

Flash Art

Yossi Milo Gallery

Trish Morrissey

Parents bringing their first child home from the hospital in the 1960s, a family birthday in the '80s, a family birthday in the '80s, two guys drinking on the couch, apparently in the late '70s. What at first appear to be family photographs that could belong to anybody, these are in fact fictional scenarios in which Trish Morrissey and her sister pose as a variety of characters. The photographs meticulously copy the hackneyed genre's conventions: fingers on the lens, sloppy cropping, squinting expressions and ill-fitting, synthetic '70s shorts. But one is never quite fooled. The images are large and have a professional finish; and small insignia dismantle the illusion bit by bit: a too orderly mess, an overaged teen, a husband that looks too much like his wife. Unlike Gillian Wearing, who substituted herself

into portraits of her immediate family members, eerily questioning her own identity and how she bears the imprint of family history, Morrissey constructs what never was, or perhaps what could have been. The photographs stage the questions that all photography engenders: what is the distance between the photographic representation of an event and its reality, between an old portrait of a family member and that person's contemporary appearance? Morrissey mixes real and fictive elements to muddy the waters. In this way she not only investigates her own family history, but also meddles with a much larger, collective family album.

—Sarah Lookofsky

TRISH MORRISSEY, November 15th, 1975, 2004. C-Print, 81 x 102 cm. Courtesy of Yossi Milo Gallery.





THE NEW YORKER

THE NEW YORKER, JANUARY 17, 2005

TRISH MORRISSEY

A set of color prints that depict the thirty-seven-year-old Irish photographer and her sister—posed as themselves as children, their parents, and various aunts and friends. Morrissey uses dated clothes like tight running shorts and multicolored nylon coats to create her reimagined family moments, along with formal gimmickry—in “August 8, 1982,” a pose at the seaside is marred by two blurry fingers over the lens. Through Feb. 26. (Milo, 552 W. 24th St. 212-414-0370.)

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PDN FEBRUARY 2005

PICKS OF THE MONTH



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GALLERY

Trish Morrissey

If Trish Morrissey's portraits look eerily familiar, it may be because she takes her compositions straight from typical family snapshots—including all the awkward poses, uneasy body language, shy smiles and I-can't-believe-we-ever-wore-that clothing. "Seven Years," Morrissey's new exhibition, is made up of large-scale color prints of the artist and her older sister striking poses to create what appears at first glance to be a genuine family document. It's weird how many photographers lately have been showing work inspired by their families—or family albums—but rarely to such an oddly touching effect. This is the first show in the States for the Dublin-born, London-based Morrissey, and it continues Yossi Milo Gallery's track record of putting on perplexing, intriguing shows by artists we've never heard of before. On view until February 26.

Yossi Milo Gallery, 552 West 24th Street, New York, NY. (212) 414-0370. <www.yossimilo.com>