



## JIGSAW COMBINES DENSITY, CHAOS OF CITY

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The bleak underclass of Dickens' London.

The squalid slums of New York's Lower East Side in Jacob Riis' 19th-century photos.

The violent Rio shantytowns in the film "City of God."

To these visions of the urban underbelly, add Hugo Crosthwaite's fever dream of his native Tijuana.

The highlight of his small show at Mason Murer Fine Art is [a drawing looming 13 feet high and 10 1/2 feet wide](#). The monumental piece consists of multiple scenes bound together in a jagged jigsaw that conveys the density and chaos of the city.

Details that seem like frames in a larger story -- a blood-spattered sleeve or a grimacing face, abut architectural fragments; a grid of burglar bars; billboard lettering -- that suggest the backdrop against which these dramas play out.

Crosthwaite's world of violence, poverty, furtive sex and tedium gathers power from the tension between the gritty vision and the beauty and grace of his draftsmanship. His sure line, the subtlety of light and shade and finely rendered details create a sense of reality so vivid you forget that it is in black and white.

A final tidbit: Crosthwaite, who is also represented in the High's current "TRANSactions" show, made this 2005-06 drawing in Atlanta. He lived here for a year. Pity we didn't know about him then.

[A video of the artist talking about this drawing](#) can be found online; search for his name on YouTube.com.