

CAKES AND ALE

THE ART LIFE IS THE GOOD LIFE

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Heartland / Wasteland

The Dutch have been thinking about the Midwest. The US Midwest. In collaboration with the Smart Museum of the University of Chicago, the Van Abbemuseum (in Eindhoven, Netherlands) has created an introduction to the art of "an unknown part of a well-known country." *Heartland* features works by artists and institutions of the region either side of the Mississippi River.

I love the idea of tapping into what's happening in the middle—for there surely must be art happening in places between the coasts—but isn't it interesting that from the get-go we're seeing from the outside in? I mean, only an outsider would consider the length of the Mississippi a region to itself. An American looking at the map instinctively knows Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, that's the *South*. Culture doesn't really follow the river, but the flow of history. Am I quibbling? Just a little. It seems good though to remember the framework a story is told through. Let's not forget the impact the Dutch had in helping define the mercantile character of this country.

But hey, speaking of the story, one of the projects presented fits right in on the trip down the mighty Mississippi. *Miss Rockaway Armada* is an ongoing collaborative art project involving handmade rafts and boats carrying artists and performers from Minneapolis to New Orleans. It's sort of Black Rock City on water, bringing utopian wackiness to the staid residents of the midwest. Sort of like feeding the masses... The missionary aspect of the project disturbs me a little, but the boats are so wonderful. And everybody seems to be having a right good time.

On the other end of the spectrum, *Heartlands* introduced me to the work of *Scott Hocking*—incredible photos of the decay of Detroit and beautiful installations, a ziggurat of bricks in an abandoned factory, a midden of rusty trash. This is melancholic work, dealing with cultural and material detritus, echoing the scale and weight of Anselm Keifer.



photos – Scott Hocking – www.scotthocking.com

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So I go all the (virtual) way to the Netherlands to get a glimpse of the mid-lands. And this is one of the things I see there..

POSTED BY CAROLYN RADLO AT 7:50 PM

<http://cakesnale.blogspot.com/search/label/Scott%20Hocking>