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ZOE CROSHER
BY JOHN MOTLEY

According to Allan Sekula (one of Zoe Crosher's professors at CalArts), Los Angeles cannot be definitively documented. Sekula believes the city can never take on a static essence because the reality of LA is constantly trying to catch up to the fantasy of what it should be. In response, Crosher spent five years photographing what is undeniably essential to the city: change and transition. In her *Out the Window* project, Crosher has compiled 31 images shot from hotels surrounding LAX, each documenting a plane making its descent into the airport. At small A projects this month, the entire body of work has been collected for the first time since she began *Out the Window* in 2001.

Using the imagery of travel—namely, hotels and airplanes—Crosher depicts LA as an anchorless no man's land. The city's interiors are anonymous spaces, where every aspect of the rooms she photographs is undoubtedly replicated in the unseen rooms on either side. The exteriors are equally void of identity: urban sprawl, lots full of parked cars, and hazy gray skies. Any document that is captured is profoundly temporal, relegated to the split second the shutter curtain opens, so that an airplane appears tiny and stationary in the corner of a window.

What charges these images with a sense of specificity is the insistent presence of the photographer herself. In some pieces, the camera's flash is reflected in a glint of light in the window. In others, the traces of Crosher's presence are less subtle: the rumpled comforter of a slept-in bed or, as in "LAX Topper Hotel," a paper bag and plastic cup from Burger King. In fact, as part of the project, Crosher spent the night in each room photographed, and created her images early the following morning—adding a performative aspect to the process. This seems appropriate given that the images, which are occasionally blurry or overexposed, place far greater emphasis on concept than technical virtuosity. Crosher may concede to the impossibility of preserving any permanent truth about LA. But, in the focused documentations of *Out the Window*, she finds an apt metaphor for a city in a constant state of change.