

Reviews

Art

Dan Torop

★★★★★

Derek Eller Gallery, through Jul 13
(see Chelsea)



Dan Torop's exhibition "Snowbound" counters summer warmth with ten photographs of chilly locales in Iceland, Colorado and upstate New York. Torop has a remarkable knack for capturing the picturesque; seen from a great distance, the frozen peak in *View from Monkey Mountain* veers toward calendar prettiness. *Horses*, his shot of two shaggy Icelandic ponies nuzzling the tufted grass at their feet, seems almost uncomfortably sentimental. But other images, particularly those that allow the man-made into scenes of

natural wonder, possess a tougher brand of beauty.

In *Glass*, a solitary figure in a coat, silhouetted against a hazy sunrise, evokes the lonely travelers in Caspar David Friedrich's romantic paintings. But a car's windshield occupies the foreground; pale golden sky glints poignantly off the glass, half wiped of snow. Torop's very best works, such as *Runway*—its row of streetlights and their reflections in icy water seem to stretch forever between snowcapped hills and a coastal town at twilight—have achingly gorgeous effects of illumination that transcend the modesty of their subjects and format (11-by-14-inch C-prints).

Two pictures of the ocean, one with a large moon on a silver-gray horizon, strike a different note: Their close-ups of liquid swells are marked by odd geometric configurations, pixelated outlines and unearthly color. In fact, they are entirely artificial, screen grabs from the artist's own computer simulation. But like the "straight" photos, they juxtapose nature and culture to admit the possibility of the sublime.—*Joseph R. Wolin*