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Heather Mekkelson

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A field can be fallow or fertile, marked out for sporting games, witness to a battle, or a branch of study. Heather Mekkelson's installation *Debris Field*, 2008, puts each of these meanings into play, with results both devastating and contemplative, dead quiet and deafening. Meticulously arranged across the gallery space is a walk-in composition of discrete ruins, among them a dirty blanket roll sheathed in tattered plastic, wrecked horizontal blinds twisted up in the shoulder strap of a lady's handbag, a no-longer-upright electric fan caked in sand, and three linoleum-clad stairs with a lone sock wedged underneath. As objects tangled up with the human—the purse, the sock, a lone dinner plate—each sculpture compels its own queasy reflections.

Suspended electric lines and a pendent blue tarp draw the whole together, as do wooden stakes, tied with orange tape, which punctuate the floor at irregular intervals. These small props mark the entire gallery as a disaster site under observation and, in their strange believability—did the artist really drive stakes through the hardwood?—remind the viewer of how unstable is the rich ground where catastrophe meets aestheticization.

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