

EMINENT DOMAIN

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ABSTRACT

Eminent Domain is a documentary photographic project and an archival exploration of a neighborhood located on the East Side of urban Kansas City, Missouri. The series documents a four-block portion of the Wendell-Phillips neighborhood that was bought out and demolished under the premise of eminent domain. By working across traditions and modes of image making, including portraiture, typology and appropriation, this project is concerned with exploring the use of eminent domain and its ensuing realities.

The project began with the knowledge that one day there would inevitably be a void: Occupied homes would become empty, then demolished, and the piles of debris hauled away. The neighborhoods process of arriving at this void was the physical manifestation of eminent domain that could be photographed. I gathered tangible photographic evidence through looking, interpreting and collecting. In addition to the production of images, I collected found objects, ephemera and photographs from vacant lots and homes. Aware of my inability to photograph the past, these objects allowed me to look back and know the story more completely. This series allows interpretations of many narratives such as Kansas City's racial history, African-American familial histories, larger questions surrounding urban renewal, and the ability of one entity to forcefully remove others from their homes.