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by Jean Dykstra

"Are We There Yet?," Mark Mann's show of digitally manipulated photo-based works at Laurence Miller Gallery on West 57th Street, Oct. 16-Nov. 26, 2003, is a riff on the various American recreation destinations depicted in vintage postcards from the 1960s and '70s. The ideal of the family vacation -- the escape, the fresh air, the breathtaking sights, the family bonds to be strengthened -- is subverted by Mann in these exaggeratedly pixilated images in muted 1970s oranges and greens.



A mother and her children sit on a log, admiring the view, in *Log Jam*, but it turns out that they're sitting in a logging camp, and what they're looking at is only more logs, as far as the eye can see, crowding dangerously up against them. A boy stands alone in a motel room in *Screen* (2001); dressed for the pool, he stares dully at a TV screen, as if waiting for a missing parent to return. Mann deftly captures both the anticipation and the boredom of being a child on vacation in a motel room, but he also injects a satisfyingly poisonous thread of anxiety into the images.



A crowd of people march down a road lined with Redwoods in *Long Highway* (2003): the woods are beautiful, but there's a sense of cult-like acquiescence to the whole thing. Mann has a light touch, and though the images are laced with irony, enough of a genuine sense of nostalgia remains to inspire affection for his lost and wandering subjects.