

Caught in overcrowded landscapes

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When Richard Billingham was short-listed for the Turner Prize in 2001, many thought the nomination was mistimed. In 1996 he gained instant attention for his snapshots of his dysfunctional family in their council flat in a depressed area of the West Midlands - a true picture of working-class poverty.

The art world, which has always had a nervously schizophrenic attitude to wealth and class, naturally embraced the work, revelling in its grittiness.

It was subsequently included in the seminal Sensation exhibition and shown worldwide. If he was to be nominated, it should have been then. By the time he was included in the Turner Prize the family photos were old news and his new work, essentially landscape photography, was both less sensational, less remarkable and something of a disappointment.

On show here are eight recent photographs in the same vein, calm, composed images, some of landscapes devoid of people, others of populated environments. Unlike his previous landscape images these are taken across the world - in Ethiopia, Pakistan and England - and are taken with a medium format camera that gives depth and detail. The results are good but not exceptional.

Village in Pakistan shows a busy, dusty intersection. Sunlight filters in through the trees on a steep hill in the top right corner of the composition, casting a measure of serenity across the men going about their business, a sumptuously ornate truck and scuffed advertising boards.

Ethiopian Landscape III reveals a lush, green and bucolic scene of men crossing a stream, gathering wood and other wholesomely natural activities. Storm at Sea, meanwhile, has great abstract qualities, the clouds, mist, sea and shore creating harmonious swathes of deep greys and blues.

Unfortunately Billingham, like all artists who display straight photography, labours in the shadow of the enormous mountain of images our culture produces. Being an ex-painter he has more of an eye for composition than most, and certainly he is aiming to capture the timeless quality possessed by the greatest landscape painting and photography. However, these images do not achieve that aim and, attractive though most of them are, they do not stand clearly apart from the sea of images that surrounds us.

Until 17 April. Further information: 020 7439 2201. ■