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Review: Jane Fulton Alt/Chicago Cultural Center

Pop, Photography

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RECOMMENDED

If, as Aaron Siskind said, one of photography's great services is to "redeem the ruins," then there could be few greater challenges to fulfilling that purpose than imaging the devastation wrought by Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans' Lower Ninth Ward in 2005. Jane Fulton Alt rose to the occasion and came back with color photographs that combine sensitivity to the tragedy and yet exude self-standing beauty through their elegant composition and clear muted colors. The impact is meditative; the viewer is drawn into a mood of vibrant sadness, as one might feel when listening to a stirring eulogy at a loved one's funeral. Shooting scenes of depopulated destruction rather than showing us those whose lives had been shattered, Alt lets us inhabit the demolished cityscape without a sense of voyeurism. Among the stunning and piercing shots, the most telling shows a blasted tree festooned with shreds of clothing that eerily resolves into scarecrow-like figures bound together like Siamese twins. (Michael Weinstein)



Through December 27 at the Chicago Cultural Center, 78 E. Washington

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