

shredding of military decorations, Kennard doesn't seem to want to give up the grandeur and pomp caught up in the process of making big 'worthy' paintings. These paintings are still rather polite. Abjection is kept at bay. The translation of media images of the injured and dead into paintings softens the shock and horror. The cutting viscerality is lost and they serve as more generic and abstract tokens of the injustices and atrocities.

Mark Durden

SOMEWHERE... FAST

Mary Maclean

Belfast Exposed

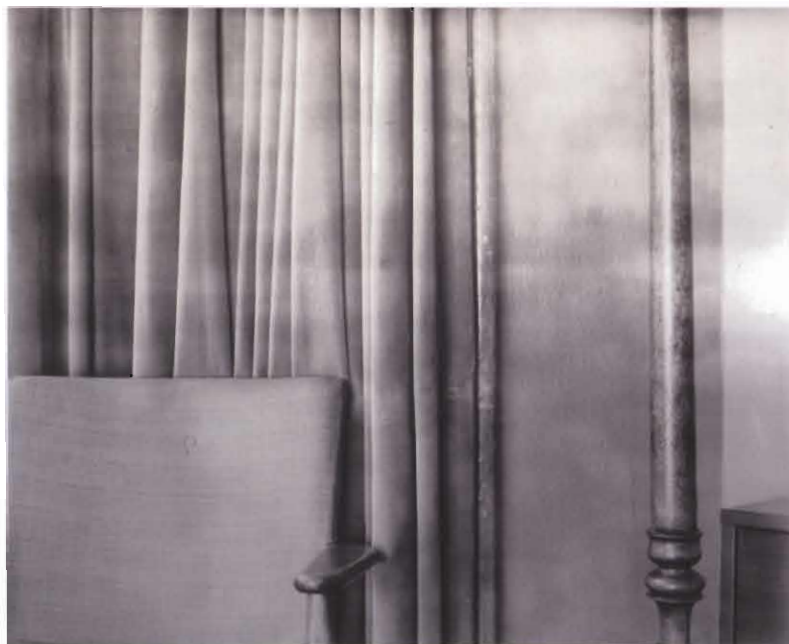
13 August – 24 September

image: State

The images in these photographs are odd looking because they are formed from photographic emulsion applied directly to an aluminium base rather than paper. The reflective ground to the images is vaguely suggestive of a Daguerreotype (though they are much bigger) but, on longer inspection they are more like some kind of miracle 3D picture or pub mirror.

The images themselves are of drab household furniture (chairs, beds, lamps), views out of windows and framed pictures on walls. Apparently they are taken in guesthouses but they might be any kind of fading establishment (two are entitled *Members' Dining Room*). As well as being unexpectedly reflective the pictures are also close to life sized. Seeing these unprepossessing objects so close is disconcerting, perhaps because it would be indecent to look that closely at guesthouse furniture but it might just be the 3D effect.

A number of the images draw attention to the act of looking and picturing. In fact the series of views out the window (through lace curtains) are paired in the exhibition with photographs



of framed paintings. So just as we marvel at the presence of these chairs and lamps we are also reminded of their immateriality. This is a kind of showcasing of the ability to picture something, the cool illusionism of a pictorial shadow on a sheet of metal. One thing we don't see in the pictures however is people, and as shiny and startling as these pictures may be they still suggest that guesthouses are dreary and lonely places.

Empty chairs are suggestive of the people that are missing from them, there's no one sitting on the sofa, both a picture of a bed (that we may assume is a single bed) and a chair show them from a strange perspective as if someone were standing next to them looking at the wall. This could be a kind of distraction ('I'm pointed this way because I'm thinking about something else') or boredom; either way they imply the person would rather be elsewhere, occupying a different psychological space.

It is a common presumption that lonely people's experience of objects is

somehow more acute than that of sociable people. This could be a throwback to existentialist fiction or based on the idea that if you spend your time in the company of empty chairs and lamps rather than people you will notice them more. What these pictures suggest is that being able to see something clearly doesn't necessarily mean you're enjoying it.

Richard West