt have explored how social values are expressed in the built environment. Whether considering the offices of the Johnson Publishing Company—home to *Ebony* and *Jet* magazines—or reflecting on unrealized urban plans for post-war Athens and Detroit, Hartt's work looks carefully at the legacy of late modernist design and its corresponding ideals.

His most recent project, *in the forest*, continues this investigation, taking up Moshe Safdie's abandoned Habitat Puerto Rico project. Building on the experimental housing typology first advanced by Safdie in Montreal's iconic Habitat 67, Habitat Puerto Rico was initiated in 1968, intended to be one of many iterations of the project realized across the globe. Nearly fifty years later, Hartt revisits the site in San Juan where parts of the unfinished project still remain, considering the fraught symbolism of this moment in modernism—both its colonial and nationalist undertones and its failure to build a better world.

Borrowing its title from a chapter in Claude Levi-Strauss's 1955 memoir *Tristes Tropiques*—an anthropological classic that raises questions about how a subject might be represented and engaged—this exhibition includes a new film, a pair of related photographs and a series of aluminum and ceramic sculptures installed throughout the gallery, the latter housing a selection of tropical plants. These mirror the vegetation outside in Gairloch Gardens, itself an imported landscape transposed onto the former wetlands of Lake Ontario.

*David Hartt: in the forest* was commissioned by the Graham Foundation, Chicago, with additional support from Oakville Galleries.

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