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Adam Hinton

June 11, 2012

Adam Hinton makes 'observations of people going to work' in his series 'Shibuya'



Above *Untitled from Shibuya.* (©Adam Hinton/Courtesy of the photographer).

British documentary photographer [Adam Hinton](#) is known for his powerful and socially significant bodies of work that are marked by political comment; but in early 2011 he felt the desire to briefly 'free' himself from such projects and undertake a project that in marked contrast to what he terms 'the more serious work,' would offer him some 'light relief,' with the images he would take being 'interesting in themselves.'

For this project, Hinton chose to travel half way around the world to Tokyo, and over the course of four days he would produce a series of striking portraits of commuters in and around the Japanese capitals Shibuya district. 'The idea was to produce a series of observations of people going to work en masse but with each individual also reflecting on their own personal world, catching moments where the subject is both present and absent,' he says.



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Above *Untitled from Shibuya.* (©Adam Hinton/Courtesy of the photographer).

In documenting Shibuya's commuters, whether they are making their journeys by car or public transport, Hinton isolate's the individual from the frenetic hustle and bustle of the city around them; in one of his portraits — or 'observations' — we encounter a woman bathed in warm morning light, her gaze upwards as if checking the departure board for her train, her dark coat bleeding into the murky shadows of the background where we catch brief glimpses of her fellow commuters, as they too weave their way through the morning rush hour.



Above *Untitled from Shibuya.* (©Adam Hinton/Courtesy of the photographer).

Through the colourful reflections of the cities vibrant signs that cascade across the windscreen of her car, we see a young woman as she endures the banality of the same daily commute. This time the gaze is downwards, maybe she is checking her side mirror, or is she lost deep in thought and contemplation? In another of Hinton's photographs, a young man is frozen in time as he rushes to work, there is a stillness to the image, yet at the same time it is an image alive with the physical tension of the daily commute.

In this short essay of 29 stunning images which was conceived as a brief interlude from the politically motivated assignments that Hinton is known for, he has entered into a world where his subjects appear trapped and tired of their daily life. As we look upon these colour images, it is hard not to view them — even if on a subconscious level — as a social commentary on the everyday commute and struggle of Tokyo workers and salarymen as they pass through the world's busiest train station, like so many of us, slaves to the world of consumerism.

Shibuya is published by *This Is Real Art* in an edition of 500, including 29 copies

with a signed print.

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