

Transference

By Anna Hygelund

Patti Oleon's latest work showcases interiors that, yes, manage to transfer you to another place. In the tradition of painting, this is hardly a revolutionary concept, after all this was a primary aim of Renaissance artists, but Oleon's beautiful contemporary interpretation proves most refreshing in this postmodern day of age.

Interesting spaces—library, study, ballroom, lobby, baroque bedroom—transfer the viewer to a more elegant sophisticated reality where, no matter however familiar or unfamiliar, is ridden with a sense of mystery. Oleon's mindfully selects each space for its ability to evoke poignant associations (such as sophistication, nostalgia, intrigue) and at the same time leave the viewer feeling somewhat ambiguous. In addition to subject matter, Oleon completes the transference in a number of ways. By using large-scale canvases and leaving the spaces empty, the viewer is free to transport themselves into the scene. Additionally, by showing these spaces somewhat blurred, Oleon makes use of how an unfocused presentation can ironically be more realistic. Lastly, Oleon's effective use of color, light and perspective all contribute to creating visual transference.

Only by seeing the show in its totality is the sense of contradiction easily recognized. Oleon carefully selects interiors that both are inviting and unwelcoming at the same time. A library appeals because we think of a place of quiet, a place where we can enjoy a favorite book, a place to pursue our passions, a place to expand our knowledge yet at the same time it is a place where we are not free to do as we please. We cannot talk, eat or use our cell phones. There are plenty of rules that must be observed. Similarly, a ballroom draws us in, conjuring up ideas of beautiful attire, refined food, drink and company, yet this is a place where propriety must be observed, where social decorum is expected, a place where amusement comes with restriction.

All in all, I found that the show very enjoyable both as an experience and as an opportunity for acquisition. Indeed, Transference has some excellent examples of MAC (mystery, ambiguity, contradiction) Art—the MAC Criteria being an evaluation method for determining the kind of art that is most enjoyable to live amongst. Transference is Oleon's fourth solo show at Modernism and I know I for one hope to look forward to many more.