

GUTTED: An Exhibition of Photographs by Etienne Clément

Tuesday 11 February – Sunday 25 May 2003

Gutted is an exhibition of photographs taken at the Holly Street housing estate in Hackney, East London, focusing on the abandoned domestic interior. The tower block in which Etienne Clément worked was being stripped and prepared for demolition by explosives. He entered these spaces in order to capture the echo of recent occupation and to record the empty shell of a discredited piece of urban planning.

Clément's photographs are taken in a formal, architectural style which allows the interiors to speak for themselves. Hidden stories lie in these empty, uninhabited domestic spaces. What has been left behind, and the condition in which these interiors are left, lead the viewer's imagination on a fascinating journey. "There is something very morbid about these spaces... they are almost like funeral chambers or discovered tombs. They are extremely sad and scary", says Etienne. "The spaces are scary because it is the end of something: the end of the building itself and of the occupants' experience of life in this space". Once the familiar domestic space is gutted, a transformation occurs. They go from being familiar and animated places into "nostalgic and ghostly, and perhaps rough and dangerous spaces".

Each photograph was taken from the same position in each flat, on each floor of the tower block. By adopting the same viewpoint for each of the shots in the series, Etienne distances himself from the space. The photos can be scanned for the clues to the human existence they once supported, or they can be viewed in a more abstract way. When seen *en masse*, these repeating images generate a rhythm and interesting surface patterns.

Born in Paris in 1965, Etienne studied English History and Civilisation at the Sorbonne-Paris. He now lives in Hackney. His work is widely published and exhibited, and his most recent show was *Baltic* at RIBA, London. He was awarded a *European Architectural Photography Prize db architecturbild* in 1997. Etienne teaches at the Architectural Association. He is also working on a Geffrye Museum project with Horizon, a special school from Hackney, to help teenage pupils produce their own exhibition of photographic work, which will be displayed alongside Clément's.

Notes to Editors/...

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1. For further information or transparencies, please contact Nancy Loader, Press Officer, on 020 7739 9893 or nloader@geffrye-museum.org.uk

2. Related Activities and Events

The exhibition will be accompanied by a public programme of activities and events including exhibition talks by Etienne Clément, a panel discussion exploring the ways in which lifestyle influences architectural space in contemporary London, and a range of workshops for adults and children (details to be confirmed).

3. Clément's photographs will be available for sale at £600 plus VAT each (36"square, sealed and mounted on foamex).

4. The Geffrye specialises in the domestic interiors and furniture of the urban middle-classes. Its displays span from 1600 to 2000, forming a sequence of period rooms which capture the quintessential nature of English interior style. The museum is set in the former almshouses of the Ironmongers' Company, elegant 18th-century buildings surrounded by tranquil gardens, in Shoreditch, East London.

5. The Geffrye Museum is an independent charitable trust, grant-aided by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. The Trust actively seeks to attract donations and corporate sponsorship to support the museum's services and development plans.

6. Admission: FREE
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Web Address: www.geffrye-museum.org.uk
Email Address: info@geffrye-museum.org.uk
Opening Hours: Open Tuesday - Saturday 10am - 5pm
Sundays & Bank Holidays 12 - 5pm
Closed Mondays (unless Bank Holiday)
Travel: Buses 149, 242, 243 or 67
Tube Liverpool St, then bus 149 or 242
Old St (exit 2), then bus 243