

PHOTOGRAPHY

FIONA CRISP / OZHANG

MARY MACLEAN

7 WOCESTER TERRACE, BATH
OCT 12TH TO NOV 17TH 2002
WORDS: JOHN TAYLOR



Anyone fortunate to have stayed in more than one static caravan on a holiday park may know that they are not all identical. They have a fabulous array of elaborate personal touches and gaudy luxury extras giving each a unique interpretation of home from home. They are, one would presume, a Holy Grail for the lens of Martin Parr. Fiona Crisp sees it differently. Her lengthy exposure pinhole shots of caravan interiors and exterior views have literally stripped this idea bare. Gone are any signs of human habitation. The caravan interior merely acts as an extension to the pinhole camera looking out to the Northumbria coast where Crisp was working. No viewfinder was used, instead the camera was placed using a methodical plotting. Devoid of human interference the photographs appear at first a little dull and lifeless, coming alive only after a lengthier viewing, which allows the soft lighting to induce a cinematic atmosphere. Humans are also conspicuous in their absence in

Mary MacClean's photographs of unremarkable interiors. However unlike Crisp, who looks out into the exterior world, MacClean has zoomed in. You only get half a settee or a strip of tablecloth. Enough to identify the object, but reduced, clipped and angled so that a new interpretation emerges. The floral pattern of a sofa becomes a decorative landscape, whilst the creases in fabric form abstract marks. By printing on aluminium panels that have been painted with photosensitive emulsion an extra depth is created and the viewer is drawn into these secret new worlds. Finally with Ozhang the body exposes itself. Again the focus is close up so that patterns and colours compose themselves to fox the viewer. Wet black hair swirls above naked thighs, erotic images are projected onto the folds of limbs. The viewer is treated to glimpse of subtle intimacy, that needs, like most of the photographs on show (and like no caravan interior I've ever seen), time to reveal its subdued charm. ●