



You are here: [ChicagoTribune.com](http://ChicagoTribune.com) > [Collections](#) > [Untitled](#)

Ads by Google

[Art print for sale](#)

Buy now! art print online, framed art reproduction, print your photo  
[www.acurela.com](http://www.acurela.com)

[Fani - Photography](#)

Art Photography Photo, Art, Photography  
[fanimadrigal.com](http://fanimadrigal.com)

[Wedding Photography Sale](#)

30% discount for 2010 bookings! See website for pricing details.  
[www.beautifulmemoriesphoto.com](http://www.beautifulmemoriesphoto.com)

[Los Angeles Images](#)

View Beautiful Image Slide Shows Produced By Bing Travel!  
[www.bing.com/Travel](http://www.bing.com/Travel)

[Dave Suarez Photography](#)

Specializing in Chicago Weddings Packages designed just for you.  
[www.davesuarez.com](http://www.davesuarez.com)

FIND MORE STORIES ABOUT

- [Untitled](#)

FEATURED ARTICLES

[Rewind or delete?](#)

March 14, 2006

[Documentary photos bring unsettling fantasy world to life](#)

June 2, 2006

[Iranians volunteer to die](#)

June 14, 2006

## Art review: Craig Doty's 'Women' makes us stop, stare

September 18, 2009 | By Lauren Viera, Tribune reporter

Craig Doty, "Women," at Roots & Culture Contemporary Art Center

There are a few images in "Women," the new solo show by Los Angeles-via-Chicago-based photographer Craig Doty at Roots & Culture, that are uncomfortable enough to be called good art.

Mind you, it's in Doty's nature to shock. He shoots primarily brightly lit portraits of people in less than comfortable situations. In the past, he's framed a bearded, hairy-chested man wearing blue-silk pajamas lying on shag carpet, his eyes rolled back into his head, or a trio of shirtless young men chugging plastic gallons of milk against the backdrop of a manicured green lawn.

Ads by Google

[Study Nature Photography](#)

The Art Institutes: Pursue a Degree in Photography. Pursue Your Goals!  
[www.artinstitutes.edu](http://www.artinstitutes.edu)

[Free Stock Photos](#)

Create a Free Account and Download High Resolution Images for Free.  
[Dreamstime.com](http://Dreamstime.com)

[John Reilly Photography](#)

Portrait, Corporate, Event, photographer in Chicago/Lake Forest  
[johnreillyphotography.com](http://johnreillyphotography.com)

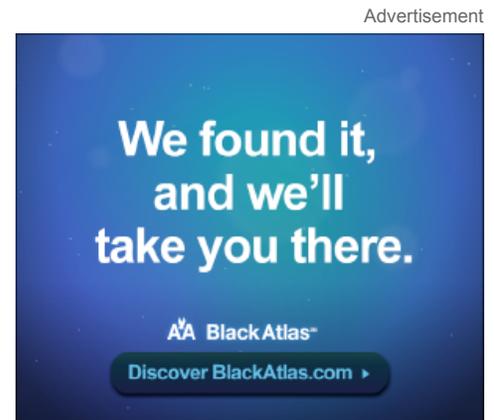
But "Women," somehow, is more poignant, and not simply because Doty's lens is focused on the gender he rarely documents. Approaching this collection of images -- 10 prints and one video -- has the same effect as overhearing your upstairs neighbors' muffled, potentially abusive fight -- or loud, rough sex: As the innocent bystander, you are told by your morals to ignore business that isn't yours. But there it is, in plain sight, and curiosity keeps you from turning away.

Some images are more subtle than others, though it's all relative. "Untitled 20" (2008) shows a pasty-skinned, dark-haired woman seated on a black leather couch, against a backdrop of dull gold curtains. What could be too simple of a portrait is anything but. The woman's hair is wet and matted, her mouth agape but clenched, her eyes caught somewhere between pleading and unfeeling. The crop just below her bare shoulders suggests that she's topless, but we'll never know.

And that back story that Doty isn't giving away is precisely what makes his images work.

The fact that most of the photographs in "Women" are staged (in a studio, even) is moot. Inspired by A.M. Homes' controversial novel "The End of Alice," about an incarcerated child molester and his pedophilic pen pal (how's that for heady?), the suggested situations are so carefully fabricated that the more they're examined, the less information they give away. "Untitled 25" (2009) offers a candid view of a woman's nether regions as she lies beneath the makings of a home office. The details -- a potted palm, a recycling bin, an illuminated computer monitor balanced on a swivel chair on top of a birch-hued desk -- reveal nothing. All we know is what we see: a woman, naked save for a red hoodie, lying with her face and expression concealed and her arms outstretched toward a face-down paperback. It's complicated and, because of the nudity, controversial. But more than anything, it's engrossing.

Ads by Google



[Art print for sale](#)

Buy now! art print online, framed art reproduction, print your photo

[www.acurela.com](http://www.acurela.com)

---

1 | 2 | [Next](#)

**Chicago Tribune**

[Index by Keyword](#) | [Index by Date](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Terms of Service](#)