

Don't Go Back To Sleep is a haunted experimental narrative feature that operates primarily as a metaphor for the violence of the American state and its resulting trauma. In the tenuous relations of strangers collaborating under pressure, resilience and regenerative energy rise in small, understated human exchanges, like sparks in the dark.

Shot in Kansas City, Missouri, in newly built homes left vacant and unfinished in the economic crash, *Don't Go Back to Sleep* follows roving groups of medical professionals, frontline emergency workers adrift in nearly empty, end-times urban and suburban landscapes. In a series of uncanny scenes, dark joking emerges alongside efforts at cohesion and collectivity. Squatting never lived-in suburban developments and luxury high-rises, depressed with the aura of so many displaced by the housing market catastrophe, nurses and doctors establish make-shift triage centers within the architectural mundane: fixtures and countertops, carpet pads and exposed wiring, fireplaces and crown molding. Untouched appliances glow dully in the market's wake. Time alternately slows and speeds as the characters recalibrate their stress responses, suspended in the in-between of waiting, activated by uncertainty, disasters already underway and the reverberations of decades of distress. Alcohol, cake and lunchmeat provide unstable sustenance as the workers labor, sleep and bury their dead.

Further extending a video practice that allows fluid boundaries between the real and the fictive, between narrative and abstraction, Kahn directs an ensemble cast of mostly non-actors to perform both scripted and improvised scenarios in which their agency becomes central to the film's construction. Her sound design, anchored here with original compositions by Kahn and musician Keith Woods (of Hush Arbors and Chelsea Light Moving), holds a central role in the language of the film. The edits and the cameras' movements and fixations play with reconfigurations of space, time, materiality, alienation and the overworking of Nature. A quieter humor of anxiety seeks out the edges of despair while trying to connect.

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