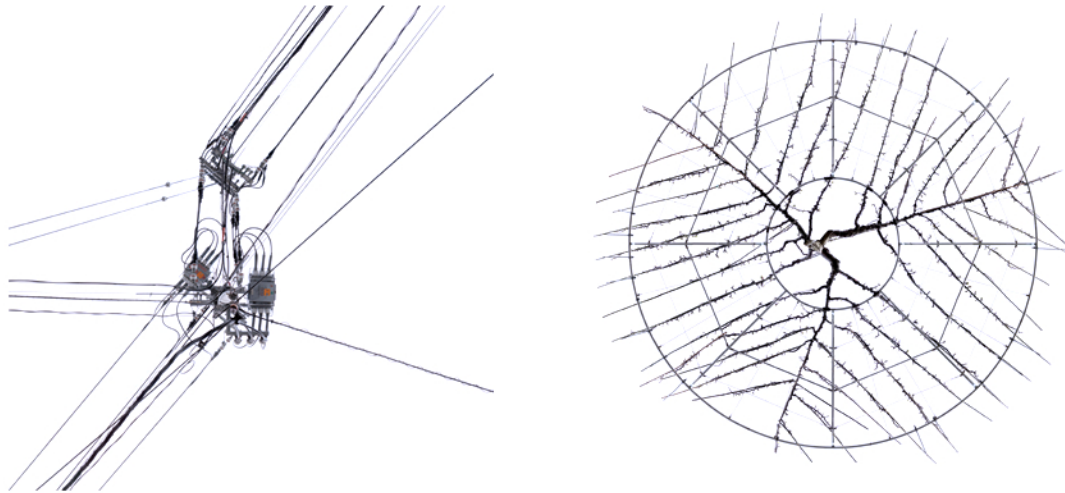


## Art and Tsunami Relief

Categories: [Art&Nature](#), [Climate Change](#), [Energy](#), [Nature](#), [Plants](#), [Reviews](#)

By [Lila Garnett](#)

03/31/2011



Andreas Gefeller, Poles 08, 2010, & Andreas Gefeller, Untitled (Pear Tree), 2010, courtesy Hasted Kraeutler

Tonight, Hasted Kraeutler Gallery in New York hosts a reception for the artist Andreas Gefeller, in conjunction with an exhibition of new photographs titled *The Japan Series*. Gefeller made the work during the spring of 2010 in the Tottori Prefecture for the European Eyes on Japan/Japan Photography Today project. A subtle investigation of the formal relationship between nature and manmade structures, this theme finds an unexpected, twisted echo in Japan's unfolding disaster. The work will be exhibited in through May 14; and a percentage of profits from the show will be donated to the American Red Cross Japan and Pacific Tsunami Relief Efforts.

Gefeller is known for his large-scale digital prints, which are often made of hundreds of smaller images stitched together. His earlier work *Supervisions*, presented a scale-bending world of "groundscapes" – parking lots, racetracks, driving ranges – photographed from a fixed overhead position in meticulous detail, so that the actual subjects emerge only gradually from their composition.

In *The Japan Series*, Gefeller looks at power cables and plant life. Isolating his subjects against a white or black ground, a tangle of wires take on the chaotic properties of vegetation, while plants conform to manmade structures. In some of the plant pictures, the branches resemble electrical cables. Seen together, there is a disorienting doppelgänger effect: What's natural isn't, and what's artificial mimics nature. Formal and abstract, these are details rendered in an elegant hand, almost calligraphic.

A year later, a bigger picture is seen in the cascade of imagery coming out of Japan. How strangely prescient it seems, that Gefeller chose power cables as a subject! But now we think of a different sort of plant, and of melt-downs. And those delicate cherry blossoms seem to float over an abyss.

In the context of a mega disaster, when the stuff we've built or tamed is swept away on a wave, it's startling, and perhaps necessary, to see our efforts to control nature metaphorically. In *The Japan Series*, Andreas Gefeller engages the subject on a small scale with delicacy and precision. In some ways, his pear tree has a clarity that isn't found in the current daily documents from Japan. Similarly, as Tsunami relief pours in, there is still in evidence a modest gesture of assistance, on an individual level, from the artist.