

2013 Malibu LS
 Low-mileage lease example for very well qualified lessees
\$199 PER MONTH FOR 24 MONTHS WITH \$2,219 DUE AT SIGNING¹
 No security deposit required. Tax, title, license and dealer fees extra.
 1 Example based on...

[LEARN MORE](#)

ADVERTISEMENT

eEdition Stay Connected Customer Service Advertise Classifieds Homes Jobs Cars Shopping

Entertainment Movies



Home Ent Movies

SEPTEMBER 14, 2012 AT 9:52 AM

'Detropia' protagonist: City's future can be found in its past

Passionate about Detroit, film's star challenges people to invest in future

BY SEBASTIAN HOFER SPECIAL TO THE DETROIT NEWS 1 COMMENTS



Purchase Image

"You have to build an environment where people will want to raise a child," says Crystal Starr, 28, who appears in "Detropia." "That means education. That means transportation." (Clarence Tabb Jr. / The Detroit News)

When it comes to questions, just ask Crystal Starr. "The single most important question to ask a native Detroiter is: Why are you still living here? Then, they will tell you what is really important about this city. And what would really be important for this city."

Starr, 28, has asked this question, over and over again — and she is not hesitant to share the answers.

One of three protagonists of "Detropia," a documentary on the City of

Switch

Tweet 0

0

EMAIL

PRINT



DRIVE HOME A 2013 MALIBU LS

Low-mileage lease example for very well qualified lessees
\$199 PER MONTH FOR 24 MONTHS WITH \$2,219 DUE AT SIGNING¹
 No security deposit required. Tax, title, license and dealer fees extra.
 1 Example based on...



[LEARN MORE](#)

ADVERTISEMENT



Celebrity Buzz

Notable photos of celebrities and events.

[See the gallery](#)

TV Listings

View the grid, customize your listings, click on program details. You also can delve deep into your favorite shows for information and photos.

[Go to the TV listings](#) [Best bets](#) [Network photos](#)

[Video of TV episodes](#) [National ratings](#) [TV blogs](#)



Celebrate Halloween for less at ALDI.

[Click here to view your weekly ad >>](#)

Simply Smarter Shopping.

ADVERTISEMENT

Most Popular

Three reasons the Tigers win Game 4 - and three

Detroit, Starr is billed as a "blogger," "but only because they needed to put a title on me," she says.

You could also call her a writer, a historian, an activist, even a barista. That's actually how she became part of the documentary.

"Heidi Ewing and Rachel Grady, the directors, were in town to research another film they were about to shoot. They came to 1515 Café (in 1515 Broadway), and while I was making their latte, they discussed a conversation they overheard at City Council about a request to blow up Michigan Station."

It didn't take Starr long to be part of this discussion: "I explained to them how outrageous it would be to destroy this landmark, and how important the station was and still is."

She ended up showing Ewing and Grady some of the 400 hours of video she has amassed over the years, filming in abandoned buildings, doing interviews with Detroiters, observing their daily workings. She says, they in turn ended up postponing the movie they were ready to shoot and doing "Detropia" instead.

So, now, nearly three years later, what does Starr think of the movie and the role she has in it?

"At the moment, it is exciting and nerve-wrecking," she says. "This is something I am very passionate about, so I want it to mean something — not just tomorrow, but also a year from now. I want it to be a source of inspiration. It's not about me becoming a movie star. I want people to get it. I want people to see my passion for the city."

Yet before its Detroit premiere, "Detropia" inspired mostly complaint.

"Detroiters hadn't seen the film yet, they had seen trailers. And many people felt it re-opened a wound. They tend to think the worst is over, and they want to believe that new investors will save us."

Starr doesn't fully share this belief. "They will definitely build a place where people will want to live and come to live, but will that actually help the greater good, the neighborhoods that really need help? When the young people that come to Detroit now reach an age where they want to have kids, are they going to stay in the city?"

"You have to build an environment where people will want to raise a child. That means education. That means transportation. That means all the basic services that have been shut down. What investors are investing in is not the future of Detroit, but their vision of Detroit's future. This city needs help, yes, but what it doesn't need is someone else's ideas of what it would need."

So where could these needs really be found? For Starr, the answer might be in the past.

"People have always come to Detroit to create a future for themselves, but please don't come with that Columbus state of mind that you are discovering something no one has ever seen before, and where nothing has happened prior to your arrival," she urges.

Starr's passion about Detroit and its natives has a lot to do with urban renewal. "I would love to see older people who have left the city years ago move back and bring back the history of Detroit. I have nothing against the changing of times, but in order to let the city prosper, there has to be an awareness of its history."

SHARE
A A A

See Also

'Detropia' successfully symbolizes Detroit and nation's anguish

reasons the Tigers lose

Michigan men's basketball team unveils new uniforms

Former Detroit Lion All-Pro Alex Karras dies at age 77

Poll: Detroit residents have little confidence in leaders


UP DOWN

Events Calendar

 **Zoo Boo**
Friday, Oct 12, 6:00 pm
The Detroit Zoo, Royal Oak

Ballet Magnificat
Friday, Oct 12, 7:00 pm
Zion Christian Church, Troy

 **The King's Men Tour with...**
Friday, Oct 12, 8:00 pm
Fox Theatre, Detroit


 **Ron White**
Saturday, Oct 13, 7:00 pm
Fox Theatre, Detroit

Add an Event || More

10 Wed 11 Thu 12 Fri 13 Sat 14 Sun All events

Empty search box

- Top events Music Sports & Outdoors Restaurants Performing Arts Community Detroit events Movies

 **PhotoStore**
Purchase outstanding photos from Detroit's past and present
Go to the PhotoStore

Weekend Planner

- What's going on?** Check the Events Calendar first!
- What's playing?** Check the Movie Finder for details
- Leaving town?** For listings of Michigan events and attractions, historic sites, recreational sports and family fun, browse www.michigan.org
- BBQ?** Check the Recipe Box for ideas
- Dining out?** Search the Restaurant Finder, sortable by cuisine or location
- Camping?** State camp sites, reservations
Current weather conditions, extended forecast, for any city
- Michigan lane closures
- Current Metro Detroit traffic
- Metro Detroit real-time traffic update
- Oakland County real-time traffic map
- Lowest regular gas prices in last 24 hours

To raise that awareness, Starr has been working on a theatrical script about Paradise Valley and Black Bottom and the people of those neighborhoods — about southerners coming to Detroit and creating their own history here.

"I dig through these documents and these stories, and I say, 'yeah, you have to be proud of Detroit, of these amazing buildings, of what we did for this country.'"

Somewhere, in these stories, Starr believes she will find the direction Detroit will have to take to be great again. Maybe all you've got to do is to ask a simple question: Why do you still live here?

Sebastian Hofer is an Austrian journalist visiting The Detroit News as a fellow of the International Center for Journalists.

Northwest flights' status
Check for flight delays

Buy Concert & Event Tickets

Search By Artist or Venue Name

Most Popular Searches

- Detroit Lions
- Lady Gaga
- The Darkness
- Green Bay Packers
- Trans-Siberian Orchestra
- The Lost Christmas Eve
- Justin Bieber

Join the Conversation

The Detroit News aims to provide a forum that fosters smart, civil discussions on the news and events that we cover. The News will not condone personal attacks, off topic posts or brutish language on our site. If you find a comment that you believe violates these standards, please click the "X" in the upper right corner of the post to report it.

POLICIES

- [Community Policy](#)
- [Privacy Policy](#)
- [Terms of Service](#)

Post to Facebook
Posting as DETROPIA (Not you?)
Comment

Carla Gonzalez · Director, CE at College for Creative Studies

Saw Detropia this weekend and think Starr's blog may be the way to get "something" new from the discussions about Detroit. Detropia didn't tell me anything new- it just laid both sides out flat. I keep thinking- this just reiterates where we already are--- where's the VISION? Oh right, that's part of the film's point.

[Reply](#) · [Like](#) · [Follow Post](#) · Yesterday at 1:12pm

Facebook social plugin

Make the move to Optimum today.

Call today, install tomorrow. 866.907.7957

More From Movies

TUE, OCT 9
Charlie Brown, 'Peanuts' pals head to big-screen



Charlie Brown and his "Peanuts" pals are coming to the big-screen. Charles Schulz' beloved characters will star in their own animated film scheduled to hit theaters Nov. 25, 2015. That year marks the 65th ...

TUE, OCT 9
Oscars have record 71 foreign-language submissions

MON, OCT 8
New Zealand to rename city 'Middle' for Hobbit premiere

MON, OCT 8
Judy Garland's 'Wizard of Oz' dress up for auction

MON, OCT 8
School of harsh knocks portrayed in 'Won't Back Down'

MON, OCT 8
Dozens turn out in Muskegon to be in zombie film

SUN, OCT 7
Neeson doubles the take with \$50M 'Taken 2' debut

More from The Detroit News

SEEN IN THE PHOTOSTORE



Purchase Detroit News

SUBSCRIBE

FOLLOW US ON TWITTER

Transcript: Pro-life congressman urged mistress to get abortion
<http://t.co/Xsjetvtl>

THE DETROIT NEWS APPS

Stay up to date on the go with the latest from The Detroit News apps

Our apps connect you with the best news, sports, auto and entertainment coverage from our team of award-winning journalists.

ARCHIVES

- [Yesterday, Oct. 09](#)
- [Monday, Oct. 08](#)
- [Sunday, Oct. 07](#)
- [Saturday, Oct. 06](#)
- [Friday, Oct. 05](#)

images of historic events, scenes, places and people.

Follow @detnews

Go to the PhotoStore

Sign up for home delivery today



Thursday, Oct. 04

Wednesday, Oct. 03

See our paid archives for news older than a week.

ADVERTISEMENT

News | Sports | Business | Autos | Entertainment | Lifestyle | Opinion | Photos | Video | Shopping | Rentals | Homes | Jobs | Cars

615 W. Lafayette Blvd.
Detroit, MI 48220
(313) 222-2300

The Detroit News
Directory + Contacts
Jobs at The Detroit Media Partnership
Terms of Service
Privacy Notice
Ad Choices
Newspapers In Education

Subscriber Services
Newspaper Subscriptions
Manage Account
Report a Delivery Issue
eEdition
Newsletters
Mobile
RSS

Advertise
Web + Mobile
Newspaper
Classifieds
Death Notices

Store
Photographs

Connect
Your guide to The Detroit News
Contact The Detroit Media Partnership
Facebook
Twitter

© 2011 The Detroit News. All rights reserved.

Subscriptions | eEdition | Mobile | Text Alerts | Newsletter | RSS