



All material in the Artforum Archive is protected by copyright. Permission to reprint any article from the Artforum archive must be obtained from [Artforum Magazine](#).

“Things Fall Apart”

01.26.09

AUTHOR: LORI COLE

01.16.09-02.21.09 *Winkelman Gallery*

This exhibition, curated by artist Joy Garnett, culls its title from a poem by W. B. Yeats. The show responds to a variety of political issues, including Hurricane Katrina, which is loosely referenced in a series of unframed drawings, prints, and photographs by Paul Chan and the New Orleans-based artist collective the Front. Most striking from this group are the architecturally inflected images, such as Jonathan Travesa's *Sculptural Awareness #7*, 2005, a photograph of a house covered with peeling strips of canvas, and Megan Roniger's precise pen-and-ink drawing of vine-covered houses precariously resting on tilted poles.

Recovering such lost histories rather than “brushing them under the rug” is taken literally by Mounir Fatmi, who affixes the flags of G8 nations to large brooms that lean against the gallery's central pillar. Whereas Fatmi's installation is playfully literal, Stephen Andrews's drawings are abstracted beyond recognition. Carlos Motta's broadsheet listing US interventions in Latin America communicates an explicitly anti-US agenda, while Yevgeniy Fiks's black-and-white painting of a film still, *Songs of Russia #20*, 2007, based on the titular 1944 movie, poignantly reminds viewers of the short-lived government and Hollywood support for the former Soviet Union.

Rather than stake out a political position, Croatian artist Renata Poljak focuses on personal responses to the Serbian war in two videos accompanied by a subtle, droning sound installation. One depicts a Croatian woman who feels trapped in bourgeois exile, while the other presents a drive through an uninhabited, sunlit Croatian landscape, narrated by, alternately, a Croatian woman and her Austrian companion. While the overall politics of the exhibition are diffuse, the individual pieces unearth the creative possibility embedded in official history.



