



"E. Brady Robinson: Shift"

To Saturday, Oct. 6, at the Gallery at Flashpoint

By Kriston Capps Posted: September 12, 2007

Travel photography can be pretty pedestrian. There's perhaps no subject in photography more prone to cliché than unfamiliar destinations: from the cloudy landscapes snapped from the plane window to the angled shots of skyscrapers and monuments. But E. Brady Robinson takes travel photography — specifically, the snapshot — as her trade. At the very least, the sheer quantity of images she's assembled is a testament to her persistence. Curated by veteran D.C. portrait photographer Chan Chao for the Gallery at Flashpoint, "Shift" highlights new photographs taken stateside and across Europe this year. Robinson has an eye for symmetry: Sweet/Unsweet, a photograph of side-by-side iced-tea urns, shows a Matthew Barney-like eye for parallelism. Repetition is another frequent compositional tactic in her work, as in the sequences of orange chairs and poster advertisements on an empty subway platform in San Sulpice Metro. She's also fond of the angles and light reflections that come with shooting from a train window. Traces Red looks like a real-life counterpart to Jörg Sasse's digitally constructed images of geometric, brightly colored, often deteriorated environments. Much as with traveling itself, the sublime moments in Robinson's work are few. Of a number of humdrum shots of the sky, one horizon, Blue, succeeds because the photograph is so low-tech: Digital noise is enlarged to the point that it looks like particulate matter in the atmosphere. One photograph, Hotel Continental, seems like a metaphor for everything Robinson wants to accomplish. It's a snapshot of a bright Venetian canal taken through a slight opening of the drapes over a hotel window. This is the moment everyone hopes for while traveling: a chance glimpse that pierces the veil of the exotic. The exhibition is on view from noon to 6 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays, to Saturday, Oct. 6, at the Gallery at Flashpoint, 916 G St. NW. Free. (202) 315-1305.