

ARTS

Infrared reveals invisible world

BY ROBERT CURRIE

INFRARED LIGHT FLOODS the world, but since it is beyond the range of human vision, we remain oblivious to it. In a show entitled *Red Eye*, at Gottingen Street's Eye Level Gallery, 12 photog-

PHOTOGRAPHY

Red Eye

Eye Level Gallery, Gottingen St.

Until November 3

raphers make the invisible world visible.

The photographs exhibited

in *Red Eye* were all made using infrared film, which renders subjects in a distinctive grainy black and white. Objects which reflect infrared light strongly show up as white; those which absorb it, black. Leaves appear a brilliant white, while skin tones are flatted, lips made pale, flesh taking on the appearance of marble.

"When infrared delivers, it really delivers," David Middleton writes in the introduction to the show's program. "The photographic image it presents is beyond the range of the normal situation or the usual event. It is unique."

Cynthia Phillips' series of portraits show the results of infrared film applied to portraiture. Her subjects look frozen, carved from white stone, but retain a definite warmth and freshness. In two of the photographs, Phillips has chosen to isolate the figures from background clutter, surrounding them in a luminous haze. The third, depicting a boy in a bathtub, is a more candid, but no less striking image.

Rachel Brodie also chooses human subjects, but treats them in a wholly different way. Her "First three Portraits from the Child Series" all feature young children with enigmatic expressions. The children look natural, but at the same time do not try to conceal their awareness of the camera. Again, infrared film creates an otherworldly radiance to their faces, set off by the absorptive blackness of their eyes.

An entirely different sensibility informs the work of John Kingwell and Jessica Veinot, who turn their cameras toward the natural world. Veinot's studies of stark, windswept trees, bare rocks and patterned skies emphasise the absence of the human form. The works on display resemble Ansel Adams's photographs of the American wilderness, but with the unfamiliar tones of infrared imaged foliage. Kingwell takes a



PHOTO: RACHEL BRODIE

Whoever blinks first loses.

more pastoral and painterly approach. A deserted building, obscured by trees, a piece of abandoned farm machinery rusting in an overgrown field and a chapel seemingly in an unpopulated wilderness are striking for their range of tones and quiet, timeless appearance.

Not all the photographs dwell on the more arresting at-

tributes of the infrared medium. Katherine Glauser's series entitled "Desert Cemetery at Nazca" emphasises content over form in her grim photos of skulls on bones piled on the barren ground. Rag shrouded bones are piled deliberately, the eye-sockets of the skulls staring into the featureless desert. Content displaces form again, with a lighter touch, in John Hillis and Sandra Legere's five images of an Elvis impersonator posing in settings ranging from a lakeshore to a Green-Gables parking lot. As is the case with Glauser's work, the Elvis photos show little of the abnormalities of infrared film; a casual glance would find them indistinguishable from images made with regular films.

Most of the photographers have chosen to let their works speak for themselves. The exception is David Middleton, whose photographs and text piece are called "Il ne faut pas remuer la boue/musn't stir the mud." Each of the three photographs features a nude male, standing in open country, holding a figurine of a dinosaur or an extinct mammoth. Alongside the photographs are a piece of text describing dinosaurs, a definition of the word "extinct" and a magazine article documenting the FBI's harassment of John Sturges, an American photographer.

The works of other photographers, including Melissa Atkinson's rural and urban landscapes and David Gamble's juxtaposition of modern architecture and trees complete an exhibition of high quality; it is ably presented in Eye Level Gallery's small but well lit space. The show's opening attracted a huge crowd which packed the gallery and spilled out into the adjoining space. The show continues at Eye Level Gallery, 2182 Gottingen St. until November 3. The second part of the show, from October 30 to November 18, will be housed in the Dartmouth Heritage museum.

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Ghostly Elvis haunts Green Gables

PHOTO: SANDRA LEGERE