

Matthew Sleeth

Ten Series/106 Photographs

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With its scarcity of text from the start, this book instinctively feels like the kind of work one will dip in and out of and flick through at one's discretion, rather than actually sit down and read from cover to cover. This disjointed feeling is echoed by the ten series themselves, which range from images of abandoned umbrellas in Tokyo, to fire extinguishers from all over the world. Sleeth's images themselves have a fleeting, instantaneous quality, as if he is shooting from his eye's point of view (often looking down at his subject) as he passes through a location, rather than assuming a more considered position. *Kawaii Baby*, in which he documents the delighted reaction of Japanese strangers in public places to his little girl, is the most successful series. This is due to having a less ambiguous concept than the others, but mostly because Sleeth adopts an effective visual strategy, where he shoots from directly behind the infant who also acts as a decoy to the presence of the photographer.

These ten series do explore a variety of themes (globalisation and cultural identity in particular), and any one could be embellished upon in greater depth, as they are in the essay at the end of the book. Sleeth shows himself as a prolific image taker with a clear penchant for randomness. This volume is likely to be one of many anthologies of his highly active, if perhaps a little whimsical, practice.