

TRACY WILLIAMS, Ltd.

# Los Angeles Times

ART REVIEW

## Meditations on Disintegration

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By Leah Ollman

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Image: Detail from "My Own Private Angkor," 2007-2009. Courtesy the Artist and Tracy Williams Ltd.

**SIMRYN GILL** *My Own Private Angkor*

Simryn Gill's quietly stunning photography series, "My Own Private Angkor," focuses on a housing development in a seaside town in Malaysia.

The complex was built in the 1980s, but never occupied. Over time looters have stripped the site of salable metals. Surfaces have eroded. Dried leaves pile up on the floors and vines creep through the windows openings.

Gill's pictures, largely of abandoned domestic interiors, speak of both promise and ruin, of palpable economic collapse. They are documents, but resonate like meditations, deep dives into form, light, presence and absence.

Born in Singapore, Gill makes her home in both Malaysia and Australia. All 90 of her black-and-white pictures in the series (2007-09) are installed in a continuous row, two deep, as the inaugural show at Varola at the Pacific Design Center.

Bare windowpanes propped against the walls serve as a compositional through-line. One or more appear in every image, a tinted, shadowing or reflective frame within each frame. The panes serve as architectural foils or rhymes, effectively flattening the space and echoing, for instance, the dark void of the nearby doorway.

Remarkably, Gill – also a painter and sculptor – did not alter what she found onsite. She returned under different conditions of light over the course of several years, photographing with insistent frontality, making of the encounter a sort of prolonged, mesmerizing, minimalist theater, with repetition and variation defining both plot and set.