

AMERICAN PHOTOGRAPHER

Robert Walker

In Robert Walker's world view, all subjects are equal, almost everyone alienated, and every image a contradiction. The Montreal-born photographer, trained as a painter, now works in the snapshot tradition. And, in that tradition, the whole world is his album. "People are incidental," muses Walker about his imagery. "They have no more importance than a shadow or a bright mailbox." Working in the style of the street photographers of the sixties, he uses his camera to fragment events and only grabs a shot when he feels a tension between the right combination of form, color and unself-conscious happenings.

Since moving to Manhattan, Walker spends most of his time walking from one end of the island to the other. The weather, rather than the neighborhood,

is his influence; he only shoots on bright sunny days when he can close down his aperture for greatest depth of field. He usually prints on Cibachrome paper for heightened color saturation.

In spite of his art school background and a brief skirmish with conceptual art, Walker now demonstrates an eagerness to embrace photography on its own terms. It seems a medium aptly suited to convey the violence and disaffection he sees around him. After viewing a recent exhibition of William Eggleston's color, Walker came away moved. "When you look at his pictures," he said, "you know the Western world is finished." The impact of Walker's pictures is no less intense: seen through his eyes, the future doesn't seem much more secure.

—Nancy Stevens

Embracing
photography on
its own terms.