

Lustron Stories

Lustron Corporation manufactured porcelain baked enamel steel houses in Columbus OH between 1948 and 1950. Virtually everything, exterior siding, roof, interior walls, cabinets, and ceilings were made out of this material. The components were shipped to site on a specially designed trailer and assembled by local contractors. Of the 2500 sold, roughly two-thirds are still in use today. These houses were aimed at GI's returning from the war, as starter homes for young families - an answer to the country's severe housing shortage.

I created 125 portraits of the people living in these homes spread across fifteen states. I used a wooden film camera for these photographs. This was not for technical reasons. People are charmed by the beauty of the camera. It's awkwardness allows them to feel more comfortable with the process. I hope that the images show them in their homes rather than being photographed.

Lustron Stories explores the course of the Great American Dream since that unique time immediately after the Second World War. At the same time, it looks at the history of prefab and manufactured housing that began with the Bauhaus ideal of using industrial methods and materials to produce affordable housing.

We learn from the people in the photographs, all living in the same quirky house scattered about the country. They show us a design that has held its purpose for 70 years. More importantly, they speak to us about the meaning of home.

Charles Mintz
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