

# THE PRODUCTION LINE

## The 20th-Century Woman at Work

The way we dress for work can offer clues about what we do for a living, where we are employed, and even our professional rank. Through the twentieth century, the roles of women in the workforce expanded dramatically thanks to a rising economy, two world wars, new technologies, and vast social change.

Clothing worn, and made by, Baltimore women mirrored the changing status of women in the workforce. Early on, women were expected to wear dresses regardless of the rigors of the job. During WWII, female factory workers began dressing like their male co-workers. Pants eventually gained acceptance socially and at work, as fashion trends responded to women's needs. "Power suits" materialized in the 1980's as more women entered management.

The current garment loft window display explores the history of local women's work uniforms. The mini-exhibition is curated by museum volunteer Debbie Farthing and will be on view through January 2020.



The garment loft window display at the BMI.

## Join Photojournalist Joe Giordano for a Twitter Conversation

Joe Giordano's relationship with the steel industry goes back to seeing his grandfather take his last breath surrounded by family and green oxygen tanks in his Dundalk home. He was a member of the mechanics'

union at Eastern Stainless and a Navy veteran who died of white lung from the mills. Joe started documenting the decline of the American steel industry 15 years ago as a reporter for the *Dundalk Eagle*. *Shattered*, his solo photography exhibition now on display at the Baltimore Museum of Industry, takes the viewer on a tour of the failing mills of Sparrows Point starting in 2004, just as predatory investors began to buy up mills at the expense of its retirees who lost large swathes of their pensions almost overnight.



J.M. Giordano in the *Shattered* exhibition.

The photos in the exhibition show the once mighty Bethlehem Steel Mill at Sparrows Point, and Eastern Stainless the mill responsible for the steel of the St. Louis Arch and the Golden Gate Bridge in sharp decline and, ultimately, death. Dangling limbs of rebar, a main office stripped of its facade, the faces of retirees--women, men, black, Jewish, Native American, and white-etched with a hard-edged age that comes from working the same job for almost half a century. The shining star of Bethlehem, built by the workers and affixed to the L blast furnace, shows brightly though a thick brew of December fog, soot, and ash not as a symbol of hope, but the last remnants of an inevitable closure.

These poignant photos will be the topic of an online conversation with Giordano on Wednesday, August 14, from 7 to 8pm. The chat will take place on Twitter using the hashtag #BaltIndustryChat.

*Shattered is made possible with support from Howard Bank and the Delaplaine Foundation.*

## Mistrust. Pride. Cancer. Prosperity. Shock. Community.

A series of striking contrasts emerged as themes throughout the BMI's "A Mill on the Patapsco" story sharing program at the Sollers Point branch of the Baltimore County Public Library in June. As part of the museum's commitment to community engagement in our Bethlehem Steel Legacy Project, the BMI hosted a free, public program on the history of the mill, followed by story sharing



from attendees.

A word cloud captures the phrases used at a recent public program on Bethlehem Steel.

As our staff blog documented [here](#) there was an enormous disparity between participants' fond memories of the company and their negative experiences, especially when it came to health problems caused by the steelmaking environment. Former employees describe benefits like 13 weeks of paid vacation-an unbelievable amount in 2019!-and how working at Bethlehem Steel enabled families to start their own businesses, buy homes, and send their kids to college. They also recalled the risks that accompanied the work-how living in the shadow of a steel mill led to untimely deaths due to industrial accidents, cancer, and lung disease.

The BMI will host another session on Saturday, August 10 at 11am, this time at the North Point branch of the county library located at 1416 Merritt Blvd. Senior museum educator (and Dundalk resident) Jack Burkert will again provide an overview of Bethlehem Steel's Sparrows Point Steel Mill followed by an opportunity for attendees to share their memories of Bethlehem Steel. This event is free and open to the public.

*"A Mill on the Patapsco" is part of the BMI's Bethlehem Steel Legacy Project series, made possible with support from Tradepoint Atlantic.*

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## Upcoming Programs

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**BMI FARMERS' MARKET** | Spend your Saturday morning in the waterfront pavilion's market featuring fresh produce, local meat and eggs, oven-fresh sweets, bright flowers, tasty ready-to-eat treats, artisan items, and more. Family-friendly activities offered throughout the season, as well as a changing schedule of live music and community-interest vendors. The market offers easy access to pedestrians and cyclists, as well as plenty of free on-site parking. Picnic tables are available, inviting visitors to relax by the harbor.

**WHEN** Saturdays, May 18-November 30, 2019 | 9am -1pm

*Many thanks to LifeBridge Health for their generous support of the 2019 market season.*



**A MILL ON THE PATAPSCO** | Join the Baltimore Museum of Industry at the North Point branch of the Baltimore County Public Library for an evening of stories about Sparrows Point. The program will include a presentation by BMI senior educator Jack Burkert followed by time to share your own stories.

**WHEN** Sat, Aug 10 | 11am-12:30pm

**WHERE** Baltimore County Public Library - North Point branch | 1716 Merritt Boulevard in Dundalk

**COST** FREE



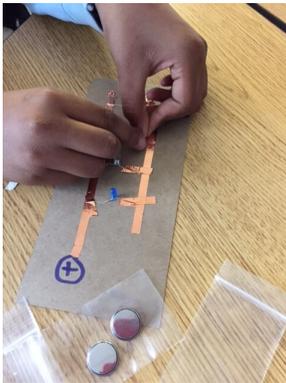
**TWITTER CHAT** | Hear from Baltimore photojournalist J.M. Giordano about his artistic process and ask your own questions about working in the photo industry in this online conversation moderated by the BMI.

**WHEN** Wed, Aug 14 | 7pm-8pm  
**COST** FREE



**CLASSIC CAR SHOW** | See a showcase of collector vehicles from the Chesapeake Region Antique Automobile Club of America and then step inside the museum to explore the interactive exhibition, "Fueling the Automobile Age."

**WHEN** Sun, Aug 25 | 10am-2pm  
**COST** FREE (Outdoor portion)



**Weekend Workers** | It's all about fun as you discover how things work. These engaging activities allow children of all ages to investigate the world around them. Please note, weekly activities are subject to change.

**WHEN** Saturdays | 11 AM-2 PM unless noted  
**COST** Free with museum admission

**UPCOMING THEMES** AUG 3: Explore Coding | AUG 10: Create a Craft Car | AUG 17: Build Your Own Catapult | AUG 24: Paper Rockets | AUG 31: Industrial Art

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Baltimore Museum of Industry | [www.thebmi.org](http://www.thebmi.org) | 410.727.4808

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