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## Craigie Horsfield

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02.23.08-03.29.08 *Monica de Cardenas* | Zuoz

Shortly over a year ago, the Monica De Cardenas gallery opened a new exhibition space in Zuoz, a village in the lower Engadin valley, not far from Saint Moritz, in a seventeenth-century house with a broad, sloping roof, massive stone walls, parquet floors, and wooden wainscoting and partitions. Its pared-down exhibition program currently features English artist Craigie Horsfield, who is presenting part of "Madrid Conversation," his recent project on the city of Madrid. An imposing thirteen-foot-square photograph on one wall immortalizes an "instant" of amusement enjoyed by the dancing young people crammed into the Sala el Sole discotheque on Calle Jardines. This mass of bodies in turn can be broken down into countless intimate interactions. Accompanying the work are individual portraits—a genre that Horsfield has mastered uniquely in our time. It being Spain, a connection with painterly traditions is inescapable, and indeed, this body of work proves to be an homage to the "golden age" of painting in that country, above all to Velázquez. Behind their documentary nature (each title bears the full name of the subject, as well as the place where and the date when the image was captured), these photographs imbue the illustrated reality with a dimension of uncertainty and suspension close to that of painting.

The still lifes in the exhibition, which belong to other photographic series, likewise reveal this transformative capacity. One need only see the sequence of pictures of glass bottles, in which the transparency of the glass is transformed into the heaviness of specific colors; the image of two metal pumpkins, their surface a play of minute variations on blue; or the bottle of seltzer that, in its splendor, stands out sharply against the background, bringing to mind the precision of Northern Flemish painting. In these images, Horsfield demonstrates his mastery of a new "dry print" technique, a modified ink-jet print rendered on drawing paper. Once again, photography seeks a rapprochement with painting; this time, the attempt largely succeeds.

*Translated from Italian by Marguerite Shore.*

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