

## ART / MEDIA Five Brooklyn Artists Doing Interesting Things with Urban Decay

Posted by [Benjamin Sutton](#) on Tue, Jul 26, 2011 at 10:31 AM



Gordon Matta-Clark, "Day's End (Pier 52)" (1975, detail)

In a hilarious "News in Brief" piece this weekend, *The Onion* proclaimed the end of urban decay art, stating: "the art world announced Tuesday that it had captured all the beauty it was going to find in rusted-out cars, abandoned houses, and condemned industrial sites." Point taken: poverty porn is played out. However, as longtime fans of the art of urban decay, we feel compelled to point out that well, *actually*, there are a bunch of artists (or at least five) right here in Brooklyn using this popular type of imagery in interesting ways.



Amanda C. Mathis, "Displacement (239 N. 5th Street)" (2010, courtesy the artist).

**Amanda C. Mathis:** Like Gordon Matta-Clark with an archaeological angle, Mathis doesn't cut holes in walls of abandoned buildings, but strips back their layers to reveal the accumulation of paints, wallpapers, materials and vestiges of generations of inhabitants. For her, urban decay isn't something to be aestheticized, but rather investigated and picked apart.

The *Onion* piece concludes that, though urban decay art may be dead, "artists [will] spend at least another 50 years churning out heavy-handed depictions of the inherent soullessness of suburban sprawl." Hey, Gregory Crewdson's gotta make a living, ya know?

(Gordon Matta-Clark photo: David Zwirner)