

# MAIK GRAEF

Jason Klimock



*Abandoned Diner.* Maik Graef.

<<http://disconnectionplease.tumblr.com/>>.

Maik Graef is a twenty-five year old photographer from Weimar Germany, and is currently on exchange at Concordia from the Bauhaus University. Prior to studying art, Graef worked for six years in advertising and graphic design. In his photos he seeks to diverge from these commercial aspects by working exclusively with analog cameras. Black and white film is his preferred medium, because he enjoys the excitement of developing his own film; he says that with film you are never absolutely certain how the picture will develop, and he likes this element of surprise. Maik uses a Polaroid camera to exploit this element, and believes that the images have a painterly quality that better transfers the emotion of his pictures to the viewer.

Maik Graef emphasizes that there is a strong emotional component to his self-portraits of his experience in the Montreal suburbs. The urban sprawl in North America has caused the disappearance of neighborhood institutions such as the local diner, and as a result these buildings now sit empty. Graef feels that these abandoned spaces have an alienating effect, yet he is drawn to them, and connects their emptiness to his experience living in a foreign country for a brief period of time. As a picture of Canadian life his stark images provide an interesting outside perspective to the everyday spaces we, as Canadians, take for granted.