

'Fragments and Ashes' by Erin Antognoli

Creating home through art

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By [Lauren LaRocca](#)

Resembling a stillframe filmstrip, Erin Antognoli's "Fragments and Ashes" at the Delaplaine shows a cohesion of objects in the Washington, D.C., cityscape, as if the viewer is taking a walk through an urban neighborhood: trashcans, cars, gated windows, cement sidewalks, brick walls, the occasional bird or tree.

Upon moving to D.C., the photographer began noticing how objects relate to one another aesthetically, partly because she picked up her Holga camera and left behind the digital.

She said that because she forced herself to look closely at her environment, she found herself becoming more in tune with it, creating a new home, in a sense, through her art.

The simplistic nature of the camera allowed her to place more emphasis on her own ideas, she said. Without being able to view images as she took them, she shot with an idea in mind, "and then it's kind of happy accident," she said.

While shooting, she kept in mind the shapes, textures and amount of light in each shot.

"Some are very planned, some are loose, some not at all," she said.

The images overlap, resulting in ghostlike black-and-white pieces.

Sitting in a coffee shop in Frederick recently, before a wedding photography gig, Antognoli dug in her purse and pulled out a black, plastic Holga camera, one of five in her collection.

"They all do different things," she said.

Some don't have many light leaks, some have a lot. Some create rounded black edges; others, triangular.

"I just carry one with me all the time. ... I got it in grad school. Everyone had one. It was, like, \$20."

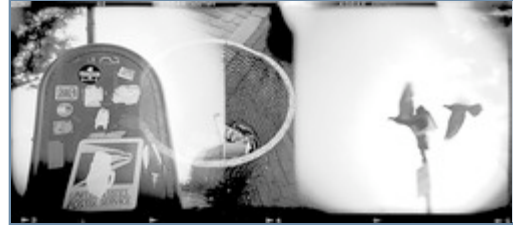
At the time, the simplistic format didn't work for the mixed media pieces she was creating (literally tearing apart photos and rearranging them).

"I kept (the Holga) because I don't throw things away."

When she moved to Germantown with her husband four years ago, she started her "Fragments and Ashes" series, and the Holga made sense.

"It just kind of clicked," she said. "I think the frame of mind is what has to do with it. If I move from here, I might not be as interested."

Antognoli grew up in Western Pennsylvania and attended college in Ohio, earning a degree in photojournalism from Kent State University. She went on to study photography at Savannah College of Art & Design and received an MFA.



"Birds," silver gelatin print, by Erin Antognoli.

What: "Fragments and Ashes" photography exhibit by Erin Antognoli

When: March 7 to April 26. Gallery hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 1 to 4 p.m. Sunday.

Where: The Delaplaine Visual Arts Education Center, 40 S. Carroll St., Frederick

Information: 301-698-0656; info@delaplaine.org; www.delaplaine.org

Because of her expanding collection of photo pieces (she has about 70 right now), she is also showing a similar exhibit simultaneously in Colorado, and she has shown two smaller versions of the project in other galleries. She adds pieces while rotating out others.

The majority of the pieces are shots of the greater D.C. area, but a few were taken in other locales as far as Alaska (Antognoli took a cross-country trip last summer).

Most pieces contain multiple images, some with as many as six frames, and their titles are literal, identifying objects in each photo.

"They're really mundane," Antognoli said. "I want other people to come up with their own meaning and connection."

She develops all her film herself, and the resulting silver gelatin prints are horizontal, 2 1/2-inch in height, and in solid white matting.

Because the images are so tiny, the viewer has to stand just a few inches from them to see them clearly, creating an intimate experience much like that with which the photos were taken.

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View more of Erin Antognoli's work: www.erinantognoli.com.

See what other people are doing with Holga photography on Flickr: www.flickr.com/photos/tags/holga

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