

THOMAS DANE GALLERY

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ARTFORUM

Critics' Picks: Amie Siegel



Amie Siegel's film *Winter*, 2013, opens with mysterious people drifting around a white biomorphic building that seems vaguely like a commune. They perform bird calls, weave the husks of plants, and, in a comical moment, patiently sit in front of an old broken music player as they pose for an unseen audience—us. The humor darkens when it dawns on us that while the film is set at an unknown future time, what we now think of as new technology hasn't survived at all. A young woman reads a worn book on birds that was first checked out in 1961 (and in 2070); we later see her wandering through a display of taxidermic animals. The great irony of the film is that it attains its dreamy futuristic quality by dealing with old-fashioned artifacts in an atmosphere of loss.

It's not until about halfway through the film that *Winter* settles into a recognizable narrative of any kind, and then what's striking about the story is how familiar, even archetypal, this global disaster survivor journey has become. The young woman slips out of the safety of the compound, where she forages in the woods, sleeps in abandoned houses, and looks out over landscapes that are both apocalyptic in their emptiness and utterly banal. The film's uncanny visual images are both gracefully exquisite and deeply sinister. This quality is reflected in a series of accompanying photographs in the gallery's second space, which depict radioactive minerals that glow sinisterly. At the end of *Winter*, when the young woman floats away on a found raft, what lingers is the quiet threat of a future that is somehow achieved with the gentlest of suggestions. The film's pervading sense of instability and mourning is further underscored by the structure of the exhibition at Ratio 3, in which a rotating cast of actors and musicians provide an ever-changing sound track, resulting in a slightly different, even mutated, experience with each iteration.

<https://www.artforum.com/picks/amie-siegel-46560>

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