

EAST BAY express

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ON THE WALL

Cheap Wine, Free Cheese

Our critics review local visual arts exhibitions.

By David Downs

Winter Light – There's beauty in entropy, and veteran West Oakland photographer Katherine Westerhout has a breathtaking ability to find it. Ten large-format digital prints of photographs she took inside abandoned and decaying buildings haunt the Swarm Gallery. Measuring six square feet and filled with an entire spectrum of light values – from pure white to pitch black, red to violet – Westerhout's work is in complete focus and as composed as the best paintings. She has been known to break into sealed edifices to get her shots, which transport viewers to ethereal interiors of old canneries, churches, and schoolrooms. Never has the absence of people been so present, nor the stillness of a photograph been so moving. (Through October 8 at 560 2nd St., Oakland; SwarmStudios.net or 510-839-2787.)