

Scrubbed Orange Wall: Calgary, AB

I made his photo while walking around a neighborhood that I remembered photographing years before - a run down street with old houses, abandoned buildings, and walls made of broken brick and peeling paint. The area had changed drastically. The old buildings had been refurbished, now sporting fresh trendy businesses and earth toned stucco. There seemed to be a crane on every block, each hovering high above the concrete skeleton of a new apartment building.

One of my favorite old buildings still stood on a corner, weather beaten and alone. A massive square red brick monolith, it was a splendid spectacle of twisted wires, broken glass, and nesting pigeons. It was refreshingly derelict, a jury-rigged patchwork and a thorn in the side of progress.

This painted metal had been hastily scrubbed to rid it of graffiti. The resulting patterns caught my attention at once - the little scene seemed like a macabre painting of a freakish sunset. I liked the way the scrub marks formed into little clots, tiny dirty clouds lined with white. The graffiti had already been replaced a few feet away from where it had been scrubbed off.

It won't take long to transform this old building into a tower of shiny metal and glass. This photograph will always remind me of the transition, of the hasty and desperate pace of change.

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