



St. Louis Art Capsules

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Cindy Tower: Riding the Rubble Down

This solo show of predominantly large-scale plein air paintings of St. Louis-area industrial ruins, completed between 2005 and 2008 while Tower was a visiting professor at Washington University, gains strength as it attenuates. Compressed by the galleries' narrow halls and low ceiling, the grand canvases and their detailed, putty-hued depictions of massive, decaying interiors, feel further dwarfed by their performative origins, which are prominently broadcasted in the space via video and assorted accompanying text. Not much room is left to consider the paintings on their own terms — which is unfortunate considering their fluid execution and demand for perspective. As though heeding these strictures, the chronologically arranged works decrease in size, subject and taut realism, and conclude on a simple and vulnerable note: a small piece (after which the show is named) depicting an unpopulated playground, its swings and slides half-discernable behind long paint drips and loose painterly strokes.

Through May 2 at the Sheldon Art Galleries, 3648 Washington Boulevard; 314-533-9900 or www.sheldonconcerthall.org. Hours: noon-8 p.m. Tue. and Thu., noon-5 p.m. Wed. and Fri., 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Sat.