

## HANNAH STARKEY

Interim Art  
London

Hannah Starkey's photographs have established themselves in the territory of staged banality. Often deliberately untitled her actresses and occasionally members of the public inhabit strangely familiar places that are carefully observed. Narratively her images are ambiguous. *Untitled September, 1999*, encapsulates the teenage state of boredom and lethargy, the compelling ennui so familiar to the teenager. But Starkey's image is imbued with a frisson, a narrative that works on the viewer. Four girls are grouped round a table, the remains of a snack in evidence. The group is silent, each lost in thought. The absence of dialogue establishes an enigmatic presence as we focus on the girl facing us, who is about to enter the loaded space, and whose footsteps the group must have heard on the highly polished floor.

This is teenage observation at its best. Starkey is a talented director, able to recognise the exact gestural vocabulary of teenage girls. *Butterfly Catchers* is another striking image. The moonlight catches the corrugated iron roof of an industrial unit abutting the desolate landscape of a rubbish tip. Two young adolescents are on a nocturnal mission. One strides purposefully along, her net held aloft, the other's demeanour expresses coercion, her gaze is pensive and hints at not altogether compliant resignation. In contrast another work shows black teenage women in a video store, a pink light permeates the interior as the girls strand around choosing which videos to hire. Again we have Starkey's engagement with moments of minimum narrative importance.

Sometimes, as in *Untitled August 1999* the work has the quality of an Edward Hopper painting. The lighting, tonal values and attitudes of the older women as they wait isolated in their own space outside a school, offer a loaded stasis. Constructed scenarios exploring women's daily lives.

These works are photographic fictions, they are about banal encounters and wasted time lassitude and frustration. These are moments that become lost in the whirl of life, arrested and given attention by Starkey's intelligent gaze.

Jean Wainwright



Hannah Starkey  
*Untitled - August 1999*  
C-type Print Courtesy Maureen Paley Interim Art