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Above: Sarah Jones, *The Living Room I*, 2002, c-type print on aluminium, 150 x 150cm. **Below right:** Cristina Garcia Rodero, *Rituales en Haiti*, 2001, documentary photograph from the book of the same name, featured in "Metamorphing"

MULTI-STORIED

When Sarah Jones last showed at Maureen Paley Interim Art in 1999, all the talk was about a new generation of British photographers whose work was carefully staged and markedly formalist. Now, three years later, when curators and the press are talking up a new trend in British photography that rejects staging for a more naturalistic attitude, Jones returns to London to present new work at Paley's gallery.

Jones's work has evolved in the past few years: her images are darker and more beautiful, yet they retain their signature sense of estrangement. While her *Francis Place/Mulberry Lodge* series (1996-1999) featured houses populated by teenage girls, the work recently seen at New York's Anton Kern Gallery consisted almost exclusively of outdoor scenes, shot in unidentified London parks. For her new show, Jones has regained her interest in the interior, but both inside and outside feature on the gallery walls. Attention is also paid to still-life motifs; Jones has made photographs of roses and trees, which are displayed in diptychs or triptychs with

human counterparts. This form of display adds to the complexity of her work: meaning is not produced just by the repetition, but also by cross-referencing human and natural portraits.

But these developments haven't changed the core of Jones's practice. It remains an investigation on the relation between the particular and general – how the individual, a girl, a flower, a room, can convey the universal by means of a gesture or in a certain light. Jones often chooses kids-next-door as models, and, by asking them to adopt staged, static poses, turns them into icons. If the aim of documentary photography is show things, Jones's work is iconic: it creates figures that refer back to a story, but a story we are not certain about. Like Piero della Francesca, whose *Brera Altarpiece* was the basis for her *Actor* series (1995), Jones offers us – by staging real people in a world of fiction – the opportunity to elaborate a narrative ourselves. And we should thank her for that. **PL**

Sarah Jones, 28 Oct-24 Nov, Maureen Paley Interim Art, London E2 (020 7729 4112)