

The Waiting Room: an art investigation of site in abeyance

Sharon Vickers 2005

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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 other institution of higher learning, except where the acknowledgement is made in the acknowledgements."

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Introduction

This exegesis is intended to elucidate the practical component of my thesis, which has been presented as a body of work consisting of paintings that communicate my interest, research and findings in regard to time and site. The presentation of the works will be held at the Auckland University of Technology Art and Design building in St Paul Street, Auckland City.

Images of developmental work are included in the examination copy of the exegesis. Documentation of the exhibition and an accompanying commentary will also be included in the final bound library copy.

Abstract

This art project explores issues of unoccupied space. In particular, the project concerns itself with temporal aspects of site and issues of past, present and potential usage. This space, otherwise inert, invites activation by the spectator's psychological projections. This projected occupation calls on redolence of the past, memory and a sense of the utility of the site.

Based on imagery evidence and personal remembered experience, the spectator provides context for this site. The project uses the painting process to open up areas of sensibility around personal and remembered experience.

The thesis is constituted as practice-based work, 80%, accompanied by an exegesis, 20%.

Chapter One: Conceptual Arena

Ideas concerning site, time and usage are my overarching concepts.

This project aims to raise questions concerning a number of chosen vacant sites, and their positioning in regard to utility and time – past, present and future. These sites are unpopulated, yet the vacancy and the peopling of the space with non-human signifiers, e.g. furniture and flags, imply presence. (Fig.2)



Fig.1: Candida Hofer, 2000, Schindler House, Los Angeles VII.

The Waiting Room references vacated space. Originally thinking of site as external, I came to believe through this research that my rooms were multi-contextual sites rather than definitive places. Sites are indicative of something that has happened or is about to happen. There is an inference of activity (or lack of it), rather than place being positioned within space.



Fig.2: Sharon Vickers, 2005, *Interval*.

Place can be thought of as located (wrapped up) within space, as experienced and remembered; space, in comparison, involves a more cerebral understanding. Place can be perceived as framed, accessible and known space. “Very often the power or the impotence of a place in the public and historical imagination is defined by access” (Dean and Millar, 2005, p.184). As Kant stated in 1768: “the most intimate as well as the most consequential inroad to place is through the body” (Casey, 1997, p.210). The fact that the physical body is absent from my ‘rooms’ brings to attention the importance of remembered space through a physical experiential means. I feel that place is bodily perceived. We identify it as ‘known’ in a phenomenological rather than a topographical way. Derrida (Casey, 1997) thought that place was not a literal, contained thing but rather an event, a matter of ‘taking place’. We sense place individually yet there is a collective recognition of certain places. As Gaston Bachelard writes in his book *The Poetics of Space*, “a great deal of our memories are housed”, (Bachelard, 1994, p.8).

In relation to the body, Merleau-Ponty (2004) states that the human body is never without a place or that place is never without (its own or virtual) body. The tie between body and place is unable to be severed.

Emplacement entails embodiment, and vice versa. The emptiness of a room speaks of previous and future occupation. Absence bespeaks presence.

Spaces are psychologically mapped. My paintings will evoke varying responses from viewers depending on their memory and association with similar sites. Some may feel uncomfortable and repellent while others may feel more comfortable despite the transient nature of each place. Anthony Vidler, in *Warped Space: Art, Architecture and Anxiety in Modern Culture*, speaks of how intrinsically psychological spaces are, and cites authors such as Ayn Rand and Virginia Woolf whose works reveal stories about urban isolation and anxiety. According to Vidler, “the psychology of space is deeply connected to its physical presence ... the ways in which these spaces are regarded, represented and resolved are ever present and ever changing”. (Cited in Stoner, 2001, p.4).

The chosen sites for the paintings are vacant and suspended in time. There is an ambiguity about the nature of the place and its usage. Vidler speaks of the loss of place when analysing Martha Rossler’s photographic series *‘Rights of Passage’* 1994, which feature motorways and urban landscapes, but more relevantly airports: “...its spaces manifested as empty, sterile non-places determined more by mathematical calculation of times of arrival and departure than by any regard for the human subjects subjected to this version of total control and surveillance” (Vidler, 2000, p.180).

As in my images, Rossler’s photos are devoid of humans. He speaks of “anomie and estrangement” in these places of transience. Vidler refers to Siegfried Kracauer’s essay about the employment agency in which “the activity of waiting is so demoralising”. He compares this with the middle- and upper-class equivalent, the hotel lobby, which he sees as a “space of individual anonymity” (Vidler, 2000, p.180).

In *The Waiting Room*, these spaces are literal waiting spaces; their reason for being is the functionality of waiting. This work focuses on places that, despite their function, are 'spaces in waiting' in a phenomenological sense. They are in the edgy quiet zone of pre- and post-occupation. Suspension of time and the inutility and subsequent anticipatory nature of the sites are inherent in this work where space and time are inextricably woven.

At times we think we know ourselves in time, when all we know is the sequence of fixations in the spaces of the being's stability – a being who does not want to melt away, and who, even in the past, wants time to 'suspend' its flight. In its countless alveoli space contains compressed time ... (Bachelard, 1994, p.8)

Foucault suggests that we live in the epoch of space, in which time has been absorbed into space: "I believe that the anxiety of our era has to do fundamentally with space, no doubt a great deal more than with time" (as cited in Casey, 1998, p. 298). Casey adds: "Time is swallowed by space". Heidegger, in contrast, perceived space as being of secondary status to time, even though space was a central component of 'Being-in-the-World' or 'Dasein'.

Another question to be considered in this work is the relationship of the spectator in the present to an image from the past. Time has become suspended and space omnipotent. The vacancy of the spaces and the has-been-used and about-to-be-used nature of the places reinforce that suspension of time. In question also are the duration of the vacant state and the potential usage of the site. This exegesis discusses the psychological mapping of these spaces as the spectator brings their own reflection to the works. In the midst of flux, each painting becomes a single static image; caught in the present and suspended in action. A juncture.

Chapter Two: Other Contexts

Background

This project has developed from previous work (2000–2003) which was diaristic and time-based in nature. For one series of works I photographed images that abided by a strict time formula. These were edited and transposed into multiple paintings to create a narrative that drew attention to the peripheral and mundane aspects of our lives (Fig.1). I realised that these seemingly unimportant aspects of our lives were, in their framed isolation, significant. Through personal analysis and viewer feedback, I also realised that the images that were devoid of person were the most compelling to the viewer and held a greater sense of potential human presence. Even where a human form was partly seen, the figure representation seemed to dominate the scene and became a magnet to the viewer's eye. Attention was pushed towards a possible search for narrative. In another work I took several images of a moment in 360 degrees. This referenced the space between photographic shots and time past. The 'unseen' became as significant as the seen.



Fig. 3: Sharon Vickers, 2000, *Hourly*.



Fig. 4: Sharon Vickers, 2003, *Hip High*.

In *Hip High*, I experimented with an altered, lowered point of view, as seen from the hip height of an average adult or a child's perspective. Later I juxtaposed photographic image and painting in one work, with the image repeated at its edges as an intended overlap, a slippage. Playing with the perception of painting in relation to the photo, I painted from the photographic source and then photographed the painting. I was interested in the play between media and viewer reading and the expectations of both (Fig.14). Moving on from multiple pieces as one narrative and abandoning the juxtaposed works for the moment, I focused on painting as the sole medium for the exhibited works. An indeterminate duration captured within a single frame.

Issues of representation



Fig. 5: Photographic source for *Recess*

The transfer and representation of a site image to a painting raises questions about photography versus painting. Documenting the suspended moment via the camera, I go about interpreting it through painting. The camera is the means for the documentation of site, the collecting of evidence and data, for comparing the same site at different times of the day. Photography has become the resource and the camera the information-gatherer. The portability of the camera and the ability to take quickly and store numerous resource images that can then be edited is advantageous to this concept. The camera has the ability to store time, to take 'time samples' and provide that sense of suspension I was seeking. The single image with the spectator viewpoint has limited representational scope, but it can imply the space and time between – and then what is not seen becomes pertinent.

The moment and the site having already been identified, the interpretation via paint enables the inclusion of my individual subjective response. In rendering it, I bring in my experience and memory of such places

and present the space as an enlarged, framed, painted and elevated image, in stasis, to be actively viewed. Painting becomes another process in the investigation. The activity of painting involves protracted time. In an effort to represent the stilled moment in a painted image, there is further suspension of time.

Phenomenology of space

There are phenomenological implications in my work in the way that space is perceived and in the recognition of the perceiving subject. Reflected here is the conscious relationship we have with an object, the idea of the object in our head. This relates also to the perception we have of site and space. This essence of things (intentionality) underpins my work as I analyse the viewer response to the sites that I have chosen to paint. Bachelard, in *The Poetics of Space*, gives a name to this localization of our memories: he calls it 'topoanalysis', or the "systematic psychological study of the sites of our intimate lives" (Bachelard, 2004, p.8).

Foucault focused on institutional space, e.g. boarding schools and prisons. He proposed, "space itself has a history" (Casey, 1997, p.297). Maurice Merleau-Ponty points out that "the space of the perceived world is not the unique space of a dismembered intellect, but like physical space, has different regions which are structured by our expectations concerning the things we find in them" (Merleau-Ponty, 2004, p.20). My interest is in the psychological readings that the viewer brings to my work and the subsequent individual critiques of such sites.

Absence and presence



Fig. 6: Rachel Whiteread, 1993--1994. *House*.

By focusing on the people-less space, a strong reference to occupation is made. Installation artist Rachel Whiteread and her 1997 works *House* and *Ghost* exposed the private interior space as solid trace. *House* involved filling a derelict tenement house in London with concrete and then peeling off the house exterior, exposing its insides. The same process was employed in *Ghost*. The negative space became positive. The private became public. This was an extreme statement about expelling the enclosed comfort and privacy of the home and replacing it with stark public spacelessness.

The Waiting Room focuses on the space or room interior that is straddling both public and private spaces, spaces that are resistant to long-term accommodation and yet often fake domestic ambience. Roy Exley, in his article on a number of artists whose representations of familiar situations are devoid of human presence, writes about absence: “the empty space is a stage onto which viewers can project their own eidetic shows in an attempt to staunch the loss and heal the ache that absence brings” (Exley, p.68). *The Waiting Room* registers a sense of both anticipation and loss. It requires the viewer to imagine what the next moment holds for the portrayed space. If the image was a film frame, what or who would enter the space next and who has been there before? The tie between body and place cannot be severed and the absence of body speaks of its presence. These ‘rooms’ are spartan, with little furniture or ‘use’ debris. What objects do remain in the spaces are signifiers to articulate depth of space and indicate duration, e.g. the flags and mat in the hall (Fig.2) and the coat-hanger in the changing room (Fig.23).

Public and private

My exploration of place and space contests what is deemed to be private space and what is public. I intended to position my work between these two areas. I became aware in this process of how indeterminate such a positioning is. These areas can be described broadly as public/private, i.e. privately used public spaces.

Intimate space within the obscure framework of public space is a moving platform. Our idea of what is public and private continually alters and the boundaries have shifted and become blurred, especially with the use of Internet and increasing surveillance. Auckland's 2nd Triennial in 2004 was titled *Public/Private, Tumatanui/Tumataiti* and invited national and international artists to exhibit work around this theme. Of particular relevance to my topic were the works of Australian artist Catherine Rodgers. She is a photographer who conceptually investigates private place within public space. The images she portrays share a similar context to my work in the way they present borderline spaces that sit on the boundaries between public and private.

Catherine Rodgers' work *Photographs of Home* (Fig.7) presented a series of strikingly similar vacated internal domestic spaces. These were show homes. She maintained a consistent point of view, so that in the bedroom scenes, for example, there was an uncanny sense that you were viewing the same room. The show homes had a vacant, ready-to-use look, which came across as both cosy and resistant, fake and banal.



Fig. 7: Catherine Rodgers, 2003, *Photographs of Home*.

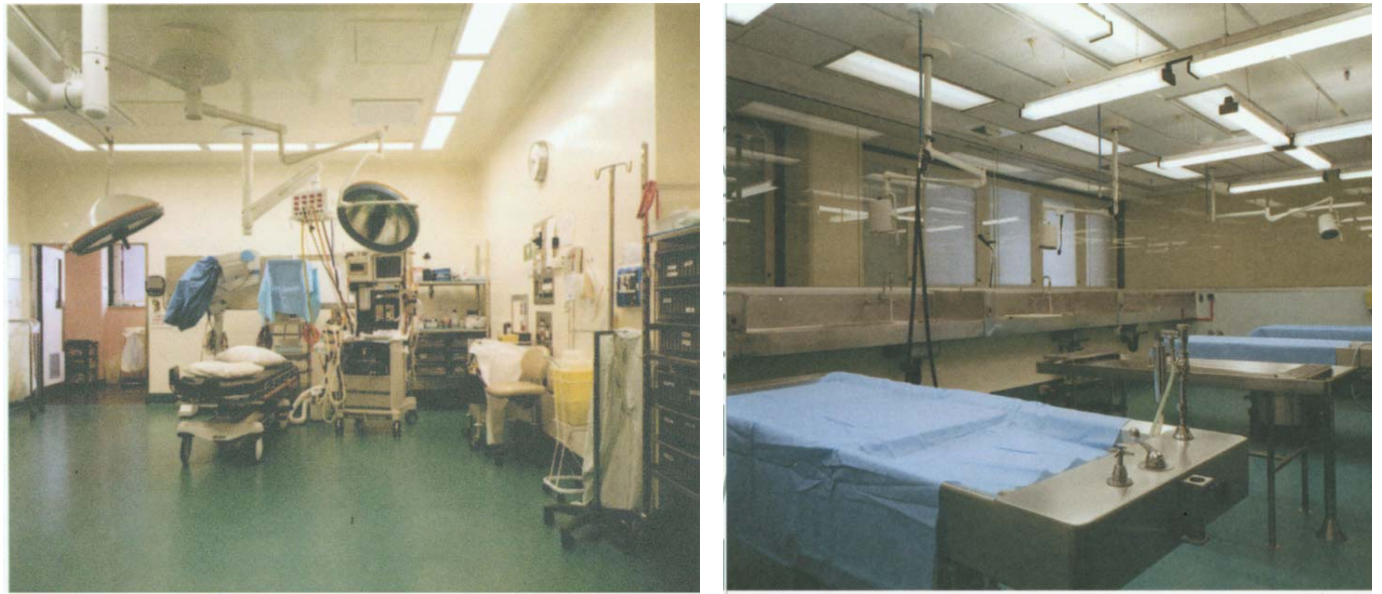


Fig. 8: Neil Pardington, 2003, *Operating theatre #1* and *Post mortem room #*

Neil Pardington also explores people-less spaces which are also both public and private in his photographs *Post mortem room #1* and *Operating theatre #1* (2003). They speak of the intimacy of life and death in an institutional space, one that imitates a stage set. It is 'ready to roll'. The lighting in each has an ethereal, other-world quality. Here the absence of the person evokes strong feelings of recent occupation. However, the 'client' enters this space only if they are unconscious or dead. Hence, Pardington's spaces are less accessible than mine.

Light is a common evocative element in all of these works. The lighting is artificial, reflected, screened or direct. Candida Hofer also uses light dramatically in her photographs (e.g. Fig.1), documenting her “internal architecture of absence”. Here the focus is on interior public spaces such as theatres, halls and libraries. She stretches this genre to underground railway stations. All are vacant transient spaces. In some the vacancy is fleeting. Marc Auge in his book *non-places* categorises certain public places as non-places. These are temporary spaces for passage, consumption and communication, e.g. motorway restaurants and airport transit lounges. He says that they have no identity, no history and no urban relationships. This is arguable. They have an identity as their own genre of space, though it could be said that they are resistant places, or ‘don’t get too comfortable’ spaces. They are pervaded by a sense of banality and loneliness, due to “the singular isolating experience of a functional occupation” (Auge, 1995, page not known).

The influence of light

Key factors in the chosen images are banality, loss and emptiness, though anticipation and its related edginess are fundamental as well. Anticipatory tension is borne through various means, such as definitive subject matter, the method of paint application and the presence of light.

Light has a strong presence in each painting. Light references life, which seems bereft within the space. It is indirect or mirrored and has been chosen to accentuate the feeling of paused time. Vermeer also used this device in his paintings. In *The Milkmaid* (Fig.10) the light from the window as the woman pours milk from the jug references the excluded world outside and the suspended moment. Vilhelm Hammershoi (Fig.9) and Edward Hopper (Fig.11) used light in a similar way; especially indirect light, which glows on the floors and walls of the stark, vacated interiors of their paintings, “transforming an empty room into a no-man’s land, the ultimate stop on the voyage of the lone self” (Hammershoi *et al.*, 1984, p.42).



Fig. 9: Vilhelm Hammershoi, 1909, *Interior of the Great Hall in Lindergarden Kalenborg*.



Fig. 10: Vermeer, c.1657, *The Milkmaid*.



Fig. 11: Edward Hopper, 1965, *Sunlight in an empty room*.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Through experimentation with media, i.e. paint and photography, I made decisions influencing my final outcome. Instead of using photographs juxtaposed with paintings, as originally considered, I decided to keep the photographs as a resource to facilitate a consistent sensibility in the work. As a result of peer critique, I was able to assess viewer response and make alterations accordingly. This was especially important in my editing process and framing considerations. Because of this, Donald Schon's reflection-on-practice was a key methodology. Within a moving, cyclic platform of intent, experimentation, practice and evaluation, and then re-evaluation, I could make formal decisions regarding the exhibited outcome. Mark Smith (2004) points out in his essay on Schon that "as we think and act questions arise that cannot be answered in the present ... the space afforded by recording, supervision and conversation with our peers allows us to approach these ... reflection requires space in the present and the promise of space in the future" (p.12)

As a broad research umbrella I used phenomenology. I believe this to be an appropriate methodology as my work (practice and theory intertwined) explores notions of presence and absence, perception and intentionality.

Developmental work



Fig. 12: Sharon Vickers, 2004, *Living Room*.

During the initial development of this project, the photographic image was a key component of the finished work. In Fig.12 the image on the left is a photograph of a vacated room with a photograph of the same room as a picture within the scene. The centre image is painted in a highly reflective combination of enamel paint and polyurethane, in the same colour as the portrayed room. This reflects the spectator within the room where the work is being viewed. The last image is of remembered space with reference to the same room. Time, site and framing options are explored.



Fig. 13: Sharon Vickers, 2004, *Sauna*.



Fig. 14: Sharon Vickers, 2005, *Waiting Room 2*.

Inclusion of the photograph is again seen in Fig.13, where three images appear to overlap and repeat.

Notions of photography and painting, and viewer perceptions of both, are explored in Fig.14. The image on the left is a photographic enlargement on board, the middle image is painted, and the image on the right is a photograph of the painted image of the same scene (the colours here are not representative of the original images). Below, in Fig.16, two large boards present a painted image on the left and an inkjet print on the right with some repetition of imagery at the juncture.



Fig. 15: Sharon Vickers. 2005.

Waiting Room



Fig. 16: Sharon Vickers, 2004, *Courtesy Court*.

Reflection back into the room via the television screen in Fig.15 creates an imagined exit for the viewer. Here the image is in portrait (vertical) format and singular.

Site criteria

To explore the vacated space, I identified a set of criteria: the spaces needed to be public yet privately used. The majority of the spaces were accessible and local. I was interested in the blurred and ever-changing boundaries between public and private space. A study of the use of intimate spaces within a very public place (e.g. swimming pool changing rooms) reveals alterations in human behaviour, as the intimate use spurs the creation of new boundaries to protect the individual from the crowding and the gaze of strangers. Here I am talking about the uneasy, defensive psychological reaction to using the space that sits between public and private. The architecture of such sites reflects this, with the presence of booths and screens, e.g. Fig.17



Fig. 17: Sharon Vickers, 2005, Resource photograph.

Consequently, our response to the vacated site calls on our own memories of similar experiences. Sites were chosen for their combined familiarity and ambiguity.

I wished to evoke a sense of familiarity with the rooms but also a sense of the impersonal and transitory nature of these frequently used, cleaned and reordered spaces. Examples are motel rooms, swimming pool changing rooms and waiting rooms in doctors' surgeries. All are receptacles for private behaviour, yet some appear to provide hospitable accommodation through the use of colour and comfort signifiers or 'ornaments', such as prints on the wall. I was interested in the areas of marginality, sites that occupied a position on both sides of the ill-defined boundary between public and private. These were sites that facilitated multiple use yet were not always receptive or user-friendly. Those with an overtly religious or political agenda were avoided, as they were encumbered with cultural rhetoric. Sites were chosen for their uncluttered and near-banal aesthetic, because they had the ability to communicate a language of space. The negative space of the room became omnipotent as a means for allowing the observer to travel and occupy that space both virtually and psychologically. The walls and sparse contents of the room then became secondary in the reading.

Photographic documentation as source

The digital camera has been my tool in collecting information about spaces. The two essential criteria were that the images had to be taken from the doorway at an altered perspective (generally lowered) and that the space was vacated, readied for occupation. I photographed, collected and edited numerous site images, not knowing until the photograph was printed which elements I wanted to pursue or discard. Expanding these images into large colour photocopies, I assessed what spaces held the necessary 'waiting factors' and spoke of public/private, without any superfluous information – e.g. church interiors with overt religious references and motel rooms that appeared domestic. My experience of the space, as photographer, was not always helpful in the final reading of the image, as the viewer could not be

presumed to have my knowledge of the site. This was the case, in particular, with the show home photographs that I took. I knew these to be show home interiors, but viewers in a critique session saw them as domestic, in spite of the newness and immaculately posed interiors.

Formal analysis of the final selection of images highlighted differences and similarities in the rooms. Horizon line, colour, warmth, light entry and were analysed. The ability of the eye to roam and the places where it came to rest enabled me to consider framing options. Through cutting and folding photocopied images, and then editing more decisively using Photoshop, framing formats were determined. A variety of widths evolved, creating an interesting shift for the viewer as the eye moves from one work to the next, emulating a natural visual experience.



Figs 18 and 19: 2005 Constructing space images from photographs.

The images in Figs 18 and 19 are an example of the method by which the 'roomscape' were constructed. Multiple photographs of the same site were collected to facilitate a subjective analysis of the site, points of view, and framing options. Here I had not yet realised the importance of the floor space to provide the illusion that the spectator can physically enter the work. Instead of using a wide-angle lens, I took several photos in panorama, utilising a portrait assemblage to create a landscape.

Perspective/point of view and physicality of viewer

Through this investigation of 'the space in recess', the point of view of the spectator became a crucial consideration as I painted. The spaces utilised are interiors, framed by their walls, empty of human presence and awaiting future occupation. They are transitory and anticipatory. They are also uncluttered, and there is minimal 'peopling' of the space with furniture. The sites are observed from an altered perspective, with ample floor space. The majority of the images are viewed from a lowered point of view, with one (Fig. 20) significantly elevated. This elevated perspective gives a feeling of being removed from or floating above the site – e.g. *Changing Room 2* (Fig.20) and *Rest Room* (Fig.21).

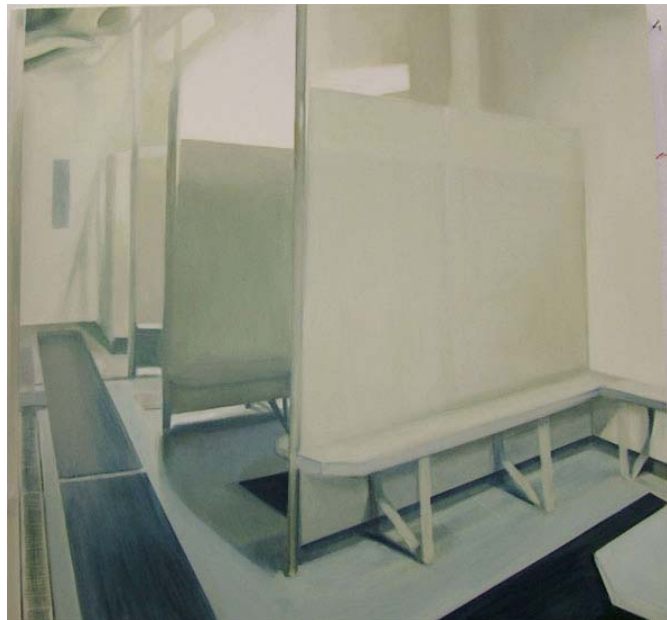


Fig.20: Sharon Vickers, 2005, *Changing Room 2*.



Fig.21: Sharon Vickers, 2005, *Rest Room 1*.

After critique sessions of selected photographs with tutors and fellow students, it became clear that the point of view and interior negative space were important aspects in the selecting and defining of each space. The floor space is significant because it allows – and even beckons – the viewer to enter into the ‘room’. This is especially significant as entry is at eye-level or slightly below, provoking a psychological, imagined entry removed from the usual perspective of bodily entry. In many of the works there is the added entry marker of a doorway or pillar. The eye then roves within the represented space. Margaret Wertheim talks about this virtual eye that can roam around space independent of the physical eye. She refers to the writings of the perceptual psychologist Michael Kubovy, who argued that artists such as Mantegna and Leonardo da Vinci deliberately “subverted the ‘open window’ concept” (cited in Wertheim, 2000, p.115) favoured in the Renaissance, which placed the viewer directly in front of the image and, through linear perspective, made the artist and the viewer aware of where they were in space. To illustrate this subversion, the centre of projection for da Vinci’s *Last Supper* is fifteen feet from the floor, and to view this scene from that point of view one would have to be up a ladder. Kubovy noted that “these images amounted to a sophisticated form of mind-game whose ultimate effect was, ironically, to bring back to perspective imagery, a sense of detachment from the body” (Wertheim, 2000, p.113]), as was prevalent in Gothic and Byzantine paintings, where images could be viewed from any position without any particular point of view.

The placement of my work on the wall is critical in facilitating interaction with the physicality of the viewer. Wertheim describes this device as ‘being there’ in terms of the history of art: “The physically specific ‘point of view’ encoded by linear perspective had the effect of making both the artist and the viewer conscious of where they are located in physical space ... Depending on what point of view an artist chose to render, he could direct the viewer to stand anywhere” (Wertheim, 2000, p.113). In the Renaissance, the artist chose the point of view directly in front of the image. My chosen point of view in each image is from varying altered perspectives. The paintings are positioned on the wall at a conventional viewing height to relate to the standing viewer, who may then perceive an altered

perspective. Candida Hofer also uses perspectival devices in her uncluttered spaces. As Virginia Heckert notes: "The vantage point may be slightly elevated or lowered, an elevation that is not dead-on parallel with the picture plane, or an object framed so that it seems slightly out of place" (Glenn *et al.*, 2004, p.33). In *The Waiting Room* the vantage points have also been elevated or lowered; however, the images are less cluttered, with more visible floor space and room for the eye to rove.

Scale and format

As these spaces were constructed and painted, issues of frame, format and scale became contentious in the reading of the work. Spectator perception was paramount. The reading of the 'room' became double-edged as it involved the physical formatting and construction of the image as well as the manipulation of the viewer's point of view and vantage point.

Framing in a landscape format follows the traditional rendering of a scene. It gives room for viewer entry and its horizontality promotes feelings of calm and stability. A portrait format conveys, I believe, a more edgy and anticipatory reading. I have tried both portrait and landscape formats, and I interrogate the reading of the portrait format when the figure is absent. Does an object take on corporeal qualities, or does this happen only when the placement of subject is central to the work? Does the repositioning of objects in the room to avoid focus within this frame still create a portrait reading? Is the frame obstructive in the reading of the work? Or is it a device to give viewers a realistic sense of their own visual limitations and physicality? Whatever the answer, framing is intrinsic to the art works' pictorial logic. I have used various formats for this reason, to give a sense of visual journey, of moving in and out of the 'rooms,' as our eyes do naturally when scanning our surroundings. Some of the images have 'frames within frames'. In addition to the edge of the work, an added frame is often compositionally placed at the entry in the form of a doorjamb or a floor rug. This can be seen as either a barrier or an invitation into the work.



Fig. 22: Vickers, 2005, *Respite*, showing manipulation of a painting on the computer to explore framing implications.

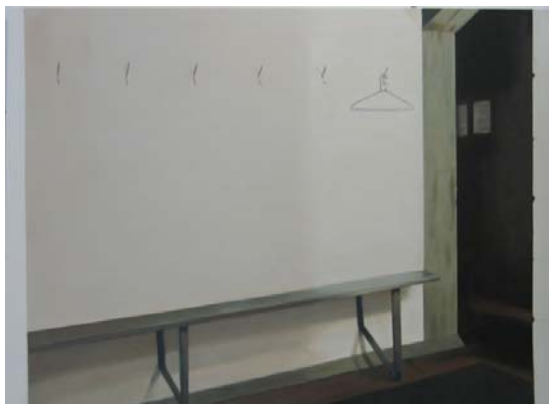


Fig. 23: Sharon Vickers, 2005, *Changing Room 1*

Media

Oil paint and liquin is the medium chosen for the final exhibited works, as it enables a transparency and luminosity to be achieved to create real-light effects and spatial depth. The minimal surface texture allows the viewer to enter the space. The use of liquin and the thin layers of paint promote quick drying and translucency. The colours are muted and the palette restricted within each work to minimise surface distraction. The works have been painted on plywood boards, which have been layered in gesso and sanded smoothly to further facilitate a flatness of surface and also to give reference to the wall surface of rooms. These boards are shaped in a variety of rectangles, in the style of a conventional window/lens shape, reducing visual interference with the reading of the painted space.

Conclusion

In exploring the sites portrayed in this series of paintings, I have come to interrogate all sites. Eliminating the human subject from the room allows space for the spectator's eye to travel and explore without the inevitable magnetic interference of the gaze or the corporeal form. The space becomes the focus.

Through this exploration and its analysis, I have come to identify the poised space between the past and the future, between occupations; spaces that are hovering between public and private. These spaces are presented as places for further subjective evaluation as a series of paintings. Of growing importance as the series progressed was the relationship the paintings had to one another as a complete body of work in format and sensibility, and how they collectively communicated the 'waiting rooms' to the spectator.

In future works I plan to continue my investigation of the suspension of time, the moment 'on pause'. Portrayal of such a slice of time-space in *The Waiting Room* has focused on the suspended moment, which is executed in a time-protracted practice as an attempt to 'put my finger on the pulse' of the moment.

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Appendix

Exhibition Documentation

Plans to exhibit in a shared space and use one continuous wall were abandoned five days before exhibiting. It became clear that my works needed ample wall space between each and that one wall was inadequate. The works would have been crowded. They required the stillness and solitude of an unshared room. In this way visual interference from other work and their spectators was excluded. The paintings could dominate and relate pertinently to the existing gallery space.

Consequently, the position of the works on the wall – that is, the space between each, and the height from the floor – became a crucial consideration in relation to the viewer. I chose to position the paintings uniformly but, unconventionally, closer to the floor – that is, 900 mm from the floor to the base of each painting. This was intended to emphasise the relationship between the gallery floor and the expansive floor space within the works. It was also intended to facilitate an imagined physical entry into the image. The distance between the paintings was dictated by the structure of the gallery space. One temporary end wall was left un-hung, and the positioning of the paintings on the walls close to it was intended to corral and include the bare wall. Irregular spacing between the works was a decision made on site. Although each painting stood alone, there were distinct relationships between them in subject matter, size and colour. References between them and the vacated space of the gallery also developed – between the concrete pillar in *Changing Room 1* and the pillar in the gallery, for instance – and placement related to this. I also considered the light sources in the room in relation to the light sources within the paintings.



Figure 1: Exhibition space with entry to left and un-hung wall behind camera.



Figure 2: View of the far wall of the exhibition space on entry.



Figure 3: View of the near wall of the gallery space (to the right of entry).

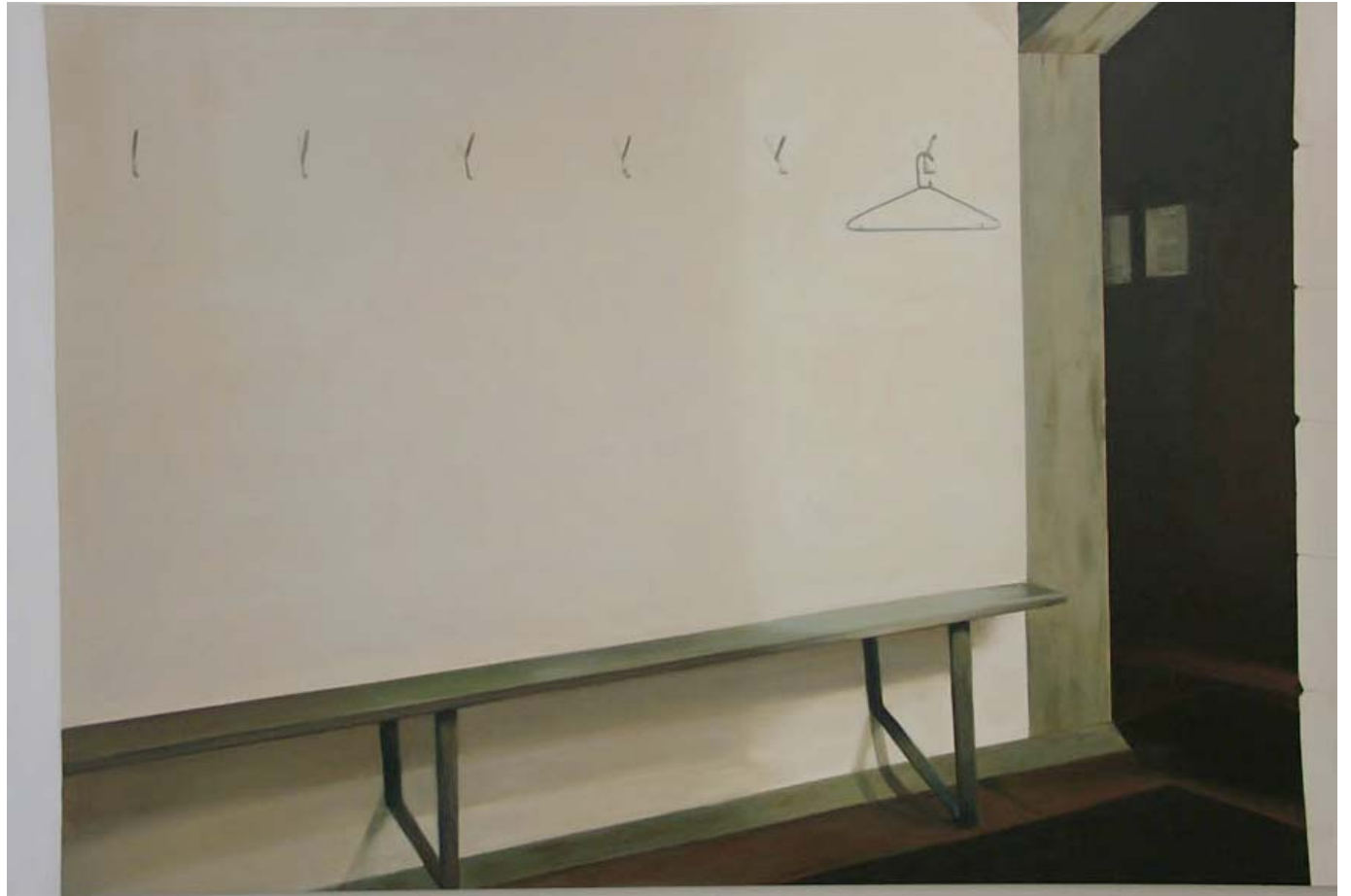


Figure 4: Sharon Vickers, 2005. *Changing Room 1*, 1350 mm x 900 mm.



Figure 5: Sharon Vickers, 2005, *Changing Room 2*, 1035 mm x 900 mm.



Figure 6: Sharon Vickers, 2005, *Changing Room 3*, 600 mm x 900 mm.

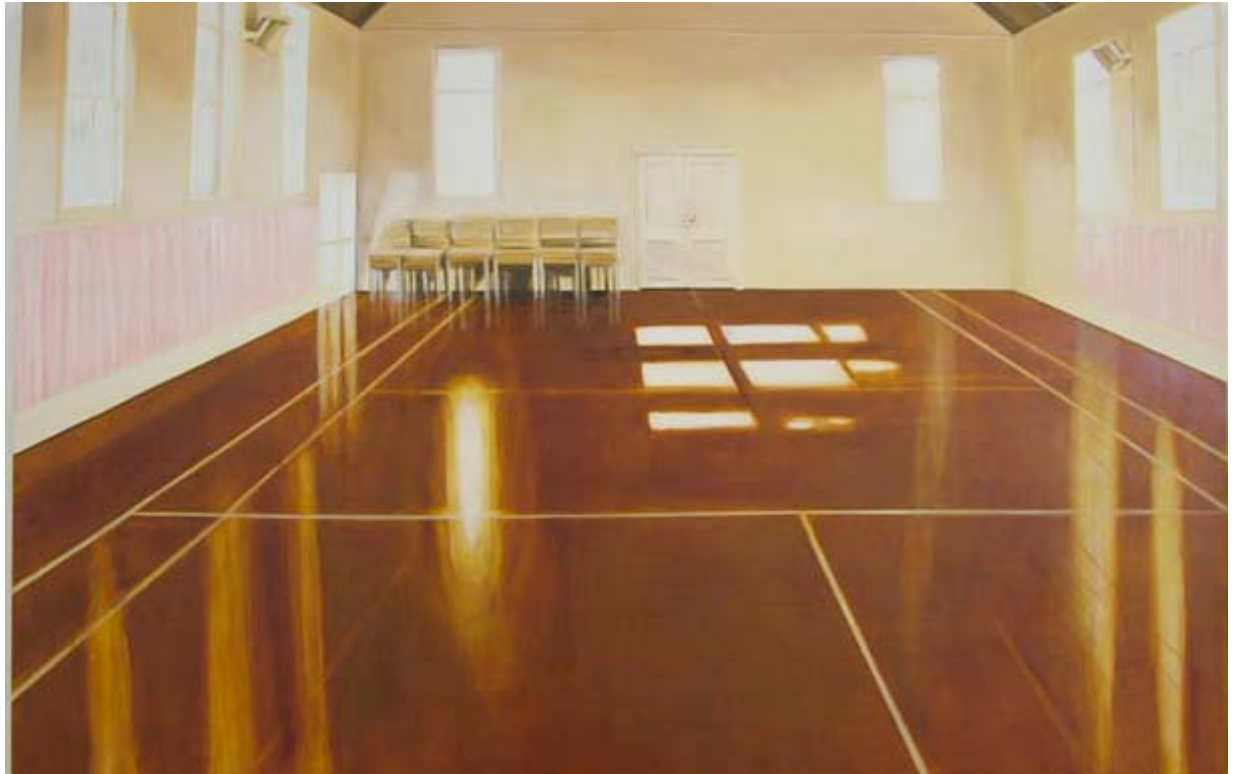


Figure 7: Sharon Vickers, 2005, 'Recess', 1350 mm x 900 mm.



Figure 8: Sharon Vickers, 2005, *Interval*, 1385 mm x 900 mm.



Figure 9: Sharon Vickers, 2005, *Rest room 1*, 600 mm x 900mm.

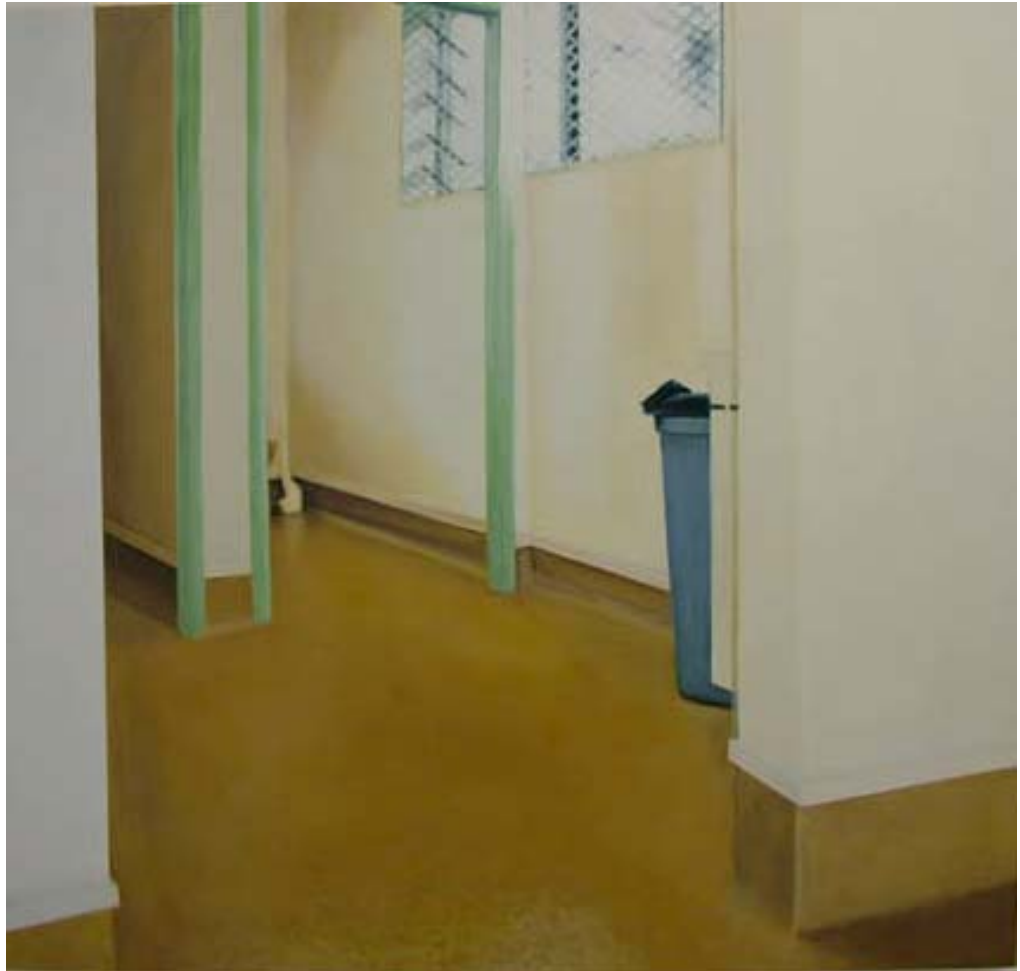


Figure 10: Sharon Vickers, 2005, *Rest Room 2*, 965 mm x 900 mm.



Figure 11: Sharon Vickers, 2005, *Rest Room 3*, 1350 mm x 900 mm.



Figure 12: Sharon Vickers, 2005, *Changing Room 4*, 965 mm x 900 mm.