



THE INVISIBLE VIEW; Betwixt and Between

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ATTESTATION OF AUTHORSHIP

“I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the qualification of any other degree or diploma of a university or another institution of higher learning, except where due acknowledgement is made in the acknowledgements.”

Christine Latimer, 2008

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the idea of a liminal space, as being dreamlike, suspended in time and physically unlocatable. It questions and exploits the boundary between abstraction and figuration in painting. This investigation has been considered from a subjective viewpoint allowing a distancing of space to illuminate new perceptions and experiences through the language of painting. The project has sought to explore the relationship between the natural world and seeing, to deepen and emphasize the other worldliness of an in-between space. This third space has been evoked by a process of abstracting pictorial content, juxtaposition of elements, colour and composition.

This thesis is constituted of practice-based 80%, accompanied by an exegesis 20%.

INTRODUCTION

The intention of this project has been to explore the notion of an in-between (site), considered through the experience of seeing, as being visible and invisible, real and imagined. Through broad experimentation of painting in the studio, where images have been abstracted and reduced; devices have been discovered and employed, and through analysis of other artists' works, questions arose about the boundaries between abstraction and figuration. In turn this opened up considerations about what painting techniques best evoked and described the liminal. The liminal in the context of this project, refers to transitional space; a space that is neither one place nor another; rather a third space, in-between. Liminality is often associated with ephemerality, the transitional passage between alternative states, and in an expanded sense has referred to a new sensation or experience. Liminality for the purpose of this project operates as the underpinning interest and concern thereby constructing interplay between states of reality, which swing between key aspects, abstraction and figuration, the real and invented.

The liminal space has been explored and viewed as an 'other' experience that has been constructed via the scene. The notion of the scene is constructed through deliberate imagination that allows the finished paintings to be read by viewers as an imagined space and the concept of liminal as unfixed. The idea of the imagined is described by Peter Doig in conversation, "I don't think of my paintings as being at all realistic. I think of them as being derived more from within the head than from what's out there in front of you" (Schurian, W. 2005, p. 94-95). Uncertainty of perception and previous knowledge of the viewer's own experience has also brought new ideas to the viewing of images that have played a major part in this project. There are three series of works, which run parallel as a method for creating varying points of view and investigation to evoke the project premise.

In this project, the notion of abstract is referred to for its potential relationship to the invisible, the inner state where the starting point is the real world, from where the image then becomes abstracted by means of simplification until it becomes an essence of, or in some way similar to a recollection. This method of translation has enabled me to

simplify and present a representation of what I have ‘seen’, so that my work becomes depictive of what was felt through viewing and perhaps a new representation of the world. “The Chinese give expression to the invisible by expressing through absence” (Gombrich, 1960, p. 175). The idea of absence in relation to time is relevant to my work because the focus is on a sense of time that is floating and removed rather than fixed, thereby creating a mood of ambiguity. This position correlates with Doig’s comment on the imagined, and forms the basis of my own practice and conceptual framework.

CONCEPTS

The concept of this project has been to evoke a third space to show/visualise an ‘other’ experience, in order to create an uncertainty of perception. This has been approached through experimentation with painting processes, and the researching of other artists with similar methods and approaches who are also exploring the boundaries of abstraction and figuration. The conceptual and contextual part of this project has involved research into perceptions of what we see, the experience of the unseen and unrepresentable. The perceptual aspects have focused on experimentation, translating these ideas through paint, colour, elements and space, continually creating a tension between the perceptual and abstraction, or the unreal. Painting techniques and strategies have altered and developed over the duration of the project. Colour has become quieter, space has become a larger element in the work and the actual technique of applying paint has evolved as works produced elicited desired commentary from peers. Images and subject material have been appropriated from a variety of sources including magazines, newspapers, photography books, the internet and chance encounters from everyday life. This random selection is intuitively arranged into props and scenes, devised to set up

particular sensibilities in my works. I choose certain images because I can visualise them translated through paint into desired images, ‘they somehow fit together’.

Throughout this text, the liminal is referred to as the ‘third space’ or the in-between and is key to the reading of these works, suggesting an uncertain place, where boundaries can dissolve, a transforming space that holds the threshold of possibility, a space that redefines/realigns what is real, then offers a transformation. The concept of the liminal is elusive to description and seems to allow the imagination to be open-ended, allowing the experience of the unexpected to be constructed, in this instance via the scene. The project has also been concerned with an investigation into colour sensation and colour responses as a means of evoking the sensibility of a liminal space/time zone. The concept of the unlocatable has also been defined and investigated. When referring to a description of an image as being grounded in the real world but triggering a memory of something quite different and elusive. Gibson (1978) states that, “an image is both a surface in its own right and a display of information about something else, but it’s also more than

a display, Wollheim says, a representation is a configuration in which something or other can be seen, and this ‘seeing in’ is central to our experience of pictures” (Willats, J, 1997, p. 220).

PERCEPTION/EXPERIENCE; Inner and Outer Reality

Perception plays a large part in this project; the project asks what perception is and the extent to which it plays a part in evoking the liminal. The concept of ephemerality in this project has been important in terms of translating experiences that are fleeting or difficult to grasp. This process in itself is potentially indefinable. In some ways our perception, in the viewing of a work (a scene) is an interpretation conditioned by our own memories and personal experience. “Perception is the medium through which states of being are directly experienced” (Molon, John, 2005, p. 22). Bridget Riley describes seeing and experience interestingly when she says it’s something that should take you by surprise, be sudden and unexpected, have a lively quality with a balance between the inner and the outer. “This balance is a sort of convergence which releases a particular alchemy, momentarily turning the commonplace into the ravishing” (Kudielka, Robert, 1999, p. 32). Although Riley is solely an abstract artist, conceptually it is the

aspect of the ‘thrill and pleasure of seeing’ that is of interest to this project as a way of communicating experience and perception.

STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT; Subject to Sensibility

Throughout this two year project there has been a tension between ideas/concepts and the perceptual appearance and response to the images I have painted. The idea of the liminal or the in-between as a concept has been challenging because of its unfixed or temporal state. It is this intangible feeling or place I have striven to capture with rigorous experimentation. Initially colour and composition were active in addressing what was intended to be an unusual sensibility, but the literal content, subjects such as the animals, deer heads and statues seemed to hinder slippage into the ambiguous world. Gradually colours became more muted with scale and perspective playing a larger part, till finally through a wet on wet painting technique and diminished figurative lines, responses from viewers were more in line with my intention. Upon primary encounter the wet on wet technique dominates as texture, but is then taken over by a cast of light or haze catching the viewer’s eye. In early paintings I experimented with transparent paint as a way to capture the image and locate a response

that could be found between layers of information. This was successful to a point but once I changed my painting technique towards more discordant colours I was able to elicit a response from viewers that coincided with what I had intended. As I painted I was coynisant that what I was trying to communicate pivoted between something pictorial and imagined, that often one layer could detract from or enhance what I set out to achieve. I also realised the best approach was to totally limit subject matter, as too much variance proved a distraction to my focus. Through small painted experiments where I re-painted the same subject from different angles, I decided to limit the subject to houses, turning the house into a scene. These scenes became sites where activity could potentially take place, providing links to the liminal through suggestion i.e. site of potential activity. I felt through this selection of houses/buildings that I would be more able to engage in the subtleties of site, space, place and also concentrate on and develop different techniques/devices to evoke the ambiguity of a third space.

CONTEXTS

The broader context of my research brought several types of work into focus. In researching the conceptual arena in which my ideas were evolving, I investigated several painters whose works resonated with my ideas. The following is a brief synopsis of influence and relevant contextual undertakings. In my research into the concept of simplicity and stillness, Maureen Gallace provides an example of a painter whose painterly approach is simple and combined with a soft palette gives the viewer a sense of quiet, stillness and space, so much so, that one can almost hear the noise of silence. Gallace's small paintings are evocative of a third space through a combination of limited detail, subject and muted colours. Michael Raedecker explores places and scenes in a unique way that gives his work an 'other worldly' somewhat strange feel to the images. The resulting scenes become unlocatable and dreamlike yet are still based on reality. Raedecker sources his images from magazines, books, photographs, and film. Colour is of importance in Raedecker's works as in mine; in the awareness that there exists a critical balance where colour can become too dominant, therefore becoming the subject itself. This tension is used to create a sense of unease in my work. Alex Katz employs painting methods that

I have been experimenting with in the later part of this project, in an attempt to capture the fleeting sensation of a scene viewed in order to evoke the third space. This has involved a wet on wet technique which I have exploited and merged into my own practice. Katz is interested in the first impression of direct observation and developed his painting methods to capture this directly. Although quite stylised Katz's images are useful as a good example of the crossover between abstraction and figuration. Marisa Purcell is another artist who slips from the figurative into the abstract revealing the inner or invisible world as a tool to explore the space between the inner and outer, creating dreamlike, other worldly paintings. Her images seem to float through a space that has no formal perspective. Peter Doig in relation to my project is also interested in creating dreamlike atmospheric paintings. Doig's works are subjective and artificial as he digs into his own past experience to personalise formal elements that transform the ordinary into the extraordinary. Of most interest is the way he uses found imagery juxtaposed together with the real world to create an atmospheric third space.

MAUREEN GALLACE; Tonality And Subject

Limited tones and subject matter in combination create simplicity; Gallace's works are an example of this captured stillness and honest renditions of the familiar landscape she lives in. There is a reduction of 'natural detail' to geometric form, these simple shapes set up a hybridity of association. Gallace's paintings convey the feeling of



M. Gallace, *Marfa* (2007)
Oil on canvas, 27.9 x 35.6cm



M. Gallace, *Icy Barn* (2003)
Oil on board, 11 x 14in



M. Gallace, *Untitled* (1992)
Oil on canvas, 18 x 24in

vastness, although definable places they still convey a feeling of the unreal. The unreal is described by the paint (soft tonal range), the real by the recognisable place and image. These devices give the viewer information but without a lot of detail. As my work also explores the space between the real and invented, Gallace has been relevant to research through her use of soft focus and palette which gives her paintings a dreamlike quality. I am interested in the way Gallace uses a softness of edge and smudged outlines to suggest an other view where the sense of the other, an essence of something rather than a depiction, can be gleaned by the viewer. I feel the liminal when viewing Gallace's images as they remind me of blurred vision, as in having just awoken or about to fall to sleep; the space between waking and sleeping. *Marfa*, *Icy Barn* and *Untitled* all describe a mood both other worldly, touched by some wonder and affirmed by the treatment of tone and light. These works demonstrate simplification of style, and a combination of composition and colour that produces a sense of the real and the imagined. None of the buildings have windows; this device supports the notion of an impression, of an absence of habitation.

MICHAEL RAEDECKER; Colour and Light

As with Gallace familiarity with a touch of strangeness is Michael Raedecker's field. Raedecker explores places and scenes which may appear familiar but at the same time elude a more precise definition. Raedecker's use of devices such as pathways, light sources, reductive colour, shadows, threads and trees are his signature and produce the impression of strangeness. He sources images from magazines, films and other media as part of his pictorial language implying that his resultant images are intuitive selections. Raedecker also utilises the interiors of homes and buildings that become sites, places for imaginings to occur. The use of thread adds another dimension to Raedecker's work that is both a source of abstraction and surface treatment. "Raedecker does not use bright colours as he believes his work would be more about the paint and less about feeling" (Eindhoven, V., A. 2000. P. 58). It is this very feeling that Raedecker talks of, which interests me as I too am aware of trying to evoke feelings through my painterly techniques, methods and treatment of colour. The decorative element, constructed through the use of thread and application, situates or embeds the scene with a certain ambiance, which is both timeless and descriptive of the moment of viewing.

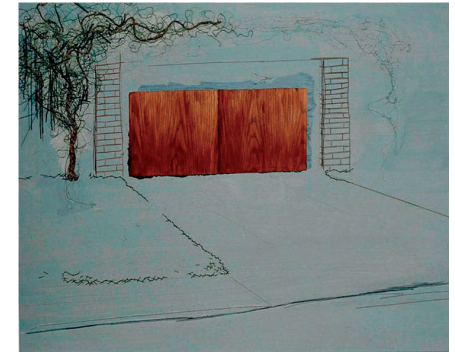


M. Raedecker, *Brilliant Gloom* (2004)
Acrylic and thread on canvas, 190 x 310cm

In his work *Brilliant Gloom*, Raedecker has not included a horizon line; the image of the house, rocks and trees appear to be floating within the scene, transforming the scene into a dreamlike space. The unlocatable scene pushes the viewer to wonder about the lights and floating forms in the foreground. In wondering we try to locate an experience. The total effect is dramatic; Raedecker defines lines with thread then paints the space within the outline which gives suggestion to the surreal. Aspects of a surreal and strange state are evoked by drawing attention to how the works have been rendered, not to the subject matter itself. Use of discordant colour also evokes a mood of gloom, as shown in the painting aptly titled *Brilliant Gloom*.



M. Raedecker, *Scene* (1997)
Acrylic and thread on linen, 50 x 60cm



M. Raedecker, *Still* (1997)
Oil, Acrylic, Veneer and thread on linen,
120 x 160cm

The limited use of colour in *Scene* produces an other worldly feel, which is specifically Raedecker's goal, asserting feeling rather than colour. To me colour is dominant by being a limited palette. It conveys an eerie feel which is enhanced by the highlighted blue and white of the windows. What is interesting about the enhanced windows and gates of *Still* is that the point of focus is characterised by detail contrasted against outline, space and colour. Large blank spaces, simple line and description of subject add to the sheer presence of form within each painting. They emphasise site as a nowhere place, perhaps somewhere, but unlocatable. The reductive colour in these works sets up a sense of time that is fleeting, reinforcing the idea there is no fixed position. By removing time or confusing it, ambiguity is set up which is of primary



M. Raedecker, *Someone said that the world's a stage*
(2001) Acrylic and Thread on Canvas, 200 x 320cm

interest to this project. This has inspired me to create images that have no locatable time.

In *Someone said that the world's a stage*, the use of soft colour and simple figurative drawings show an unlocatable site that is at once evocative of a third space and makes me question whether it presents an outer reality, as in the real world or an inner imaginative view, or the two combined. I am left wondering how Raedecker constructed this strangeness that makes the scene unreal. Is it space itself, and the composition combined with isolated details? To allude to strangeness in my paintings I am using devices such as pathways and roads to draw the viewer through the scene alongside unusual perspectives.

Raedecker and I share a point of focus characterised by detail and perspective. In share to an imagined space Raedecker is using discordant colour, simple images, thread and perspective to suggest an altered state.

ALEX KATZ; Translating Direct Impressions

Alex Katz and I have a common process in our painting method, which is a one-sitting wet on wet technique, in conjunction with figurative blending into abstraction. Katz usually paints in one sitting, in an attempt to capture high speed sensations (impressions). This is to acquire a specific quality of vision and realism of time.

Lake Wesserunsett 1V and *Swamp Maple* are based in the real world, and though stylised, the colour and minimalistic detail allow for a sense of the unreal to be felt, creating images that evoke a heightened sense of unworldliness. The colour of the tree is closely related to the background and this flattens the field. These images are examples of the way Katz captures first impressions, or sensations by his quick one-sitting paintings. Katz's contemporary impressionistic approach catches fast light and high speed sensations. He adjusts motifs until



A. Katz, *Lake Wesserunsett 1V* (1972)



A. Katz, *Swamp Maple* (1970) *Lithograph*,
104.1 x 69.8cm

they display a pictorial status to match the immobility of the painting itself. Although figurative in nature these images are also abstracted to emphasise the artist's perception and this is where Katz is of interest to this project. Katz is a perceptual painter; his depictions of objects are based on direct observation. Katz states, "I'm interested in beauty, colour, composition and direct experience, the same as falling in love" (Ratcliff, C., Storr, R. & Blazwick, I. 2005, p. 242).

I am interested in the way Katz captures impressions of what he views, both through his painting process and methods and the concept of the impression of the glance, the fleeting moment in time. I see the liminal itself as something which is fleeting, an experience which resolves itself as an impression. Katz's approach reinforces this state, through both its construction and reading. In relation to the imagined space Katz is using muted colour, minimal details and composition to create a surface that has limited depth and is visually suspended, therefore offering only the simplest of experience.

MARISA PURCELL; The Dreamlike Subject

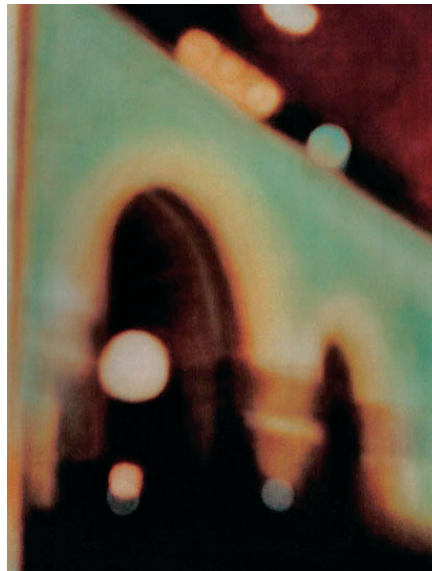
The liminal or other also contains unreal sensations and dreamlike qualities which Marisa Purcell captures by combining figuration and abstraction to consider what lies beneath the surface of the real and the relationship between the inner and outer world. This she expresses by using imagery that heightens the senses, the painting becomes a means to extract the subject. Purcell delves into the realm of the psyche by a process of instinctual painting which produces dreamlike images consisting of floating drifting mindscapes with no horizons. Purcell's paintings are quiet, almost empty – when we view them what



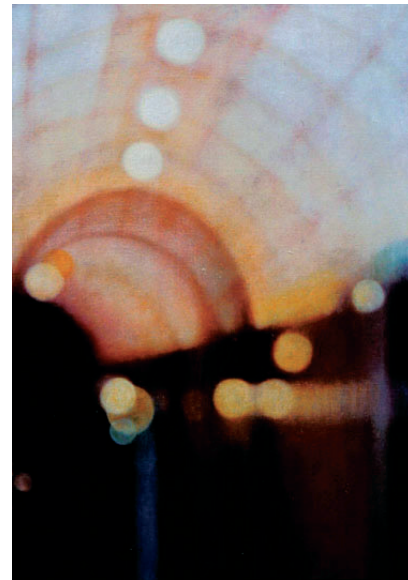
M. Purcell, *Cashe* (2008)
Acrylic on linen, 90 x 70cm



M. Purcell, *Container on the Hill* (2008)
Acrylic on linen, 90 x 70cm



M. Purcell, *An Arrested Hour* (2004)
Oil on Linen, 150 x 100cm



M. Purcell, *It's Like That Inside* (2004)
Oil on Linen, 120 x 80cm

we see is an impression of a dreamlike scene. *Cashe* and *Container on the Hill* are both examples of the dreamlike scene; motifs float, drifting with neither base nor horizon. Ascending gravity belies familiar notions of perspective; the images are quiet, gentle and promote a sensibility intended to be quite beautiful. Both works employ thin space with a lack of formal perspective. This is relevant to my practice as a method of evoking inner imagination, where space and perspective do not operate as they theoretically should.

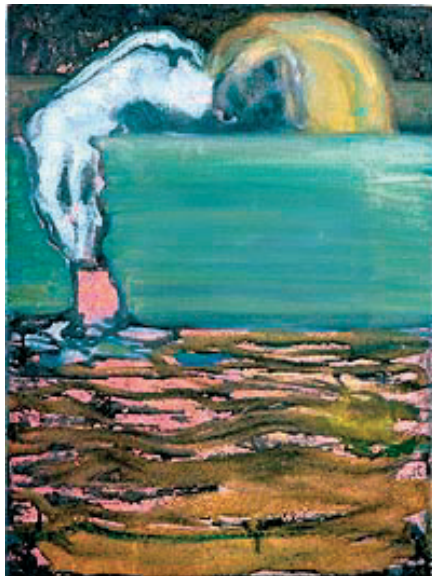
An Arrested Hour and *It's like that inside* are part of a series titled *'In Between'*, the aim of which is to suggest rather than describe, and to allude to places rather than represent explicitly. These works look like out-of-focus film stills, a framed view. Purcell has used windows, doorways and reflections as devices that neither represent the interior or exterior but rather consider a world between. Whilst these images retain some reference to reality, they also play with visual uncertainty to challenge the way we as viewers have come to expect pictures to affect us. Both images have a disorientating perspective, an element that describes the in-between effectively. The methods Purcell has used to challenge the viewer parallel methods I have employed to describe

the in-between state of the liminal; a disorientating perspective is a device I arrived at as a way of evoking the imagined.

PETER DOIG; Compiling the Imagination

The real and the invented is another concept in this project that has been translated through paint, by utilising objects such as houses, taking them out of their normal context merely by colour and association and locating them amongst recognisable elements to create the other. The real and invented is also the area where the

interplay between abstraction and figuration operates. Peter Doig has described his paintings as being derived out of his head although his process is to translate motifs from his own photographs, postcards, newspapers and popular film stills. This method of collection is also similar to Raedecker's process. Doig picks through these images to invent representational type images that are somewhere between high and popular culture. *Friday 13th* and *100 years ago (Carrera)* are examples of the way he juxtaposes the real and invented to create the imagined within new contexts.



P. Doig, 'Friday 13th' (2008)
Oil on canvas



P. Doig, *100 years ago (Carrera)* (2001)
Oil on canvas

STUDIO PRACTICE

THINKING AND APPROACH

My approach to studio practice this year has been to create series of works. In the first series I began to experiment with the wet on wet method on small boards. I selected images from books, magazines and the internet, and then spent some time focusing on and absorbing what had attracted me to the image initially. I then painted an impression of what I had responded to and what was left. The second series consisted of larger works on board that explored various compositions of the same subject. This process helped me to focus the project's subject and

expand on initial ideas, and those that I developed whilst painting. I then moved into a third series which involved a deliberate invention of the scene (houses and buildings). These I have constructed and explored as both abandoned and lived in, as being situated in their environs and imposing upon the environment. It is the conversation between both that interests me, the similarities, the contrasts and the ideas of home. There is an area of slippage between the real and invented that I have striven to capture that is about an unlocatable area, a fleeting presence. In these larger works I have combined the impressionistic with the imagined through painting technique and by abstracting images and subject. Abstracted views and indefinable images have proved to be more effective and stimulating than the more literal image. Often what one imagines as an idea or sketch can translate so differently through the process of painting; the sketch a suggestion, the finished work a resolution.

I have thought of colour as an idea carrier, something that performs between the real and imagined and is at home in both. *House 1* has a deliberately limited tonal range which adds to the desired disorientated perspective. Discordant colour helps suggest time is lost with no sense

of light falling. Because the tonal range is limited it sets up something unusual, so the viewer cannot pinpoint reality. Examples of discordant colour that come to mind can be found in the movies; *The Wizard of Oz* and *Alice in Wonderland*. Both have an unreal cast of colour that highlights and conveys the other worldliness of places within the stories. The wet on wet technique developed alongside the use of colour, has produced images that almost disappear, providing a sense of suspended time, and surfaces that have limited depth. This wet on wet technique itself reads as unlocatable because the blended edges start to operate as a dreamlike surreal experience. This treatment of subject matter links to the potential experience of the viewer; not to be attached to what they know, but to lean towards an idea of a fleeting experience referential to their imagination.

STUDIO METHODOLOGY

CYCLIC, EMERGENT PROCESS

This art practice-based project has been driven by an experimental cycle of painting, working through the process of refining initial ideas and following through on discoveries and concept changes that have occurred as part of the journey. The main strategy for

visualising ideas that investigate a liminal space, an unlocatable point of view (utilising dreamscape and subjective content) has been to open up and explore in a variety of ways two dimensional representations of space and image, in conjunction with an exploration of the experience of seeing, documentation, selection and refining.

Formal consideration of compositional devices and painting techniques such as scale and layering, have been explored, trialled and applied using intuitive responses as a working method. Selections of the most evocative elements along with the most successful techniques and spatial arrangements have been applied to produce my final exhibition, *“The Invisible View, Betwixt and Between”*.

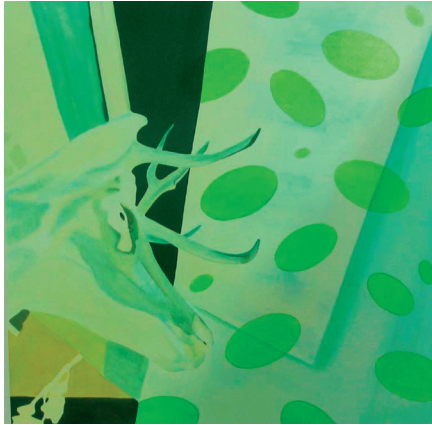
Spatial arrangements have been explored through the devices of colour and visual elements. Colour and perspective have both contrasted or highlighted reality and the liminal with varying degrees of subtlety, so they can be perceived as real rather than fantasy, allowing the viewer to gain the strong initial idea that things are not what they seem.

Perspective has also been used as an important entry point into my

work to act as a vehicle to establish the shift from the real to the imagined. Through the employment of painterly methods a different point of view (imagining) has been created from the original image sourced. These methods and techniques have been part of a continuing cyclic process that has attempted to capture the illusive.

REFLECTION AND ANALYSIS

My paintings are about known objects, the familiar, what we see every day; my aim has been to represent these objects in a way that shows or stimulates a different value. The successful outcome should be exciting and stimulating to a viewer, a depiction of the slippery association between our conscious and subconscious. Throughout this project as I moved further towards abstraction, several key concepts became clearer. These I would describe as ephemerality (which describes the indescribable; a word that suggests a sensation close to subconscious, dreamlike state), real and invented (the object is real, the invented is the imagined or unlocatable space), other (is the outcome of the invented, outside our normal range of experience, dreamlike), simplification (method of abstraction, the use of line) and liminal (which is unlocatable and referred to as the other space). In



Latimer, *Trevor* (2007)
Oil on canvas, 102 x 102 x 3.5cm



Latimer, *Magnolia* (2007)
Oil on canvas, 76 x 76 x 3.5cm

this project the liminal has been used as a threshold that is entered into through to the other by simplification and use of colour. The main focus of this project has been to evoke this other place or site that is referred to as the liminal.

In the early stages of this painting project (2007) subject matter and juxtaposition operated as the main strategy to evoke a liminal space that spoke of complexities hovering between a dreamlike state and reality. Throughout the following year new methods and techniques were developed upon reflection and analysis of subsequent images. *Trevor* (2007) was my first 'useful' work in practice that alluded to an

unlocatable and indefinable space. Through the use of colour and an extreme perspective, the figurative melted into abstraction, blending the real and the imagined. Transparent paint was used as a means of adding another layer that immediately highlighted a world between through the unexpected. The viewer's response to this work confirmed concepts of an abstracted view. *Magnolia* took transparency a step further by introducing luminosity to the paint and also explored the slippage between absence and presence. This was discovered through a layering technique which melded three views together and further explored luminosity via a semi transparent medium. In this work there is a foreground and a background, but between the layers in the flower



Latimer, *Untitled* (2007)
Oil on canvas, 102 x 102 x 3.5cm

there is another view, a third space of sorts that I found to be interesting. The responses to this work were varied: overall comments suggested the work was too crowded and the heron too figurative, this directed a need for a more limited subject range, and simplification of content. I think this work was important in that it expanded the possibilities of layering transparent paint and took colour mixing to another level that I had not experienced previously. *Untitled* (2007) further explored transparent paint as a layering device and the paint became more luminous as a method for highlighting depth and sensation. This luminosity provided a glow which I hoped would illuminate and expose new perceptions. Responses to this work showed that the bird was also too figurative but



Latimer, *Caravan* (2007)
Oil on canvas, 50 x 50 x 3.5cm



Latimer, *Caravan 2* (2007)
Oil on canvas, 50 x 50 x 3.5cm

that the luminosity and use of a limited palette were devices to continue experimenting with.

With simplicity, luminosity and colour in mind as concepts and techniques to develop, *Caravan* and *Caravan 2* both explored a minimalistic approach through reduction of information as an illusionistic tool; both works used the devices of transparency, composition, scale, luminosity and colour to describe an uncertain place. Upon reflection the choice of less pastille colours may have evoked within these works a more intense feeling of strangeness; for colour to be successful in my project it must dislocate the object from reality. There is still a glow about these works that this project has been seeking to achieve not only through painting techniques but through the pictorial content itself. This glow seems to be a combination of blended colour, brush strokes, a lightness of touch and flicked strokes.

The next series of eight works, (April 2008), were the first in a new investigatory approach, they are the first one-sitting experiments. What interested me about painting the whole scene using the one-sitting approach is that it paralleled and expressed the glance. So in



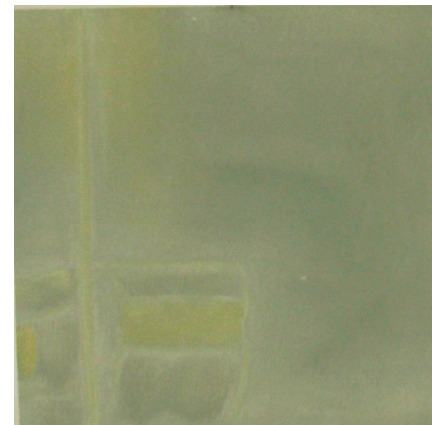
1/8 Latimer, *Untitled Sketch* (2008)
Oil on board, 30 x 30cm, one-sitting



2/8 Latimer, *Untitled Sketch* (2008)
Oil on board, 30 x 30cm, one-sitting

this form I think of the one-sitting as the interpretive impression. The reason for this method is that through previous experimentation, I discovered that precise work did not evoke the in-between sensibility I was trying to capture. Precise works seem to detract from the essence of what is viewed. These one-sitting experiments came about through the need to simplify my images by focusing more on abstraction and simplification allowing the work to become more about the painting process itself. Oil has a smooth way of blending that almost reads like watercolour, appearing sketch like.

I have chosen to use oil for several reasons; firstly the intensity of colour it produces is vital to my paintings. The paint itself has a life of its own which makes the wet on wet technique interesting and once the paint is applied it can be moved around over time. Oil also creates a depth and can be smoothed and merged. I was interested in whether liminal space/the other, was best described not by subject but by the paint itself so this series of small sketches deliberately allowed the paint to become the subject. This was where my whole thinking changed and I realised the oil paint itself was the key. Devices such as composition colour and scale became secondary. Some of these works achieved the simplicity the project strived to maintain while others once again



3/8 Latimer, *Untitled Sketch* (2008)
Oil on board, 30 x 30cm, one-sitting



4/8 Latimer, *Untitled Sketch* (2008)
Oil on board, 30 x 30cm, one-sitting



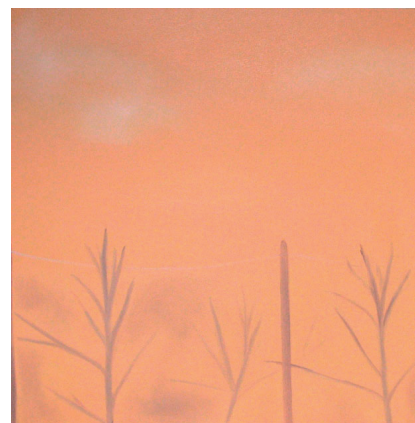
Latimer, *Untitled Sketch* (April 2008)
Oil on Board, 65 x 65cm, one-sitting



Latimer, *Untitled Sketch* (April 2008)
Oil on board, 40 x 60cm, one-sitting



Latimer, *Untitled Sketch* (April 2008)
Oil on board, 65 x 65cm, one-sitting



Latimer, *Untitled Sketch* (May 2008)
Oil on board, 40 x 60cm, one-sitting

were too figurative. The contrast between *Untitled Sketch 1/8* and *3/8* highlighted for me that absence was a strong indicator of the 'other' and therefore a useful avenue to pursue.

The next series of sketches were on larger boards (60 x 60cm) and became a revisiting and painting of the same subject as a method to create insight and focus on intention and execution. Each work was painted from a different perspective using similar devices and approaches employed in previous works, such as composition, limited tonal range, uncertain smudges, pathways, one-sitting sketches and the recognition of discordant colour. At this point I realised that the emphasis is not on what subject is being viewed, but how the source is viewed, and how to transport the subject to a new awareness or sensation. At this point in experimentation the focus on the boundaries between abstraction and figuration, the real and unreal came into play, colour became quieter and space a larger element.

House 1 was the first one-sitting experiment on a larger scale. The size created a more complex interpretation of the one-sitting approach and because of the canvas size I had to develop the painting over at least five

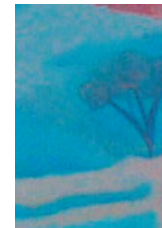


Latimer, *House 1* (April 2008)
Oil on canvas, 76 x 103 x 3.5cm

sittings. From here I decided that for the next painting, the ‘impression’ should be applied to a readied surface as this would be more in keeping with the one-sitting method.¹ The wet on wet technique which I have also developed alongside the one-sitting method creates a surface that has limited depth and allows objects to visually hover. I was interested in the way the paint and colours can be smoothed and blended creating

¹ SURFACE: the surface of this work has at least three layers of gesso and one layer of undercoat oil, each applied by rolling then sanding between each layer. This work’s surface is rough, like orange peel as the oil undercoat was not sanded but left as is. I personally like surfaces to be other than smooth, they provide a texture that my style of painting does not have and allows me the pleasure of pushing the paint up against and into the surface.

richness and luminosity, in other words an altered state. This work became another experiment in scale and composition, as the foundation and colour became more unreal. Colour was also applied by different methods; firstly there is the luminous pink, which is applied by brush, and then parts such as the tree canopy and driveway that have been applied with a cloth rather than a brush. The cloth method plays with surface quality rather than depth; it is more of a staining method. The tonality of this work allowed compositional elements to merge.



Latimer, *Detail 1*

Detail 1 is an example of how an application of transparent paint adds another layer upon the existing paint, which in effect, pushed the tree further back into the distance without adding too much depth, as well as highlighting the area.

House 2 experiments with the idea of having a prepared surface, before the image, ‘impression’ is painted on. This image is quite literal in its representation and form, it has abstracted through colour, scale and composition. There is a directness of paint that is quite deliberate in appearance and combined with the blocked tones and dense



Latimer, *House 2* (April 2008)
Oil on canvas, 75 x 110 x 3.5cm

silhouettes helps to create an unreal feel to this scene. The lack of straight lines indicates a dreamlike state, as though things are about to change in some way, and this I see as a perception appropriate to the liminal. This scene is uninhabited almost isolated with the floating form of the house creating a feeling of suspended time. This is where I first became aware of time or timelessness as another method for evoking the liminal. This image also stimulated me to think about lightening my colours and the feel of the surface, in other words the sensibility of the surface and image quality. This work is somewhat akin to Gallace's in that her scenes are uninhabited, isolated, made up



Latimer, *Facing* (May 2008)
Oil on canvas, 75 x 120 x 3.5cm

of houses/buildings described through blocked colour tones that leave the viewer contemplating an unknown suspension of time.

Trying to capture the liminal I have at various points prioritised particular aspects. In *House 2* discordant colour and tone have been used. The colour is so merged you have to look quite hard to see and identify the images. In trying to represent the liminal I have also had to think about capturing a time zone that is timeless. This was interesting because to remove all sense of time would potentially realign and play with the viewers' understanding and belief about what they may or may



Latimer, *Ahead* (May 2008)
Oil on canvas, 75 x 120 x 3.5cm

not be seeing. *Facing* and *Ahead* (2008) both have a sense of looking familiar but the colour is strange and unworldly. This taught me that the technical application of colour tone and perspective through a one-sitting sketch was a very effective method of creating an impression.

Both these works were have been painted with the wet on wet technique through all layers. This method has been explored alongside discordant colour to evoke an atmosphere that lies between the real and invented, and to highlight a suspension of time. The actual application of paint



Latimer, *Untitled* (May 2008)
Oil on canvas, 75 x 120 x 3.5cm

and colour is quite light. The painting technique in both these works highlights its ability to create a sense of surface and allow colour to operate as a cast of light. This cast has come to the fore as a device that underpins the conceptual aspect of the in-between. This process is now more accountable as a device that promotes the idea of a timeless space/site.

Untitled (May 2008) is part of another strand of work, a more deliberate constructed experience. There are aspects that haven't worked as

intended; I went too far in trying to create the unreal, for example the animated deer horns coming out of the top of the house, I felt it became too much for the viewer, it became too fanciful. The work doesn't operate in the in-between space of real and unreal, it becomes over balanced on the side of fantasy. The experiment did show however, how colour can dislocate the object from reality and how it can indicate something unlocatable.

Before another work that uses colour to set up an unnatural sensibility and seeks to question what can be read compositionally, between areas of strong tonal contrast. I asked myself if it would create an in-between sense, or an other view.

Prior has a limited pallet of three colours; green, blue and a browny-orange with limited marks to ask, do these devices capture the feeling of the liminal or create a space that potentially cannot exist? I have retained the use of luminosity as this is a strong reference to the unreal.



Latimer, *Before* (May 2008)
Oil on Canvas, 75 x 120 x 3.5cm



Latimer, *Prior* (June 2008)
Oil on canvas, 75 x 120 x 3.5cm

The aerial perspective in *Beyond* is like looking into a world and wondering just where you are standing. The repositioning of the viewpoint repositions the viewer as observer offering a different visual experience. Colour is operating as a cast of light rather than a reference to sensation or timelessness.

Beneath reads more of an isolated building; it looks habitable but is quite formal in its structure and references public architecture, like a museum or public library. Also the stronger colour intensifies the experience of viewing. Strong colour tends to push the viewer back rather than draw them in. I wonder if this hinders the viewer from stepping through the threshold and experiencing the liminal. Through this work I discovered that I could not have a completed work without some form of plant life. I am interested in the idea that plants suggest habitation, and in fact become inhabitants of the picture plane themselves.



Latimer, *Beyond* (June 2008)
Oil on canvas, 75 x 120 x 3.5cm



Latimer, *Beneath* (July 2008)
Oil on canvas, 75 x 120 x 3.5cm

Then activates a sense of impression by creating ‘the other’ through a backdrop, which is like a preliminary event to the one-sitting painting. Painting the background is intuitive. I then interpret the background in the one-sitting sketch. This work is also about using the methods I have developed throughout this project as a means to explore parallel ways of thinking about the same topic. My methods and approach are now intrinsic and I am still exploring and capturing moments in particular ways as a means of communicating my ideas of the liminal space.

The two colours used in *Above*, green-blue and green, alongside a traditional view of the landscape gives an impression of generic timelessness. This type of treatment constructs a timelessness that is contained by the sense that this image could be anytime, anywhere, any place.



Latimer, *Then* (July 2008)
Oil on canvas, 75 x 120 x 3.5cm



Latimer, *Above* (2008)
Oil on canvas, 75 x 120 x 3.5cm

In *Below* the subtle blending of colours in conjunction with a narrow colour range, creates a tension that is illusory and illusive. Combined with vegetation that is both artificial and abstract the scene presents itself from a suggestive viewpoint. Because the colours have a heightened almost surreal quality, the image is rich in depth and evocative of an other view.

In *Earlier* the home emerges out of tone and a fog of colour. Space appears flat but perceptual once you find focus amongst forms. This work uses two colours, blue and apricot and the one-sitting technique combined with wet on wet which together create a hazy view, almost like an image of something no longer there.

The following quote describes the feeling of silence this painting exudes,

“Silence. The silence that colour may provoke is a mark of its power and autonomy. Silence is how we have to voice our respect for that which moves us beyond language. ‘Whereof we cannot speak, thereof we must remain silent,’ said Wittgenstein, who saw in colour the outer limits of language. Silence is spoken by the body, through our gestures and postures.”
Batchelor, D. (2000), p. 83.



Latimer, *Below* (2008)
Oil on canvas, 75 x 120 x 3.5cm



Latimer, *Earlier* (2008)
Oil on canvas, 102 x 127 x 3.5cm

The notion of silence is embedded in *Earlier* through the dreamlike quality of the colours, blue and apricot. Tonally similar they merge as one. The softness of these colours produces a stillness whilst also capturing the essence of the image.

The intensity of colour in *Sooner* acts as a shield in a similar way to *Beneath* (p. 27); the difference between these two works is *Sooner* forces the viewer to look hard to discover the details that at first glance appear obvious because of the strong colour and tonal contrast; but then it subsides into another layer of the viewing experience. Further experimentation is possible here, using muted colours to see if the same mystery can be caught.

Later introduces the addition of the inside view of the house. The scene has an invisible quality to it that has been obtained through similar methods as previous paintings, such as the impression on the prepared background. The difference with this work is the use of darker forms emerging out of the background. This device has the potential to reflect my vision and thoughts of the elusive liminal space succinctly.



Latimer, *Sooner* (2008)
Oil on Canvas, 102 x 127 x 3.5cm



Latimer, *Later* (2008)
Oil on Canvas, 102 x 127 x 3.5cm

Both *Behind I* and *Behind II* have a European, Spanish feel to them, they are other worldly and appear quiet, through the treatment of subject matter which is both imagined and improvised. Both images have been sourced from New Zealand Real Estate magazines and books. These sourced images have been my starting point, then through a process of twisting and alchemy, which has combined techniques and imagination, an other view, has emerged. The colour of each operates differently but both convey the same muted quality, that which is indicative of a glance into an unlocatable place, where a moment is captured.



Latimer, *Behind I* (2008)
Oil on canvas, 75 x 120 x 3.5cm



Latimer, *Behind II* (2008)
Oil on canvas, 102 x 127 x 3.5cm

CONCLUSION

The Aspect of the Impression

In conclusion the liminal has been discovered through this project to be so elusive that it can only be evoked through the layers of painting itself, as it is not a solid form that can be captured, interpreted and then visually drawn, but rather a moment that is sensed through glimpses. None of the resolved paintings depict the liminal, as the liminal is not a place that can be arrived at, it is the threshold one steps through. I have relocated the objects of my paintings into another space (other) and the liminal has inspired the journey. I have used the idea of the liminal to stimulate my own ideas of what or where it might be; I have stepped through the liminal to the other, by using colour and composition. Ideas that have inspired early experiments have evolved into a subjective engagement with and a challenging of, notions of abstraction and figuration. The idea of the 'impression' has developed through studio methods and processes that have produced a series of imagined sites and compositions that have offered the viewer an experience that has sat in an undefined, unlocatable space; a place where time is suspended. Technically this impression has

been achieved through the use of colour, tone, perspective and by way of one-sitting sketches. This project has focused on the key conceptual frames of ephemerality, the 'other' and the constructed experience.

EXHIBITION

THE INVISIBLE VIEW; Betwixt and Between 2008





Left wall; left to right

1. *Ahead*
2. *Behind I*
3. *More*
4. *Then*
5. *Later*
6. *Less*
7. *Earlier*

Right wall

1. *Behind II*





Ahead (2008) Oil on canvas, 75 x 120 x 3.5cm



Behind I (2008) Oil on canvas, 75 x 120 x 3.5cm



More (2008) Oil on canvas, 75 x 120 x 3.5cm



Then (2008) Oil on canvas, 75 x 120 x 3.5cm



Later (2008) Oil on canvas, 102 x 127 x 3.5cm



Less (2008) Oil on canvas, 75 x 120 x 3.5cm



Behind II (2008) Oil on canvas, 102 x 127 x 3.5cm



Earlier (2008) Oil on canvas, 102 x 127 x 3.5cm

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