



ART MONTHLY

NOV '97



■ Worldwide Video Festival

Stedelijk Museum and the Melkweg Amsterdam
September 12 to 17

The relocation of the Worldwide Video festival from The Hague to the Stedelijk Museum and the Melkweg in Amsterdam has been a happy move, both in terms of improved accommodation and, as was generally agreed, a substantially more interesting programme of work in video, installation, performance, CD-Roms and websites...

... Nick Stewart, an Irish videomaker had a different point of view. His own tape *Familiar Image* was showing at the Stedelijk. He too used images of families but in the form of close-ups on found snapshots. In complete contrast to the pitiless realism of Wearing's projection, Stewart revealed his images slowly as if they were illuminated by a flickering candle and provided a flat commentary that simply described the individuals in terms of their physiognomy, their pose and the setting in which they found themselves. No names, no biographies and no way of identifying with the ghostly remains of a young couple squinting into the camera on a sunny afternoon in the 20s. Stewart belongs to the generation of film and videomakers that pointed to the limitations of both a visual and verbal language. They achieved this partly by narrowing the focus of the lens, emphasising the frame and by obscuring and layering the image. They stripped it down in an attempt to open up an imaginative space in which the spectator might begin to participate in the creation of meaning.

Catherine Elwes