

View From Within
November 15, 2004

Zoe Crosher
Out the Window (LAX)
October 23 – December 4

Travel is a peculiar state of existence: in it, a traveler becomes a subject of a public kingdom that belongs to no one and everyone at once. To be a traveler in an airport, a train or bus station, or a hotel, is to encounter the comforts of home (e.g. bathroom, water, television, carefully regulated atmosphere, etc.) without any of the comfort of home. This absence of a sense of place is due to the impermanency of transit. In effect, these generic shelters exist purely to satisfy the temporality of perpetual movement from one permanent place to another. It is particularly revealing then, when the hustle of travel is slowed down to a palpably meticulous pace in Zoe Crosher's photographs taken from the interiors of LAX airport hotel rooms.

Crosher's series of photographs—all shots of airplanes in flight viewed through a hotel window—are framed in manner that flattens the 3-D space until foreground blends curiously into background. The LAX Adventure Hotel conflates the space so effectively that the window loses its literal frame (i.e. the windowsill) and blends into the viewer's referential perspective as an independent photograph hung on the wall. The curtain next to it reiterates this effect in an askew comparison while the wall air conditioner sets the whole scene as vaguely out of focus.

Crosher lucidly combines these visual effects with the starkness of the composition, spinning a narrative of the unseen, unnamed traveler. The hotel as a resting stop, reused again and again without suffering the marks of its occupants, ultimately conjures the familiar feelings of waiting associated with travel: restlessness, anxiety, and urgency. Impressed by the indexical qualities of the photograph and the soaring plane suspended in flight, we sense the traveler's presence beyond the visible scene through a moment of revelatory self-recognition.

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