

# Thomas Erben Gallery

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## ART IN REVIEW

### **Tom Wood**

#### **'Looking for Love'**

Thomas Erben Gallery  
516 West 20th Street  
Chelsea  
Through Dec. 21

At first glance, Tom Wood's photographs of young people hanging out at a disco near his Merseyside home in the north of England can seem like generic examples of the casual images of casual socializing that proliferate these days. But they were made between 1982 and 1985, which may incline you to compare them unfavorably with Nan Goldin's work. Actually, Mr. Wood is a kind of street photographer working indoors in an environment full of people on the move with tension and desire in the air, and he manages to get quite a bit of it on film.

Each of his images seems to diagram a specific emotional exchange transacted among the men and women who dance, drink and talk; size up one another; approach or avoid; flirt aggressively or hang back. Sometimes they kiss or snuggle or pinch one another's backsides; sometimes they sit dejected and isolated while everyone else parties on.

In all, the images are surprisingly individual in their composition and nuance. Neither ironic nor intrusive, they provide a poignant sense of the carefully disguised insecurity and the age-old rituals of youth.

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