

# Johnen Galerie

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TIME OUT

Francesco Gennari. Mobile home

Februar 2004

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## Francesco Gennari

### Mobile Home *East End*

As an existential exercise, Francesco Gennari's sculptures use the psychology of a visit to the zoo. Within a Le Corbusier-style cube, a hand-carved hive, a sugar castle and a golden meteorite, he has apparently created four mini ecosystems consisting of earth, worms, spiders, seeds and other microscopic life; but there is little evidence of their existence. In this sterile setting, the sculptures are immediately recognisable as art objects; essentially fantasy containers, they flirt with formality. 'Mausoleum 3' is a box-shaped construction made from carved pieces of maple wood. There is no apparent entry point, but you take it as read that inside is a worm and an amount of jam. '2.7%' is a

coloured glass cube whose title refers to the survival probability of the resident insect life. There's a way in; open panels reveal some reassuringly Groundforce mulch. But the icing on the social-science cake has to be 'Mausoleum for a Worm', a sugar-walled, earth-filled prison for a solitary worm. A cross between a fairytale castle and the Gulag, this closed unit provokes palpable claustrophobia as, inevitably, you anthropomorphise its inhabitant.

Of course, the vessels might be empty, but that's the point. The sculptures do not disappoint, since there are no natural-history expectations and suspension of disbelief provides a squirm-inducing reward. The proof of the pudding might be in the eating, but you are happy not to find out.

*Rebecca Geldard*