



Untitled 2004
© Lucy Levene
courtesy Photofusion

push directly into the vicarious nature of our current political situation. Declercq was investigated by the French Anti-Terrorist Police while working on the (*I am*) *Mike* project and his documents and films confiscated and seized. In our times, the problem is that our political situation simply has too many layers already of truth and Declercq's work cannot help but feel as if it has all been done before. But that may not be the fault of the artist; and perhaps this futile realisation is the true value of this show.

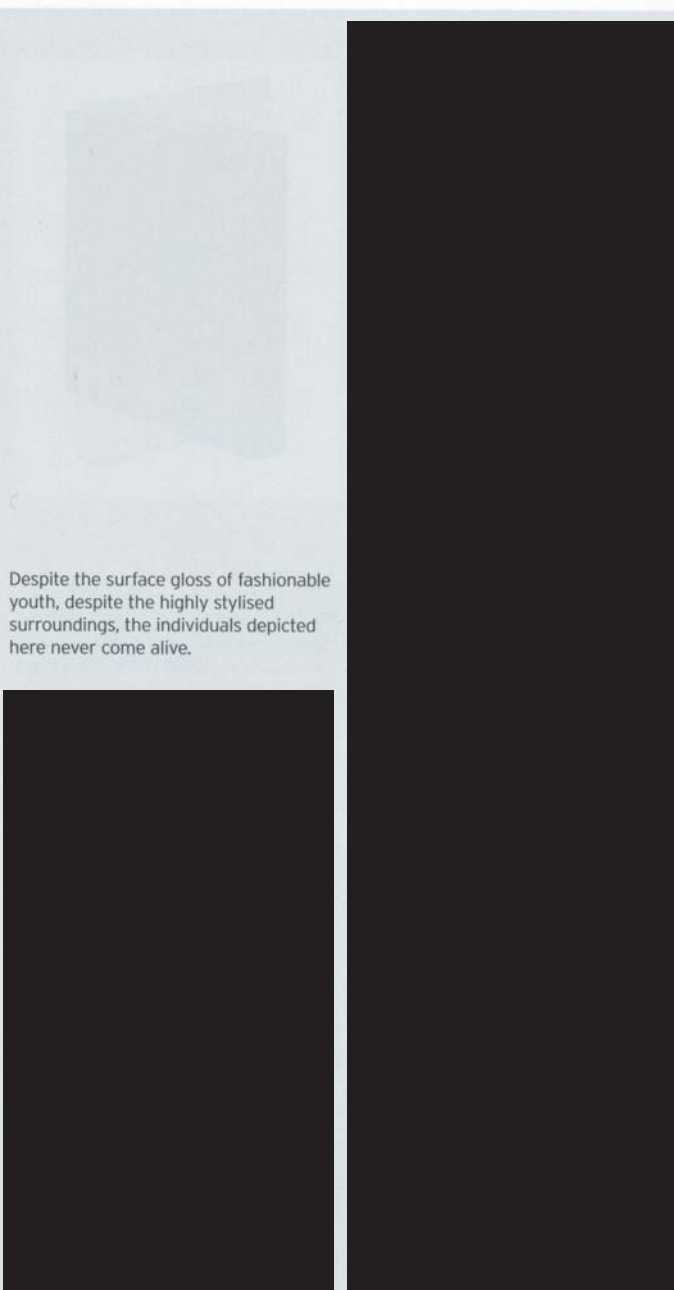
Lydia Goldblatt and
Lucy Levene
Club Series: Photographs
from the Ministry of Sound
Photofusion, London

23 Sept – 19 Nov 2005
Isabelle Schiavi

Nightclubs are places to see and be seen, yet the subjects of *Club Series: Photographs from the Ministry of Sound* seem completely unaware of being observed, let alone photographed. Nor do they seem particularly interested in doing any looking either. Despite being photographed in one of London's most popular dance venues, these are

isolated individuals occupying uncannily still and uncrowded spaces. Faces and identities blurred or obscured by shadow, they are anonymous figures lost in their own worlds – even when absorbed in groping embraces.

Consisting of 23 colour photographs, *Club Series*, 2004, was taken over the course of three months at the Ministry of Sound nightclub. Although the photographers worked separately, the works are hung together. These are striking, richly toned photographs using available light and long exposure times, giving a blurred and unreal quality to moving subjects. The sense of scopic fantasy is heightened by glowing surfaces bathed in artificial hues of light: rich velvety reds and shiny bottle greens, the occasional bright orange or magenta tone. From above, striated shafts of cold white light spill from the void, picking out unexpected details from the pervasive blackness: a silhouette drawn in white, the folds of a jacket, a shiny earring. Purportedly scenes of fantasy and spectacle, yet strangely vacant, this is a place of sound pointedly lacking a soundtrack, revealing a deep emptiness at the heart of our designated places of activity and encounter.



Despite the surface gloss of fashionable youth, despite the highly stylised surroundings, the individuals depicted here never come alive.