

*Biomorphic Sculpture at McClean Park* is one of a series of photographs by Stan Douglas taken in Strathcona, an area in Vancouver. They are normally shown near to his video piece 'Win, Place or Show'. That piece is very much concerned with structures and systems such as the imposition of planned social housing or the kind of algorithms that are used in betting. Exploring and photographing somewhere relevant to a layered and complex project like 'Win, Place or Show' is typical of the way Douglas develops his ideas.

At first glance the photograph might be a publicity shot commissioned by the local planning department. (Making work in the guise of a commonplace idiom is also typical of Douglas's practice.) But it has been taken in the wrong decade and the wrong season for that and its atmosphere is more complex, with a mood common to aging spaces like these. I grew up near similar ones in Coventry, a city that underwent much post-war reconstruction. I often walk through them when I'm out working in South London.

The sculpture, the tree and the bench have grown old together and they share the same palette; a melancholic grey - green imposed on them by the damp and cold. In contrast to the tree and the sculpture the flat apartment block still has its white modernist grid and a colour scheme which, although diluted by years of repainting, remains a considered scheme.

The contrast between these two palettes emphasises a spatial separation and of all the photographs in this series this one has the strongest sense that we are looking at a stage set before a backdrop. Douglas is keenly interested in the work of Samuel Beckett: a tree, a bench and a public sculpture upon an empty stage. It could be the perfect setting for 'Waiting for Godot' found in unlikely circumstances.

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