



Art in Review; 'The New City: Sub/Urbia in Recent Photography'

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Ever revisited your suburban hometown to find that its once cozy shopping streets have become a banal extension of megalopolis? If so (maybe even if not), you will appreciate this small show of works by eight contemporary photographers that contemplates the urban tentacles creeping out into suburbia.

Among the fantasy/documentary images here, one by Amir Zaki is especially striking. In his digitally manipulated photograph of two Los Angeles suburban homes, they become a potent symbol of displacement: oblong white boxes upended from their plots and poised precariously on the side of a hill.

Zoe Leonard's 12 small pictures from her series "Analogue" (1998-2005) track the decline of mom-and-pop shops by offering bleak or sardonic views of shabby storefronts, among them a barbershop advertising "fade," "flat-top" and "senior citizen" haircuts, and a downscale furniture store with two chairs forlornly wrapped in plastic in the window.

Gregory Crewdson's "Untitled, Summer," depicting a widened, all-but-empty main street on which ugly new box-front stores consort with remnants of a town's old architecture, shows urban slickery winning out over preservation. And two large-scale photographs by Michael Vahrenwald titled "Green Slope, Wal-Mart, Davenport, IA," remind us by way of two eroded hills that big-box stores are not so great for grass.

The disappearing suburbanscape is not a new story, but these photographs put it in sharper focus.
GRACE GLUECK

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