

ARTWALK

at Hartford Public Library

NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION

Contact: Mary F. Crean

860-695-6360 / mcrean@hplct.org

Library's Art Exhibit Celebrates Latino Cultures from the Caribbean to Central and South America

HARTFORD, CT (March 27, 2012) — Hartford Public Library announced today a new exhibition on the **ArtWalk, A Walk Down Park Street** by photographer Jack McConnell. The free exhibition opens Friday, April 13 with a reception from 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. and runs through May 20, 2012.

A Walk Down Park Street represents a collection of Jack McConnell's photographs that capture the essence of Park Street, through Frog Hollow and Parkville from Main to Prospect. It's the exuberant commercial spine of a working class neighborhood representing 20 Latino cultures from the Caribbean, Central and South America.

McConnell said, "I find Park Street a fascinating place to shoot, and I try to get there a couple of times a week, even for an hour or two. People have been so kind and generous to me; even strangers on the street who are busy with their own errands, will stand for my camera. Then, we get talking and they tell me important things about their lives. They seem to sense they are part of the history of Park Street."

Each image in this exhibit represents a fraction of a second, a simple slice of life in the midst of a cultural melting pot. For 400 years, Hartford has welcomed immigrants, from Dutch adventurers who sailed up the Connecticut River in 1624, to the French, Italian, Irish, German and Scandinavians who worked in Victorian-era factories, building Pratt & Whitney machines, Colt firearms, Columbia bicycles, Remington typewriters, and Pope electric cars. The Latino population today comes for the same reason—freedom and a better life for their families.

McConnell uses 400mm and 500mm lenses to isolate details of the neighborhood, capturing the vibrant Caribbean color palette of the streetscape---filigreed iron railings, painted porch furbelows, and rambunctious after-dark activity seen through storefront windows. His digital Canon 5D enables him to focus at low light levels, shooting lampposts, traffic and nightlife.

As he concentrates on street portraits, McConnell finds residents generous about sharing their energy, letting him see their self-confidence, peace, and worries. They seem to say, "Here I am, I exist, I'm OK, or I'm not OK." In one photo a young woman throws her hands into the air in a celebratory gesture, yelling, "Hey, Mr. Photographer, take my picture."

Louis Hernandez, Jr., Chairman & CEO, Open Solutions Inc. and collector of McConnell's photography, "When Open Solutions moved into our new building in Glastonbury about seven years ago, we filled our hallways, lobbies and conference rooms with Jack McConnell's images of New England--lighthouses, stone walls, waterfalls, harbors, etc. When our banking trainees come in from all over the world, we keep them so busy they have little time to sightsee, but at least they're surrounded by the photographs to give them the experience of this amazing countryside."

About the Artist

Jack McConnell is an annual report/advertising photographer, who travels the USA and Europe for Fortune 500 clients. His stock photo library of 250,000 images is located in Wethersfield, and marketed to clients around the world via www.mcconnellpix.com and www.stonewalljack.com. For 35 years he's exhibited photography in Connecticut, Maine, and Florida.

About the Gallery

ArtWalk at Hartford Public Library offers one of the largest and most stunning exhibition spaces in greater Hartford and the opportunity for visitors to view art in a magnificent setting in their own community. The state-of-the art gallery rises above Main Street along a glass wall that floods the space with ambient light during the day and appears to glow as a jewel box at night. Exhibitions offer an array of art experiences that reflect a variety of media, styles, and cultures in the art world, providing diverse viewing experiences, and allowing for many tastes. Art work is displayed on "floating" wall sections that allow the visitor to discover each piece while never seeing the whole exhibition from one vantage point. Because of the unusual cable system in place, one of the most unique aspects of the **ArtWalk** is that any wall and lighting configuration or arrangement can change with the nature of every new exhibition. The gallery was made possible through the generosity of donors, especially the Beatrice Fox Auerbach Foundation Fund at Hartford Foundation for Public Giving. To learn more about the **ArtWalk**, please visit <http://artwalk.hplct.org/>.

About Hartford Public Library:

The Hartford Public Library traces its roots to 1774. It operates 10 locations in the City of Hartford. The Library receives more than 860,000 visits per year. Services include access to a large collection of materials for reading and research, as well as music and video. Programs provide education, information and enrichment to the people of

Hartford in such areas as citizenship training, literacy, business skills and cultural awareness. The mission of Hartford Public Library is to provide free resources that inspire reading, guide learning, and encourage individual exploration. www.hplct.org