

Mimi Plumb *What Is Remembered* and *Portraits from 1980's*, Rayko Photo Center, May 6, 2016

Mimi Plumb, now retired from San Jose State, exhibited two bodies of work from her very early career. "What Is Remembered" was photographed in the 1970's in the suburbs of the Bay Area, Walnut Creek where she grew up, and Marin County. As a young student/photographer she returned to capture the suburbs she remembered from her coming of age. In her youth she was hostile to these newly created housing tracks created from bulldozed over orchards, as she notes in her writings, "*a wasteland from which to flee.*" Thirty three B&W images (about 11"x14") are mounted in white frames with generous 4" wide thick white mats. "Portraits from the 1980's", are represented by 9 images similarly mounted but slightly larger prints (about 16"x20").

Her photographs upon her return to the suburbs a decade after leaving don't appear hostile, but neither do they celebrate anything about the burbs. Twenty seven of the thirty three images are of people and a third of those she has photographed from behind. A similar ratio for her portraits, four out of nine, is also viewed from the back side. This leads to a feeling that she returned as an outsider, not comfortable with facing the people.

The most direct contact between photographer and suburban inhabitants seems reserved for the teen and pre-teen population. The young "coming of age" girls she photographed in the 1970's are likely not different from the current crop, except for hair and clothing styles, and lack of cell phones.

The photographs are nicely composed/exposed and well printed; however, the Rayko show doesn't reveal insights into the suburban lifestyle. It reveals more about a young photographer searching for meaningful work, a sort of coming of age behind the camera. A visit to the photographer's web page provides many more images which fills in the story a bit.



What Is Remembered



Portraits 1980's

