SUPERCHARGED PAINTINGS MOVE TOWARDS LIGHT AND SPACE

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of
the degree of

Master of Fine Arts (Visual Art)
(by Research)

December 2018

VCA Art

Faculty of Fine Arts and Music

The University of Melbourne
Abstract

This project considers certain connections between the so-called art world and global social mobility. Is the ubiquity of some universal aesthetic frameworks implicitly promoting the ever-expanding cultural class to become even more seduced by the forces of late-capitalism? The thesis, which comprises a dissertation presented in conjunction with a studio-based investigation, is centred around three distinct, but inter-related templates for display: the generic living room TV wall unit; the painted canvas; and the gallery. I consider how each format conditions our reception of cultural information by influencing our sense of individuality, whilst as the same time signalling our inclusion in a unified non-culturally specific world view that is rooted in western modernism. Significantly, these three selected display arenas all convey a sense of universality—not necessarily through specific content, but rather through their inherent structures. I argue that these successful systems of display potentially mask otherwise visible signs of power through implicit democratic ideologies disseminated via inspirational design trends. Considered together, I demonstrate that all three offer insights into the underlying function of international systems of cultural exchange.

A substantial part of this research considers the homogenising effect of Internet image-searching, especially in relation to notions of class and sophistication at a time characterised by a global democratisation of desire and appreciation for ‘good’ design principles. The artworks I have produced in conjunction with this dissertation are designed to critically engage and antagonise the already fuzzy intersection of art, architecture and design. Accordingly, I have sought to produce works that are less distinguished by traditional art-making decisions but rather emphasise compositions, materials, and principles associated within modernist and minimalist infused trends in design and architecture. This strategy seeks to recode the sublime grandeur of late-formalist abstract paintings as a kind-of banal realism perhaps more associated with marketing and pop consumerism.

The physical creation of individual artworks has taken place in accordance with two predominate modes of production. Firstly, and in reference to painting, wall mounted sculptural relief works incorporating materials such as Formica composite wood panelling, plywood, hardwood, acrylic paint, enamel paint, glass, vinyl flooring, composite stone samples, imitation plants, real-plants, pots, fluorescent lights, and found objects, were produced. The second mode of production is in the digital realm, and includes digital photographic montages (combining online images with my own photography), video (using online content and making interventions within it) and creating audio tracks (to accompany the video works). Considered together, these modes of production are used as tools to psychologically position the viewer in a space in which materials, surfaces and compositions, might trigger considerations of social mobility, our relationships to design, and finally, notions of personal intimacy and memory that are activated through smart-screen technologies.
Declaration

This is to certify that

(i) the thesis comprises only my original work towards the masters except where indicated in the Preface,
(ii) due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used,
(iii) the thesis is 15,454 words in length, exclusive of tables, maps, bibliographies and appendices OR the thesis is 15,454 as approved by the RHD committee.

Luke Adams
Preface

The final graduate exhibition associated with this project has been supported with funding awarded by the Faculty Small Grant Scheme (FSGS) Round 3, 2018. It was awarded by the University of Melbourne in September 2018.
Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to thank the staff within VCA for their professionalism throughout the term of my candidature. The rich history, central arts precinct locality, and interdisciplinary campus make for a dynamic art school environment. Not only has the campus buildings benefitted from recent significant change and improvement, I feel that the current focus by the post-Grad research community is also contributing to a greater VCA Campus within the University of Melbourne.

I would like to thank our course co-ordinators Bernhard Sachs and Simone Slee, who both provided great guidance and support to the entire cohort throughout the term of the course; and managed an amazingly smooth transition between their roles. And, a big thanks to Tessa Laird for the valuable contribution to the Masters seminars and feedback sessions.

One of the most enjoyable aspects of the MFA program is the cohort of other students that must traverse the same path. It is a great pleasure to be completing the two years with Piers Greville, Sue Beyer, Brigit Ryan, Freya Pitt, Aaron Hoffman and Nathan Stoltz, along with the other members of our cohort including those who were initially in our year, and those either side of it.

A very big thank you to my equally proportioned joint supervisors Lisa Radford and Sean Lowry. The ongoing and challenging contributions you have made to this project, and to me, has certainly ‘exceeded expectations’. You both bring your own unique focuses and skills through intelligent dialogue, challenging views, and an appropriate sense of humour. The depth of contemporary art knowledge between you is immense and I have grown from this experience. My most sincere thanks to you both for your support throughout my conceptual wanderings and art making agitations. With regard to the written document I would also like to thank Scott Mitchell for your rich and valuable feedback.

Finally, I have to thank my partner Jacqui Edge whose unwavering commitment and support has made this study possible. Without your understanding and belief this project could not have taken place. Your ability to keep focus amongst the challenges is inspirational, my dear. Also, I would like to thank Stuart and Lyn Edge for their broader support throughout this time of study, and for their ongoing contribution to the lives of our two young and brilliant children Oscar and Avalon.
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Introduction

I often find myself invested in the sublime act of gazing—albeit skimming—over highly choreographed generic images of beautifully-crafted designer products and the interiors of glossy inspirational homes. Although this experience is hyperbolically supercharged via the Internet, it is certainly not a new phenomenon.\(^1\) The online interiors attracting my attention possess qualities of timeless sophistication and an understated beauty that is not readily characterised in relation to any particular cultural heritage—except perhaps for small hints of Scandinavia, a nod to Japanese Zen, and a touch of German quality and engineering (Fig.1). If I was to make a selection (hypothetically or actually) from this array of desirable designer objects within the vast image repository of the Web, I will need to negotiate whether I make my selection based on an in-depth understanding of the subtle differences between quality-crafted bespoke-ness, or choose from the mass production of similar (or almost identical) products; of which, range from poorly executed to well-made, but with diminished significance for its larger scale of production. The correct decision could outwardly convey my position as a creative connoisseur of, at least, adequate proportion and subsequently support my position as educated middle-class aesthete. A selection of any particular product may distinguish ones’ own cultural niche within a myriad of similar aesthetic products; including originals, rip-offs, copies, fakes, veneers, printed surfaces, and poor-quality imitations. Do I buy the Barcelona chair or its cheap copy? Or, do I go to Kmart, where the latest arrivals are aimed to ‘inspire’ with ‘style and taste’ (Fig. 2)?\(^2\) Our current notions of class, style and sophistication are increasingly nuanced within (sometimes) visibly indistinguishable levels of consumer designer products.\(^3\)

Figure 1. Destination Living, Design Trends and Ideas, 2018.


\(^3\) The term ‘designer’ is defined by Cambridge Dictionary as ‘a person who imagines something could be made and draws plans for it’ and/or ‘made by a famous or fashionable designer.’ Within this document the word ‘designer’ will be used in context of homewares and interior marketing language that indicates added value by additional attention being made towards the ergonomics and visual aesthetics of a particular product.
If we consider a hypothetical, yet realistically rendered, architecturally designed modernist home we may experience the power of considered design and its inherent psychological sensuality. Upon entering you may notice the industrial sized double-glazed windows, burnished concrete floors, shadow-lines instead of skirting boards, concealed LED lighting, white walls, Eames style furniture, and exposed ceiling beams. The space between things are as sublime as the surfaces from which they are formed. The buildings architectural recipe seems to repeal the vagrancies of time by order of its’ principles; resisting dirt and dysfunction, and by extension, class, violence, war, and terror; such principles resemble notions associated with the ideology of the white cube gallery space (Fig. 3). Within this conceptual home, everyone likes to visit and have meaningful discussions about intelligent matters. We do minimal work to allow more time for meaningful engagement. And if the conversation becomes overwhelming, we can turn our gaze beyond the adjacent window where our view pierces the mid-riff of bushland and thoughts settle on fractured scenes of light-clipped hills fading into the distance. In the somewhat utopian interior of my conceptual home, the living spaces are curated and designed to maximise human potential with the aim of inspiring better living and more inclusive social dialogue—while simultaneously emotionally supercharging its inhabitants with the positivity of inspirational design.

5 The term ‘supercharged’ is derived from ‘supercharger’. ‘A supercharger is an air compressor that increases the pressure or density of air supplied to an internal combustion engine. This gives each intake cycle of the engine more oxygen, letting it burn more fuel and do more work, thus increasing power.’ The term ‘supercharge’ has also come to represent ‘very fast or energetic’ and ‘containing or expressing very strong emotions’ (Cambridge Dictionary). Within this document ‘supercharged’ is being used to represent an increase to the power and effectiveness of an artwork and is also used to describe the intention behind many aspects of design, particularly interior design, where a combination of aesthetic choices is made within a set of principles, to increase their individual effectiveness by being part of an overall scheme. Therefore, emotionally ‘supercharging’ the occupier with a feeling of healthier or better living, in line with their principles. General Electric, The Turbosupercharger and the Airplane Power Plant, (blog) Rwebs.net, first published January 1943, posted 1997, last accessed 31 October, 18, http://rwebs.net/avhistory/opsman/geturbo/geturbo.htm.
This project explores questions pertaining to international cultural frameworks and considers certain connections between notions of the so-called art world and global social mobility. Is the ubiquity of universal aesthetics promoting an ever-expanding cultural class to be even more seduced by the forces of late-capitalism? The investigation is centred around three distinct, but inter-related templates of display; the generic living room TV wall unit, the painted canvas, and the gallery. I consider how each format conditions our reception of cultural information by varying degrees of influence on our sense of individuality—but, is simultaneously signalling our arrival at a unified non-culturally specific world view, rooted in modernism. The three selected display arenas convey universality, not necessarily by their content, but via their inherent structure. Considered together, they seek to offer insight into the underlying function of international cultural systems—which are possibly performing as invisible architectures of power—where we may be manipulated through design principles into believing a contribution is being made towards an environment of healthy living, and a fair and socially equitable global community. As Michel Foucault’s observation of power revealed in *Power/Knowledge*, published in 1980, ‘power is only tolerable on condition that it masks a substantial part of itself. Its success is proportional to its ability to hide its own mechanisms’.\(^6\) We may enjoy the idea of looking good, feeling good, and being good through our consumerism—but are forces of power masking themselves under exploitative and seductive design principles?

The appeal of interior design principles were effectively satirised as design-fetish by Canadian director Mary Harron in the 2000 film adaptation of Bret Easton Ellis’s 1991 novel, *American Psycho*.\(^7\) The central protagonist Patrick Bateman (played by Christian Bale) appears to be living an outwardly successful life of domestic and professional perfection; ‘the films satire rests heavily on materialism and superficiality’, where ‘Bateman’s status anxiety is elevated to existential terror and psychosis’.\(^8\) The obsessively designed and over-refined apartment plays a brooding accomplice-like backdrop to Bateman’s frightening lack of care for others (Fig. 4). In 2016, the films’ apartment was recreated in 3D for the architectural website Arch Daily where the entire apartment can be explored in detail ‘without the fear of an axe to the head’(Fig. 5). Designers are encouraged to ‘humanise’ the space with their own designs.

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\(^7\) Definition of interior design: ‘interior design is a multi-faceted profession in which creative and technical solutions are applied within a structure to achieve a built interior environment. These solutions are functional, enhance the quality of life and culture of the occupants and are aesthetically attractive’. Source: Centre for Interior Design Qualification, USA and Canada, https://www.cidq.org/definition-of-interior-design.

Since the early 2000s, desire and value attributed to minimal design, in the consciousness of the general public, appears to have increased dramatically. What was once viewed as cold and stark may now be mainstream and characterised as minimalist. The opening scene of *American Psycho* (beauty scene) was parodied by Australian actor Margot Robbie in 2016, in an advertisement for Vogue Magazine. Both the original and parodied version of Bateman’s apartment are not too dissimilar to property interiors featured in Australian real estate marketing, or the luxury apartment interiors created on this years’ reality TV program ‘The Block’ filmed within the Gatwick building in St Kilda, Melbourne (Figs. 6&7). Executive and luxury design is not only now appealing for the wealthy, it is also providing a version of living that the mainstream is consuming as a form of uplifting entertainment. Luxury interiors and inspirational design trends can be visited online, on-demand, whenever immediate inspiration is needed. Pinterest accounts may act like ocular smelling salts supercharging us into a placebo-like state of healthier living.

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9 The corporate rise of design focused companies IKEA and Apple, along with a consideration of contemporary art will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2, and Chapter 3.
A worldwide increase in the appreciation for design has seen almost 1.5 billion visits to design-focused retail stores such as IKEA and Apple, in 2017.\textsuperscript{10} This coincides with a significant global increase with the popularity of contemporary art, including a huge increase in privately owned galleries that rival state-based collections.\textsuperscript{11} Painting remains the most traded commodity in the art market and has regained much of its critical role, which was maligned throughout the post-modernist period.\textsuperscript{12} It is my proposition that the success of designer home living, the return of painting as a favoured medium, and the continued expansion of the white cube gallery model have all been facilitated, in some-part, by the seductive packaging and democratic access associated with our smart-devices, that provide a gateway to the Internet; where the exclusivity that had previously heightened the aesthetics of sophistication can now be traversed by almost anyone, given the right search terms are used.\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{11}Adam, Georgina. 2014. Big Bucks: The Explosion of the Art Market in the 21\textsuperscript{st} Century. London: Lund Humphries. 84-88
\textsuperscript{12} For further discussion on the role of painting in contemporary art see chapter 2. For an economist overview of painting as a commodity in the global art market see below. In 2017, painting accounted for 51\% of the ‘share of value’ of artworks offered by art fairs, sculpture is the second biggest category at 19\%.
\textsuperscript{13} Both publications of Georgina Adam and Clare McAndrew indicate that across the globe art galleries have continued to grow in numbers. Art fairs have taken over a great share of exhibition presence and art sales made, the online market has expanded at a rapid pace in the last 5 years, and while the number of galleries opening versus closing has reduced there is still more year on year.
Considered together, the generic living room TV wall unit (Fig. 8), the painted stretched canvas, and the white cube art gallery museum model form the basis for an exploration into globalised culture and a consideration of the alluring forces that surround their success. The similarities between these three modes of display seem to lie in their ability to suspend complex cultural significance across notions of democracy, equity, trade, design, and at-times spirituality. Their use has risen within a recent expansion of technological complexity and increased access to large and immediate databases of images. The artistic methodology I have used within this project aims to consider such complexities and explores the materiality and formal arrangements consistent within them. I have approached the fabrication of artworks with two major focuses. The first is a formalist response to the colour, shape, materiality, and scale, of the subject matter. The second is to evoke visual questions about the correlation of formalist concerns (such as the work of Donald Judd - see Figs. 9&10)—within the contemporary art world and the significance that formalist modernism is playing in regard to taste, class, commodity, and social equity, at a time when images and the online world virtualise our experience of the corporeal world.

Figure 9. Donald Judd, *Untitled*, 1988.

Figure 10. Donald Judd, *Untitled*, 1988.
Chapter 1: The significance of the living room

Is our time really the time of *timelessness*? If we are to believe the terminologies used within designer marketing language, our home interiors are developing into spaces of sophisticated and timelessness inspiration, which may enable us to be spiritually augmented by the aura of good design principles. The current popularity of minimalist simplicity and mid-century designer furniture seems to go well beyond notions of generational nostalgia. Bench-top and joinery finishes are irrationally fetishised to a professional level across the world; such finishes include two-pack plywood, Formica topped chipboard, composite stone benchtop’s, wood veneer MDF, wood-look ceramic tiles, perfectly formed sculptural vases, cantilevered shelves, under-shelf lighting, and the antidotal presence of a thriving pot-plant. Great importance is placed on flatness, regularity, precision, surface, and composition; which together indicate a quality of design. But, are we being seduced into thinking that good design equals moral goodness?\(^\text{14}\) In this chapter I consider the significance of the living room in three parts. Firstly, I will focus on the history and function of the living room as a place of international dialogue and subliminal intimacy. Secondly, consideration will be given to specific artists responses to the living room. And, thirdly I will raise the provocation that current interior design trends are, in part, a response to the success of the contemporary art gallery. This will help to form an understanding of the psychology and morality surrounding our moments of leisure, communicated by the aspirations embedded within the finishes within our homes.

My exploration into design trends within home interiors arose from the ‘supercharged’ component of the title. I had been seeking-out spare parts from motorised recliner chairs to integrate within conceptual paintings. However, the domestic syntax of the floral fabric evoked challenging emotions. It suggested an underlying tension between the desirable coolness of my imagined internationalised aesthetics, and a redundancy associated with the local. With this particular chair, loose wires had created a poor electrical connection which shuttered an aging woman, to and fro, in a chair of indecision. It was put on the street by her husband and advertised for free (Fig.12). The floral covering of the chair had a post-colonial quality of English tea drinking, card games, and church on Sundays. While the function of the chair had been motorised, it still signified to me, a generation that was formed by the great depression and the second world war; where national identity polarised international relationships. The acquisition of the chair altered my concept of supercharging as a practical

\(^{14}\) Ralph Barton Perry suggests that ‘every deliberate act is virtually a moral belief; and most sentiment is moral opinion compounded with ardour and tenacity.’ He indicates that any notions of ‘moral goodness’ are inevitably ambiguous. However, can be defined ‘in opposition to moral badness, and in a peculiar relation to moral indifference.’ The term ‘moral goodness’ is used here with the intention of suggesting that every design choice made is a deliberate act which communicates an individual’s moral beliefs through aesthetic choices (Barton). In big business marketing and international dialogue, morality is often targeted. If you were yet aware that you have ‘moral goodness’ you may become aware that you should get some. I would generally characterise the ‘moral goodness’ associated with design is derived from Christian values, while encompassing an awareness and adaptability for religious variances, which would still constitute mainstream views. The question of ‘moral goodness’ with regards to Capitalism, is distorted through sales marketing language where the impression of moral benefit is used to make a sale. In the absence of religious structures and other moral teachings, the messaging of advertising is dispersed within general media reducing the ability to objectively distinguish a sales pitch campaign from a genuine message or act of moral goodness. Within design it may also relate to the notion of ‘good intentions’. Source: Ralph Barton Perry. ‘The Conception of Moral Goodness’. *The Philosophical Review* Vol. 16, No. 2 (March, 1907), last accessed 28/10/18, https://www.jstor.org/stable/2177469?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents, 144-146.
intervention, towards a consideration of *supercharging* human emotion by intervening with design. This has led an investigation into the role of home design trends and considers the possible relationship between utopian notions embedded within late-modernism, its commodified aesthetics, and how they are now being used in mass markets.

Figure 12. Luke Adams, iPhone screenshot of recliner chair, 2017.

An international outlook has existed within living room design for centuries. As historian Dr Lucy Worseley writes, in summary of her 2011 BBC documentary ‘If Walls Could Talk - History of the Home’, ‘primarily, the living room’s a place for spending leisure hours. But it’s also a place for display—a room for impressing your guests with your taste and wealth.’¹⁵

In medieval England, a country house was primarily one room, known as the ‘Grand Hall’ (Fig. 13), which provided communal living for extended families and their servants. The ‘chair’ represents the position for the ‘household’s head’, whose seat was distinguished with arm rests, instead of the lowly stools that servants were seated upon. The class structures and patriarchy of this time would influence today’s notions of ‘the chairman of the board’. A ‘board’ was a flat piece of wood on trestles and became the dining room table. Later, the sofa would challenge class hierarchies by providing a more casual and informal seating arrangement for interaction. The grand medieval halls of the past would be modified to make-way for the innovative open-hearth chimney, which divided spaces into living room, dining room, and upstairs sleeping quarters. The chimney may have reduced smoke, however it blocked out light; and only the wealthy could afford quality candles and glass windows. Light, climate, and seating arrangements are fundamental properties that created the

conditions for the living room to take place; and the wealthy spared no expense using it to display their wealth with collections of fine art, designer furniture and other more exotic examples of finery.

The technological innovations of the hearth and sash-window, together with increasing social ambitions of the middle-class (who were benefitting from the industrial revolution and colonial expansion), form the foundation for what we now consider ‘the living room’. With industrial processes allowing glass to become affordable, and the nationalised electricity grid bringing cheap lighting into the home, the living room became accessible on a much wider scale. Such innovations occurring within industrial England would influence home designs across the world. The social mobility offered to the middle-class by their increasing wealth, generated by technological innovation, would influence a desire to display status, through tokens of taste and sophistication. The living room became part art gallery, part museum and part sitting room. Worseley draws attention to the following contemporary situation where ‘once again things seem to have come full circle, and the open-plan kitchen/living room/dining room made possible by the invention of the extraction fan makes many homes (including [her] own) much more like the single space of the medieval peasant’s cottage’.16

The room is often not a room, rather a demarcated space within a larger one, with furniture orientated towards the (less utilised) black rectangle of a flat-screen TV. Today for many, the living room signals a recent emergence from historical poverty and is often symbolically used to convey a household’s ability, and willingness, to be part of global systems of exchange, through adherence to globalised trends in materials, surfaces, furnishing, technology and TV programs.

In the mid-twentieth century, the living room was much less about the display of the broader world, than about the consumption of imagery and sound from it. Sofas and chairs were orientated away from open-hearth, towards the television. Film writer David Thomson gives an account of the changes occurring in the living room in his book Television – A Biography, published in 2016.17 He suggests the television became ‘parental yet uncritical, if not unconcerned’ and describes time spent with it as ‘church reduced to the soft status of a sofa, minus guilt, redemption, or moral purpose’.18 But in our contemporary life of portable, multiple, and individually accessible screens with on-demand content, the ‘sacred fixed altar

16 Worseley, If Walls Could Talk.
18 Worseley, If Walls Could Talk, 11.
(the set) has given up its central place of worship’. In the past, we may have written-off TV screen time as a form of indulgence, or the more discerning viewer as conducting educative leisure (limited to news and investigative journalism). However, as Thomson points out this ‘was a ruse to hide the deeper import—that it was simply on or off’ leading to ‘reception as absorption.’ The presence of the television was not threatening or malevolent, quite the opposite, it was a ‘placid being’ and an ‘impassive force’ which was no longer ‘an elephant in the room’; ‘it became the room, the house, and the world’. And, the most ‘frightening thing’ is ‘the deepest nature of television is to be reassuring’. Thomson proposes that the television has been training us for our current use of smart-technology, and that we operate with a mistaken assumption that within information is knowledge. Some see the international reach of online content as ‘the highest proof of universality and prospects of the global village’. Thomson raises suspicion of such hopeful views and points towards the 2015-16 US election campaign where celebrity-talent-show-democracy created a media frenzy where ‘the more debates’ that occurred ‘the less subjects were debated’, leading to a ‘nightmare show our trance had allowed’.

It is my proposition that the living room is now as invisible and forgotten as much as it is real. It is the place where a child experiences formative sensations of safety, stability, and reassurance—including early notions of identity and awareness of a broader world. While stories, books and photographs may generate worldliness, the surrogate parentage offered by the reassuring television generates a more subliminal intimate relationship. The ability to forget about the impact of the living room and the television may reveal something of the power it wields. In his 1999 book Framing Places, Kim Dovey argues that ‘power naturalises and camouflages itself, chameleon-like, within this context, and by extension, the choice of the mask is a dimension of power’. And, power is exercised best, as Dovey implies, when imagination and metaphor play a role. According to Gaston Bachelard, the home is full of metaphors that imprint on our imagination. He describes the home as ‘our first world’, which imprints upon us metaphorical and psychological locations for daydreaming. But, for all Bachelard’s poetic points of childhood psychoanalytical space, their metaphors, and the intimate wanderings of European style homes he avoids an obvious set of conditions for daydreaming and intimacy. Being that, the living room is formulated with the same conditions Sigmund Freud was using to psychoanalyse his patients with; where a person reclines couch-bound and is reassured by words of non-judgemental authority (TV or radio). Such conditions seem to authorise a form of psychological access significant enough to extract the most astounding admissions, adding further to notions of power within the living room.

While the television rarely asks for anything except our attention, we instinctively credit it with democratic authority, as the message being disseminated is within some form of state-based regulatory structure and the broadcast is available to everyone. The subliminal capability of this arrangement induces a type of forgetting about lived moments, while pre-

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19 Ibid, 12.  
20 Ibid.  
21 Ibid, 13.  
22 Ibid.  
23 Ibid, 12.  
24 ‘Latchkey kids’ is a term given to children who are left with key access to their home to be accessed on their own. Often due to parents being away with work. Mostly used in reference to children under the age of 10. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latchkey_kid  
conditioning us phenomenologically towards certain screen ratios, sound rhythms, light
flickers, human voices, and other patterns which form recognition. Now, activities once
thought over-indulgent and wasteful pursuits of the lower-classes, like too much
entertainment, operate with a sense of fulfilment, even amongst academics in this new golden
age of television (i.e. a full series binge on Netflix). Our imaginations seem to be actively
stimulated within socially acceptable boundaries of soft-power online consumption. Here, it
is worth considering the importance that Bachelard places on the psychology of images
generated by domestic architectural spaces to understand why he does not make reference to
radio or television throughout Poetics of Space. Presumably, he recognises that the images
delivered by audio-visual technologies do not reside in memory in the same way. Therefore,
we may surmise that the poetics of space, as Bachelard conceives them, are corrupted or
changed by the presence of such media.

An examination of specific artworks that reference the living room may offer insights into the
intimacy, morality, and politics that are introduced into the home via the content delivered
through our devices and their physical format. This will inform a further examination of the
design systems operating within today’s contemporary spaces. In the 1950s the rise of
American mass-market consumerism ushered a new vibrancy and optimism within our
interiors. But it was English artist Richard Hamilton who best captured the significance of the
living room in his 1956 collage *Just what is it that makes today’s homes so different, so appealing?* (Fig. 14). The title of the work draws upon marketing language to orientate the
viewer into a consideration of the positive affect of design. So, what does make it so
appealing? Is it the large windows, central heating, pop-cultural icons, new time saving
electrical devices, the ability to lounge in our underwear, a social connection to the broader
world via television, the promise of a better sexualised future where the enjoyment of our
bodies is as leisurely pleasurable, and socially acceptable, as entertaining our minds? Or, is it
due to the living room representing a perception of democratic access to the symbols of
status, which renders success as an attainable and perpetual possibility for everyone?

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27 There is widespread agreement about the new golden age of television. For an overview see:
Whatever the answer, the symbolism within Hamilton’s collage resonates with the internationalised aesthetics of today’s homes. And, the question of taste displayed in the home remains a discerning factor in determining one’s class, wealth, political beliefs, and global social mobility.

The politics arising from leisurely-passivity in the living room are explored more directly by American artist Martha Rosler in her photomontage series’ *House Beautiful: Bringing the War Home*, created between 1967-1972 (Fig. 15). In this series, sophisticated home interiors and their homeowners are juxtaposed with scenes from the Vietnam War. The internationalised display of status conveyed within the living room is used as a critique aimed at those who have the affluence to occupy it. Her works suggests a moral imperative, in which those who have the means to display worldly status should also have the moral responsibly to understand worldly matters, and thereby make actions to ensure their governments act in accordance with basic moral standards. This work calls into question the educative leisure of receiving nightly television news reports on war, within the comfort of your beautifully furnished home.

Figure 15. Martha Rosler, *Home Beautiful: Bringing the War Home*, 1967-72.

After the American withdrawal from Vietnam, Cold War tensions lingered. Yet the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 signalled a new era of global freedom which strengthened internationalised systems of exchange. Old notions of status and hierarchy began to be replaced by the younger and more innovative tech-entrepreneurs of the 1990s, and from the year 2000 onwards software innovation, design and creativity would characterise concepts of opportunity, status and wealth. The immediacy and search-ability of images becomes a determining factor in distinguishing taste and class, albeit along redefined social boundaries.

Image-searching has allowed the opportunities of good design to flourish in our post-television online world. The subliminal implanting of our reassuring television years has moved on to an era of adolescent responsibility where we can now ask questions. We can ask our screens ‘how should my living room look’? Unconsciously we know this space is for displaying wealth and status in international terms, but how should it be represented today? What does good taste and good design look like in 2018? Our living rooms are often fractured spaces amongst larger ones requiring delineation, often created by sofas. The sofas are orientated towards something, a coffee table, a window, or more often it is the television; or more precisely, the ‘TV Wall unit’. An image search for ‘TV wall unit’ reveals an overwhelming universality in its appearance (Fig 16). Whether we search for architectural interior designs, or entry level furniture stores we get remarkably similar results. If we limit
our searches to cultural groups and national identities, the results are mostly the same. We find slimmer and lighter televisions hung like black paintings surrounded by hard-edge compositions complete with Donald Judd styled commercial finishes (Figs. 9&10). What does this tell us about global attitudes towards style, taste and class?

Figure 16. Screenshot, Google Image Search, 2018.

To understand the pervasive impact of design-orientation in the home, we only need to look towards the world’s largest annual print publication, the IKEA catalogue. With an annual print run of over 200 million copies, it out-numbers the bible and Quran. In 2017, IKEA stores recorded 936 million store visits and 2.3 billion online. If we add the 500 million Apple store visitations (2017) to IKEA’s, we reach almost 1.5 billion visits to stores worldwide that distinguish themselves as leaders in design. While the television still has a place within the home, Apple has re-enforced the notion that emotional supercharging is possible through good design—we only need to reach into our pockets to feel reassured. The iPhone managed to inspire a few technological ‘wow’ moments, and I consider this to be a turning point when the general public attributed greater worth to quality and design; imbuing it with some religious fervour.

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31 To put this in context of religious beliefs, there are an estimated 2.2 billion people identifying themselves as Christian, and 1.6 Billion identifying as Muslim (Wikipedia). However, while there may be ritualistic sensations when visiting IKEA stores, I am not suggesting that this is a spiritual experience. Any spiritual connotations I suggest relate to the execution of the design process and relates to a meaningfully experience an individual may have within their own space.

32 An example of this can be found within the paper; ‘Religiosity in the Abandoned Apple Newton Brand Community’ Journal of Consumer Research, Volume 31, Issue 4, 1 March, 2005, https://doi.org/10.1086/426607.
technological sci-fi innovations portrayed in 2001 A Space Odyssey, or any series of Star-trek, becomes a glimmer of hope for our utopian dreams. Visions of the future have been subliminally programmed by our reassuring television long ago, and now we can be mobilised to imagine our destiny in the direction of reality. A combination of glass, light, aluminium, and concepts of space (either lived space or the space beyond our atmosphere) fuel our nostalgia for the future, where time need not exist, and we can explore the galaxies with leisurely-passivity.

The distinguishing factors of taste and class is democratised by access to images on the Internet and more affordable access points for design trends. There seems to an implicit notion that within good design is moral goodness. Such concepts are embedded within many interior design principles, including healthy living; which is evident within IKEA’s in-house mantra of democratic design. And, the general terminologies used across the companies’ marketing, which focus on messages of social equity, with a particular emphasis on global migration and climate change. The connection between design, ethics and morality is implicit within the language used by IKEA and Apple. Not only have our interiors developed into a commercialised designer space of inspiration, enabling our greater selves to reach our full potential, we can enjoy the moral comfort of both making the world look better while being better.

A sceptical assessment of this scenario is that such marketing strategies disarm our political impulses. If our shopping satiates our political impulses by implying we have already engaged in a political act while making a purchase, then our aesthetic choices are heightened to read as a form of political enlightenment, further conveying our global and social mobility. Leading to the question, are modernist design principles being used to convey a democratic, yet privileged morality? And, does this situation have a relationship with the political and moral worldliness implicit in the functions of the contemporary art gallery, art fair, art biennale, and art museum model (see Chapters 2&3).

The gallery may not have changed much since the modernist period, but our interactions with it have. Now when we explore popular exhibitions, state-based galleries and blockbuster shows we share it with selfies, five second snapshots, and the second degree viewing of a work of art through someone else’s screen. They become part of the show. The images are stored to enjoy later, at leisure. And, while we may be forgetting lived moments within the living room, we may also recover memories there too, through our hand-held screens. Our images can be experienced with reflection and solitude; qualities afforded by time, heating, light, and the informality of a sofa. Qualities that are also associated with the gallery, yet hard to find when looking through devices. We may use our self-styled gallery images to display our sophistication and global interconnectedness, where our knowledge of internationalist aesthetics, global systems and acceptable ideologies can be displayed to the broader world, which may also simultaneously consecrate our position as socially mobile members of an inspired global community.

33 Democratic design is visually represented by a pentagon with the five key elements; form, function, quality, sustainability and a low price. Terms found across various pages on IKEA’s website include the following: ‘democratic design’, ‘design for everyone’, ‘inspiration’, ‘where it all starts’, ‘for the many people’, ‘what’s most important at heart’, ‘becoming people and planet positive’, ‘good ethics is good business’, ‘supports refugees’, ‘designed to create jobs’. Sourced; IKEA website, last accessed 28 September, 2018, https://www.ikea.com/ms/en_AU/this-is-ikea/people-and-planet/index.html.

Chapter 2: Painting as democratic image

The creative activity of painting began with our earliest of histories and remains a persistent form of visual art. Consequently, it conveys the idea of ‘art’ in an instant. The use of painting as a means of cultural expression traverses nations, social classes, sub-cultures, age groups and divides of social, mental or physical privilege. Even following the heavily contested grounds of post-modernism, in which medium specificity was challenged, painting was not down for long. For the past five hundred years paint on canvas, has remained the standard, the benchmark for what is considered painting, and by extension, generically captures what is considered art. The painted canvas has relevance in a huge diversity of places and to a great diversity of people, which leads me to consider the painted canvas a most successful example of democratic design. The format may dictate the reading in a ‘medium is the message’ type-of-way, yet for the viewer the architectural structures of such display systems become imbedded and forgotten within ubiquitous and acceptable standards of global cultural exchange. The painted canvas appears to us, as an invisible template of neutrality, in much the same way as the gallery aims to appear to be neutral. The invisibility of such structures enables instantaneous attention being drawn toward the act of creation. The historical and social currency inherent within the painted canvas system is subsumed by our ignited imaginations, which are being seduced by the artistic intervention made by the artist; in which individualised human intimacy (paint applied by hand) and conceptual viewpoints are carried by global standardised systems of display.

Although an object, painting has a double life as an image. As an image, it is documented and shared online allowing its copy to reach the world while its aura lives on as an object. This has significant cognitive effect when viewing images of paintings online where an understanding of an image coalesces with the knowledge of it being a single unique material object. Its image is a sign for an entity. But, even its object-ness lives in the afterlife of images. This chapter considers how painting exists in a post-conceptual condition, and operates as a reminder of the tension between the online and offline worlds. I will put forward a discussion surrounding painting on canvas as democratic design and the impact of online images on its democratic function. And, consider the relationship between the paintings of late-modernism and a situation of present-ness in contemporary culture, with a focus on utopian idealisms, and how they relate to the internet, intimacy and a growing international middle-class cultural aesthetic.

The inclusion of painting as a central concern in this project arose from recurring methodologies developed in past projects. It had previously served to distance the reading of

34 Democratic design is a term borrowed from IKEA’s brand mantra. In this context, it is used to underline the sanctioned, or generalised social aims, at the centre of international cultural relations in visual art, design and architecture. These aims run parallel to the aims of the UN charter. It is visually represented by a pentagon with the five key elements; form, function, quality, sustainability and a low price.
34 While Marshall McLuhan famously coined the phrase ‘the medium is message’ the extension of this theory is ‘the medium is the massage’ suggesting a more subliminal relationship to technology. Source: Marshall McLuhan, Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man (New York: McGraw Hill, 1964).
37 Peter Osborne, The Postconceptual Condition (Brooklyn: Verso, 2018).
my work from installation, towards a dialogue between sculpture and painting. In this project, painting has come to represent a position of conceptual intent, whereby a consideration of painting is a framework to consider how art is operating in the dual world of digital and physical space, and how the deployment of these two states of being, contains pluralistic divisions of institutional hierarchy and international conformity based on one hand timelessness, and on the other suppression. An initial philosophical approach was to consider, how I could improve on painting as a medium. This is a ridiculous aim, but a revealing question. I was using it to test the resilience of painting, and to investigate how an unsophisticated approach, such as supercharging, was a low brow challenge to paintings position and an attempt to engage in a conceptual dialogue with it. However, painting quickly becomes something else when tested; installation, sculpture, mural, banner, graffiti, kinetic art, and so on. Attempts by contemporary painters to deviate from the standard format of paint-on-canvas draws attention to the deviation and surreptitiously reaffirms the standard from which it deviates.

To begin an understanding of the resilience of painting, I will first examine a rhetorical question posed by Jan Verwoert in his 2005 article and lecture ‘Why are conceptual artists painting again? Because they think it’s a good idea’.39 The article raises the ongoing problem of medium specificity versus conceptuality in artistic practice. It considers the effect of attitudes throughout high modernism which elevated the position of painting and considers how ‘ever since that doctrine was challenged’ (via Post-modernism) ‘it has been the fate of painting as a medium to provide the forum for all arguments about the road that art should follow in the future’. While modernist doctrine may have elevated paintings status, and post-modernism challenged it, contemporary art has reaffirmed paintings resilience, facilitating meaningful contestation of conceptuality. The stoicism of painting as a medium is not to be confused with, as Verwoert posits, its changed status in relation to attitudes within contemporary art, where ‘art can only exist as a concept and must be evaluated in terms of its conceptual performance alone’.

The separation of art from its medium and the increased requirement for institutional discourse relegates artistic ‘practice’ to a meaningless position, in favour of ‘the art of conceptual gesture’ which can ‘rewrite history… by its transparent argument’. It places an expectation of a unique and historically significant moment of gesture, something that changes the ‘significance of artistic work’. It is a notion of art predicated on a few great moments, rather than continuity. For Verwoert, modernist painting entered a period of ‘the game of the great man in competition to see who will finish first’, and that ‘post-modernism fell into a pattern of ridiculing, mocking the tradition of the black canvas…. but, works that mock don’t offer an alternative’.40 Both Verwoert and writer Svetlana Boym, who developed the idea of the Off-modern, are both advocates for an alternative exploration of the modernist legacy due to its engagement with ongoing artistic process instead of pure conceptual gesture;

40 Ibid; ‘mocking the tradition of the black canvas’ is discussed here: Jan Verwoert, The Glasgow School of Art, ‘Why are conceptual artists painting again? Because they think it’s a good idea’, online video, last accessed 31 October, 2018, https://vimeo.com/60549110.
albeit within a conceptual framework.\footnote{Svetlana Boym, \textit{Architecture of the off-modern} (New York: Princeton Architectural, 2012).} That, while the black canvas could represent the ‘end of a male escape fantasy, you return to the canvas again and again’, this is modernism operating in a different modality, summarised by this following passage:

‘The question of painting returns like dirty laundry, again and again. You have to deal with those questions. And rather than fantasising with the possibility of being done with them once and for all, what is much more courageous, is to deal with them. No win, just play.’\footnote{Verwoert, \textit{The Glasgow School of Art}.}

The power shift from connoisseurship to institutional discourse has impacted heavily upon understandings of contemporary art. If medium specificity is a redundant criterion for art analysis, then we may consider how conceptual practice operates within painting. To satisfy the contemporary art requirement of intuitional critique there must be conceptual recognition of the intention by an artist to make artwork in a non-medium specific manner, especially if this artist identifies with (via institutional validation and peer recognition) being a painter. A painter can make this clear foremost by not making paintings, therefore allowing the painter to return to painting in context of a broader conceptual exploration. Preferably, the painter will make work that deviates from the standard (paint on canvas), but, if the standard is to be used then a clear contemporary concept must be evident. However, the \textit{standard} (paint on canvas) remains as the central point for deviation, reaffirming the lingering notion of modernisms medium specificity. If we consider Michel Foucault and Kim Dovey’s views on power (explored in Chapter 1), where levels of power rely on the ability to be masked, then the institutions we identify as being powerful (universities, curators, state-based institutions) are possibly masking other more influential levels of power (globalisation, corporate influence, international frameworks), and the frameworks we use (white cube gallery, and the painted canvas) support such masked institutions of power.

Here, we should examine the condition and meaning of the word ‘contemporary’ and how this relates to institutional structures. If it is to be understood through its historical meaning, and general usage, then it is the temporal notion of ‘present-ness’ underpinning current notions of art. This takes the Krauss / Buchloch ‘post-medium condition’ one step further, to Peter Osborne’s notion of the ‘post-conceptual condition’. This shift is summarised in the following passage:

‘The displacement of the postmodern by the contemporary as the fundamental category of the historical present follows not merely from the discrediting of the postmodern as a temporal and critical concept – and the need to fill the conceptual space it vacated – but, more importantly, from the globalisation of the resurgent concept of modernity in response to the actual historical process that underlay postmodernism’s critical demise: namely, world capitalism after 1989.’\footnote{Peter Osborne, \textit{The Postconceptual Condition}, 11.}

The relationship between a global concept of modernity, the demise of post-modernism and the rise of global capitalism are the drivers behind contemporary art, in Osborne’s view. This situation, if correct, puts globalised capital trade and the belief in open markets central to the underlying notions and ethics of contemporary art in general. It is interconnected with global concepts of free-trade, multi-culturalism, human rights, and international dialogue. According to Osborne, with some borrowing from Frederick Jameson, ‘contemporaneity is the temporal
structure that articulates the temporal unity of global modernity.\textsuperscript{44} That is, the values inherent within contemporary art align with, and are resultant from the mechanisms of globalisation. An idealism residing within global modernity, as Osborne also suggests, is that notions of global social equity are displacing moralities previously championed by religion.\textsuperscript{45} This aligns with principles of social equity within many art institutions, and a belief system within international cultural relationships; including nationally owned universities, national galleries, biennales, curators, and the vast increases of doctorate artists. Therefore, the contemporary art market becomes an indicator of successfully representing democratic design due to its ability (the product or concept) to uphold the current key principles of trade in world markets. And, painting does this very successfully, not because of its ability to convey the conceptual thinking of our current temporal existence, but due to its ability to simultaneously uphold the idealisms of globalised culture, while referencing historical canons, and conveying an aura of the individual.

The complexities arising from our relationship with international culture and the role of individual identity influences two predominant modes of operation, of which, this project engages with; difference and design-utopia. Difference is constituted by concepts of otherness, as explored by Jameson through his discussion regarding the ‘ideology of difference’.\textsuperscript{46} And, is brought forward in Osborne’s notion of ‘the colonial modern’, which includes a consideration of post-colonialism, body politics and identity politics in relation to ‘the spatial framework of anti-colonial nationalisms.\textsuperscript{47} Design is a re-enforcement of the present-ness found in non-representational modernist related artwork and aligns with the principles of IKEA’s democratic design (with a possible exception to the principle of ‘low cost’). It is an engagement with re-invented notions of an unfinished form of idealistic Utopia. And, has widely been adopted within contemporary architecture, commercial merchandising and advertising, and the design packaging of high-technology.

We could sceptically consider that the art of difference re-enforces notions of the democratic not via its content but by its frameworks. That the institutional structures and morality implicit within contemporary art are especially reinforced by facilitating expressions of difference; in which, the so-called art world assists in the preparation and credentialisation of otherness for absorption within the globalised trade of the middle class.\textsuperscript{48} The culture industry ‘subdues [individuals] unruliness and subordinates them to the formula which supplants the work’.\textsuperscript{49} Together, social capital and the globalised market are successfully expanded by difference and design and, in turn, expand the institutional structures that develop from the post-medium / post-conceptual condition, which are caressing our sense of social capital through an implied notion of arriving at a non-political utopia.

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid p11. For further expansion of this topic see Part 1. Time of the Present 1. Or, the Cultural Logic of High Capitalism Today, 3-13.
\textsuperscript{45} ‘Capitalism as religion’. Ibid, 111.
\textsuperscript{47} Osborne, The Postconceptual Condition, 26.
\textsuperscript{48} In sociology, the term ‘middle class’ is considered to be somewhat outdated. But there is no clear consensus on how this should be replaced. In this context, my use of the term is related to the general concept of the middle class, who live with relative comfort, security and prosperity.
The origins of utopia in art evolve from the ideology of socialism, and is associated with idealistic notions of widespread and fair-minded social change. Utopia found its way into fictional literature of the twentieth century, and in particular in the socio-political changes of the late 1960s, which saw a vital range of micro-political movements (neighbourhood, race, ethnic, gender, and ecological) whose common denominator is the resurgent problematic of Nature in a variety of (often anticapitalist) forms. Frederick Jameson famously centralised this discussion around notions of spatialisation, which is ‘the will to use and subject time to the service of space’. It has the ability to ‘take away a capacity to think “time and history” and opens a door onto a whole new domain for libidinal investment of the utopian and even proto-political type’. My contemporary re-interpretation of spatialisation is that it encapsulates the way in which conceptual art instigated a present-ness of the material object, where time becomes redundant due to the concept being the central notion of the art work. Formalism also creates contemporary responses relative to spatialisation, where present-ness is inherent in the psychological impact of formalist works of art. Jameson satirically suggested that there was an underground network of artists and writers engaged in an unacknowledged ‘party of utopia’, of which such members cannot be revealed as their program was yet to be identified, although he does suggest that within utopianism is ‘an aesthetic ideology’. He, also suggests that paintings’ shifts throughout modernism was an incomplete project of utopia interrupted by the disjunction of post-modernism and an engagement with institution.

A useful example of shifting concerns within late-modernist painters is the work of Robert Irwin. Through the 1950’s his painting practice quickly moved through stages of exploration; figurative, Abstract Expressionism, minimal abstraction, and spatial practice. His thought processes are explained in detail through conversations with Lawrence Weschler in the book Seeing is Forgetting the Name of the Thing One Sees, published in 2008. Irwin gives the reader a vivid account of his own creative process at a seminal time in 1960’s, now considered the beginning of the Light and Space movement. His interest in the subtleties of minimal lines on the canvas eventually developed towards a focus on the wall surrounding it. Photographic documentation of Irwin’s studio shows an empty gallery-like space totally removed of any distraction, materials and interruptions. He had a gruelling process of subtly changing lines on a painting, meditating on their effect, and evaluating the result. Eventually, this would lead Irwin towards a clear engagement with the gallery wall. The architecture and space surrounding the display conditions of painting became the new canvas. Evident within the discussions with Irwin is how the white cube gallery becomes central to the shift from the pictorial concerns of easel painting towards the edges of the painting and its relationship to the gallery wall. Irwin took these concerns to the logical extreme, by leaving painting behind and collapsing the visual edges of the artwork toward the architectural space of the gallery wall (Fig. 20). He would develop further, leaving the gallery

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51 Jameson, Postmodernism, 160.
52 Ibid, 154.
54 Ibid, 180.
56 Ibid.
walls and studio behind for some time, before returning to engage with architecture, institution and conceptual space.

Figure 20. Robert Irwin, *Untitled*, 1969.

An ongoing disruption to contemporary art institutions is the online world. It has enabled a vast deployment of images that are not contained under the same controls as the contemporary post-conceptual art world. In Hito Steyerl’s examination of the function of the ‘poor image’ she ‘reveals the conditions of their marginalisation’ as ‘illicit or degraded’ and attests to their displacement from a ‘class society of images’ as having to do with the ‘post-socialist and postcolonial restructuring of nation states, their cultures and their archives’, thus indicating the socio-global moral positioning embedded within contemporary art and the underbelly of uncomfortable non-democratic, non-capitalist, pro-nationalist, and extremist ideas that it supresses.\(^\text{57}\) Since the article was published (2009), the concept of the ‘poor’ image is a little richer; fuelled by faster connectivity, higher resolution phone cameras, and image sharing platforms, while the role of the maligned idea through anonymous images, remains. This dispersal of anonymous, digitally degraded and copyright infringed material, reveals ‘all the contradictions of the contemporary crowd: its opportunism, narcissism, desire for autonomy and creation, its inability to focus or make up its mind, its constant readiness for transgression and simultaneous submission’. This new institution of images has given the postconceptual condition a more diverse and contradictory edge, where sanctioned visual material is interspersed with rogue material ‘no longer anchored within a classical public sphere mediated and supported by the frame of the nation, state or corporation, but floats on the surface of temporary and dubious data pools’. And, not only does this have an effect on our exposure to images in expeditious ways, it pixelates our comprehension of the outside world.

The velocity of image sharing through social media platforms may also create a type of virtual distortion towards our relationship to the offline world. Several news stories have reported the deaths of travellers that have slipped while trying to capture an ambitious selfie.\(^\text{58}\) For those unfortunate few, their online world is disrupted by their fatality. The level of physical disconnection from our surrounding environments is evident within such moments. Online profile’s may, at times, represent real-time moments, but often as an


'image'. Travelling photos may be less about site-seeing, and more about being 'site-seen'. Within this state of distracted presentness, exacerbated by the demands of an online existence, including relentless push notifications, fake news stores, and irresistible cat memes, it is truly inspirational that anyone has the time to paint. It may be, that part of the attraction and enduring success of painting is the ability to capture presentness-over-time. This may give the distracted mind some hope of being able to find those clear and uninterrupted moments offline. If somebody else has found time to paint, then I just might too.

Although painting must deal with its conceptual requirements, it must also meet its aesthetic obligations. This exposes some problems that Formalism presented for art theory and still does for painting, as Osborne states, that the ‘concept of art retains a necessary reference to (an) irreducibly “aesthetic” aspect of the artwork—that is, a kind of sensuous individuality that cannot in principle, be grasped by conceptual forms’. Or alternatively, painting needs to suspend a conceptual standpoint, while maintaining, in some part, a visual structure not requiring critical thought.

We could consider Osbornes reference to ‘sensuous individuality’ in terms intimacy. There are possibly two versions of intimacy encountered within painting. The first would be the knowledge of a work being painted by hand. The time and movement across the canvas usually reads as a closeness between the artist and canvas, which subsequently invites the viewer in on this intimacy. Another form of intimacy could be found in the phenomenological response. Writer Lisa Siraganian reconsiders Michael Fried’s (1967) views on minimalism (which he termed ‘literalist art’) in her article ‘Art and Surrogate Personhood’, published in 2017. Siraganian draws attention to Fried’s notion of ‘personal surrogatehood’, which, she claims, was misunderstood by his critics (Hal Foster and others). The arrogant minimal object may stand within a room instigating the viewer to deal its presence, as if it was a person—as portrayed in the 1969 Stanley Kubrick film 2001: A Space Odessey (Fig. 21). Described by Siraganian in the following way, ‘literalist art does tend to imitate human bodies without human souls (that’s the anthropomorphism of literalism) but even when it isn’t actively mimicking persons in that way, it is still somehow unknowable’. In terms of painting, I would suggest that our relationship to technology alters this concept. In which, our relationship to minimal objects, are changed by our knowledge of high-technology, and our response to highly finished surfaces (which appear in streams of artistic painting practice) will be conditioned by our familiarity with technological design, shifting us towards a relationship of intimacy. Although, such intimacy is a surrogate for ourselves which we find reflected through technology in the online world.

59 Peter Osborne, The postconceptual condition, 93.
The painted canvas is an efficient display system for art and a convenient physical, financial and cultural asset for trade. And, painting is also legally stowed away in climate-controlled rooms hidden from the public. According to Steyerl, the increased use of ‘freeport’ lockers (storage units within airport zones, classified as ‘in-transit’) is facilitating the evasion of tax laws and scrutiny, but also represents what ‘traditional autonomous art might have been’. Steyerl takes a similar view of freeport-lockers as she does with the ‘poor image’. It is culture liberated from the controls of the contemporary art institutions where:

‘Art’s conditions of possibility are no longer just the elitist ‘ivory tower’, but also the dictator’s contemporary art foundation, the oligarch’s or weapons manufacture’s tax-evasion scheme, the hedge fund’s trophy, the art student’s debt bondage, leaked troves of data, aggregate spam, and the product of huge amounts of unpaid ‘voluntary’ labour – all of which results in art’s accumulation in freeport storage spaces and its physical destruction in zones of war or accelerated privatisation’.

In the examination of both ‘poor images’ and ‘duty free art’, Steyerl confronts the complexity of the current contemporary art world and hints at a complicity within it towards a particular world view that maintains a governing principle of moral goodness, often disregarding the role of art as a social and financial commodity. In both examples, an alternate global culture exists outside of the globalised norms of contemporary art and painting is central to this complexity due to its ability to live online as a ‘poor image’, its central position within art markets, and the influence that vast amounts of financial investment wield on the culture industry.

Within this project painting comes to represent a research stream that considers a complexity between the art market, the shared online image, and the aspirational imaginations found in the socially mobile middle-class and its identifiers. Painting is a reference point to consider how my own works of art may response to the ‘fiction of the contemporary,’ and to consider how the local and traditional are dominated by current global frameworks (Figs. 22&23). This includes considering painting as a form of architecture–of which its inherent principles stimulate the imagination, while possibly allowing a disarmed world view. That is, as Dovey states, ‘most problematic buildings and urban design are often a complex mix of seduction,

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63 Ibid, Chapter 9: Autonomy.
64 Peter Osborne, Anywhere or not at all: philosophy of contemporary art (New York: Verso 2013) 29.
authority, and coercion’ and that ‘the capacity to stimulate desire and to enlarge the public imagination can be crucial to the discourses of power’, of which the painted canvas may facilitate.


Chapter 3: The gallery as a social frame

A clean slate, or the metaphorical ‘blank canvas’ encapsulates notions of an unencumbered fresh start. It fills our imagination with romantic visions of a sublime momentary pause before an act of creative genius, leaving us inspired by our latent potential. While ‘empty art space’ is unlikely to replace the ‘blank canvas’ as an alternate phrase, it holds similar notions of an impending creative incursion into the neutrality of an expectant cultural arena. The standardised white-cube gallery solidified with late-modernism. But, to what extent do ideologies arising from modernism still reside within the contemporary art gallery museum model? And, are there implicit socio-political moralities within the gallery structure that can be characterised as another example of democratic design? By making a comparison between terms synonymous with today’s galleries, museums, and homes, such as ‘timelessness’ and ‘sophistication’, I will seek to enlighten discussion around the converging ambitions of an internationally connected class of home owners and the contemporary art world. And, will consider the potential outcomes of an ‘anti-museum’, or museum critical approach, within my own practice. A consideration of the gallery in relation to other arenas of display (living room and painted canvas) is an ambitious undertaking. However, this research is not intended to give an exhaustive account of the history and function of the gallery, per se, rather than to establish if certain conditions arise via the parameters of the gallery format that may influence broader cultural ideas.

Unlike the ‘blank canvas’ the white cube always returns to its neutral state, ready for the next iteration of its own possibilities. The gallery lives in a self-imposed stasis of time, to the extent that an image recording the artwork distinguishes time more readily than the space itself. Photography and film reveal history via their integral qualities of colour, film grain or digital time stamp. The gallery achieves timelessness via the labour of fastidious cultural rehabilitation workers who repatriate each cultural intervention with a putty knife and white paint. They come and go like mystical healers applying ointment to the scabs and grazes of cultural discussion. How many noble mystics across the globe are repairing white walls right now? Post-exhibition activity renders time impotent beneath fresh paint, reinstating neutrality, and erasing recent history. Such activity gives some insight into the function of the gallery, of which was explored in detail by Brian O’Doherty in 1976.

65 Brian O’Doherty discusses the history of the white cube as resulting from developments in painting through Realism and Impressionism. He particularly focuses a transition from the illusionist concerns of easel painting to the modernist painter’s concern with flatness, where in the 50’s and 60’s the physical edge of a painting was in dialogue with the white gallery wall. Inside the White Cube. p27. Both historians Elena Filipovic and Charlotte Klonk, argue that the white cube gallery become an accepted exhibition model throughout the 1930’s. The Museum of Modern Art in New York along with Nazi occupied Germany both adopted white walls at this time. It wasn’t until post World War II that France and Britain adopted the same model. The widespread use of the white cube gallery model in Western Society was widespread during 50’s and 60’s; its institutional qualities would come under greater scrutiny during the post-modern period in the 1970’s. Charlotte Klonk, Niklas Maak, Thomas Demand, ‘The White Cube and Beyond’, Tate etc. issue 21: Spring 2011, last accessed 10 May 2019, https://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/articles/white-cube-and-beyond Elena Filipovic, ‘The Global White Cube’, OnCurating.Org, ‘Politics Of Display’ Issue 22: April 2014. 45-63, last accessed 10 May 2019, http://www.on-curating.org/issue-22-43/the-global-white-cube.html#.XNTH76ZS_GI

66 Democratic Design is a term borrowed from IKEA’s brand mantra. In this context, it is used to underline the sanctioned, or generalised social aims, at the centre of international cultural relations in visual art, design and architecture. These aims run parallel to the aims UN charter.
Originally published in *Artforum* as a three-part series of articles, ‘Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space’ traces the history of visual art display from the salon days, dominated by illusionistic easel painting, to the establishment of the white cube - and considers the underlying principles of such a shift. A revision of O’Doherty’s influential criticism may give historical insight into the potential shifts between the display ideology of modernism to that of contemporary art. The timeless gallery has seen time pass. It has witnessed the slump of Formalism, the passing of post-modernism, the acceptance of the ‘contemporary’, and a recent dazzling increase of gallery museums, both public and private, across the globe. The world is vastly different to that of the nineteen fifties, sixties and seventies, yet the gallery has successfully accommodated, indeed thrived, amongst such changes. Why is the white cube so resilient? Did contemporary art cannibalise the ideology of Modernism for its own purposes? Or, are there ideologies laying within the fabric of contemporary art practice that are the unfinished business of Modernism? And, if so, does this suggest that modernism is ‘operating in a different mode’ (as indicated by Peter Osborne, Jan Verwoert, and Svetlana Boym - see Chapter 2). However, before considering questions of modernism we should return to O’Doherty’s ‘ideology of the gallery’ to develop a response.

‘Unshadowed, white, clean, artificial – the space is devoted to the technology of aesthetics. Works of art are mounted, hung, scattered for study. Their ungrubby surfaces are untouched by time and its vicissitudes. Art exists in a kind of eternity of display, and though there is lots of ‘period’ (late modern), there is no time. This eternity gives the gallery a limbo-like status; one has to have died already to be there.’

If the home is ‘our first universe’, the gallery may be our last; recycling us in a never ending ‘eternity of display’.

Throughout O’Doherty’s three essays we get recurring direct and indirect correlations with religion. This has significance for a number of reasons; it implies that there is an underlying social morality within its structure and suggests there are overlooked forces of control operating beyond normal levels of consciousness. Dogma takes place of questions. Systems become invisible structures re-enforcing beliefs. According to O’Doherty, the gallery perpetrates a mythical narrative that we are ‘spiritual beings’, which overlooks our normal human activities and failures. When in ‘modernist galleries, and in churches, one does not speak in a normal voice; one does not laugh, eat, drink, lie down, or sleep; one does not get ill, go mad, sing, dance, or make love’. From this, we can deduce that the modernist-born white cube gallery is a space respected by the community and represents an idealistic and ritualistic arena for social interchange.

Religious ideologies are no less apparent within contemporary art. Philosopher Peter Osborne’s contemporary critique of the gallery-museum-biennial model also beats a path in the direction of religion. He suggests that cities raise a ‘Christological spectre’ due to a belief that ‘every terminated biennial is only a biennial waiting to be reborn; just as every city without a biennial is a site of a virtual biennial-to-come’. It is the repeated structure of the gallery system that Osborne considers the ‘religious naturalism of this spectre’, systems of art world become ‘a religious temporality of expanded production’ and are ‘culturally

69 O’Doherty, ibid.
entropic’.\textsuperscript{71} Or put more concisely the gallery system is ‘a new form of ‘capitalism as religion’’.\textsuperscript{72}

![Figure 24. Screenshot, Bruce Almighty, 2003.](image)

It is not only scholarly thinkers who see connections between religion and gallery ideology. The director of the 2003 American fantasy comedy \textit{Bruce Almighty} cast Morgan Freeman in the role of God.\textsuperscript{73} His ‘office’ is the entire open-plan floor of a downtown warehouse, which has white painted walls, glossy white floors, white plinth-like boxes around columns, large industrial windows and an industrial white ladder (Fig. 24). While seated behind his white designer desk and designer chair, he proclaims to Bruce, ‘I am god’. The scene draws upon the ‘warehouse gallery’ to convey godliness while being reminiscent of a biennial, an artist run space, or commercial gallery. In this scene, the film demonstrates the level of our cultural attribution to ideas of social goodness within the gallery format. We know, through phrases such as ‘Soho syndrome’ that run-down industrial complexes on the fringes of cities can be transformed by creatives. They do this through design, dialogue, social inclusion and the etiquette’s associated with the consumption of coffee. Such activities transform neighbourhoods with cool excitement, dynamic activity, increased recognition and eventual gentrification. The simple template of the white cube often plays a considerable role in the transformation of urban localities.

In principle, we are accepted into the gallery regardless of our social background, most likely on the basis of being suitably dressed and respectfully curious. This is a ‘type of behaviour traditionally required in religious sanctuaries, where what is important is the repression of individual interests in favour of the interests of the group’.\textsuperscript{74} The sacrifice of individualism for the benefit of the group, leads us to a notion of the ‘democratic’. If we set aside the governmental use of term of democracy in favour of a nuanced social use of the word (including within the visual arts, architecture and design) we may arrive closer to an understanding of the implicit morality within the gallery museum model.

As explored earlier, through IKEA’s mantra of ‘democratic design’ there is a clear intention to satisfy consumer notions of social equity within their marketing. Similarly, galleries and museums frequently use language to reinforce our expectations of their social function,

\textsuperscript{71} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{72} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{73} Tom Shadyac, ‘Bruce Meets God’ \textit{Bruce Almighty}, 2003, directed by Tom Shadyac, (US: Universal Pictures, 2003), DVD.
\textsuperscript{74} O’Doherty, \textit{Inside the White Cube}, 10.
particularly towards ideas of social equity. For example, the Louvre Abu Dhabi (opened in 2013) claims to have created a ‘museum rooted in universal human values’ and is a place to experience ‘the stories of human creativity that transcend individual cultures or civilisations’ with the aim to ‘induce respect, curiosity and self-reflection’. The architectural design of the museum is intensely reliant on the white cube. Unlike the Bilbao Guggenheim, which is ‘starchitect-ly’ designed on the outside (by Frank Gehry) and fettered with white cubes within, the Louvre Abu Dhabi is both ‘white cube’ inside and out, save for its seaward meandering and a squat domed roof. The white cube dominates our contemporary gallery model and its language, design and function are mostly unchanged nearly half a century after O’Doherty’s analysis. Today’s ‘ideology of the gallery’ appears consistent with the aims of modernism–albeit without a medium-specific focus. Social values consistent with the gallery bare resemblance to those perpetrated in international designer marketing, which has coincided with a rapid rise in the role of contemporary art across the world; of which I shall return.

The interchangeability between notions of consumer products and cultural significance should attract our critical attention. If we analyse the language of the gallery and the consumer marketing strategies of big business together—we may begin to understand to what level internationalisation is occurring within our personal, local and national identities. However, such consideration also requires we consider that the gallery model is likely to be influencing design strategies that change our home environments too, and therefore our local culture. That is, if the gallery has enduring success in representing notions of equity, spirituality, timelessness, and sophistication, it must stand to reason that these qualities are also desirable in the marketing of products for use within the home of the middle-class, especially within the living room. Within the home—where architecture is under the control of the individual—there is a current pervasive mid-century modernist trend that communicates similar values associated with places of international cultural significance. It is worth considering a more detailed account of the strategies used within international cultural systems and their underlying function. Big business marketing is very adept at understanding demographics. By appealing to beliefs, desires and political views a company’s in-house mantra, may get a potential buyer over-the-line. We may become convinced that flat-packed products, shipped across the world, made of chipboard and veneer, are responsibly and ethically made within a socially considered framework. I may stand there gazing into a glass vitrine, transfixed by the automated ram pushing itself repetitively into a formed plywood POÄNG designer chair and be amazed by its low price and visual appeal—while considering my last lingering questions are about ethics and quality—only to have them addressed within ‘values-based narratives’. In the case of IKEA, their social narrative is underscored by the branding of national identity. Subtly, there is an implication that if someone is making-a-buck, it is a benevolent sophisticate with the noble ambitions derived from a socially democratic Scandinavian country. Yet this is folly bolstered by modernist aesthetics. By using design and language previously associated with notions of high-art, born out of the mid-to-late twentieth century—when prosperity in the United States of America boomed and capitalist democracies were on the way to become the clear winner in an ideological war with communism—we are seduced into buying the ideologies of modernism, overlaid with a contemporary moral relativism. But, should our consumer decisions matter? Can our consumerism just be written-off as glib and fashionable acts of inconsequence? In some cases, yes. Although, big business has identified the power of ‘values-based narratives’
and actively targets our core values and beliefs to generate connections beyond our attraction to this year’s trending colour palette, suggesting our decisions are determined by our beliefs.

IKEA’s ‘values-based narratives’ can be seen within the ‘chuck out the chintz’ marketing campaign launched in the United Kingdom in 1997.76 An advertising firm (St Lukes) was commissioned to improve IKEA’s image in the United Kingdom, where the market research identified that ‘60% of the market were traditionally minded and disliked anything foreign and new’, ‘30% were more innovative…and 10% were undecided’.77 The campaign aimed to polarise the public by alienating the traditionally minded, who had ‘flowery-patterned coverings—commonly known as “chintz”, and ‘filled their already crowded homes with fake antiques—also known as “chintz”. This campaign was designed to motivate their customer base and force the undecided ones to make a decision. Here, IKEA ‘advocated a more modern style that would give people a new identity and change the homes of Britain’.78 Blue and yellow bins were installed on the streets to inspire the disposal of old furniture (Fig. 25). The campaign ran only once, with such success, that the phrase ‘chuck out the chintz’ was referred to for many years.

![Figure 25. IKEA’s ‘Chuck out the Chintz’ Campaign - TV Advertisement, 1996.](image)

There is nothing new in social values being exploited within product marketing strategies. However, the difference in this circumstance is that morality coalesces within a defined global aesthetic, that pejorates the traditional. Cultural legacies become characterised as nostalgia. Patriotism is implicated as a form of fanaticism. Refined antiques become unsophisticated relics. Chucking out the ‘chintz’ revolutionises the hierarchy of classes. It grows the middle-class base within a ‘how-to system’ of sophistication and gives mobility to those previously indebted to the past. This is remarkable, considering that the history of modernist aesthetics is not derived from aristocracy, religion, monarchy, or authoritarianism, it is derived from the utopian ambitions and ideals of architects, artists, designers, writers, theorists and philosophers, in response to rapid technological and social change.

If the interior of the home is under a utopian spell of modernist ideals that signify global inclusiveness and accessibility, then the gallery is its public equivalent. The gallery is a universal model of noble ambition, that straddles across spirituality, knowledge, and

77 Ibid.
78 Ibid.
pedagogy through a complex arrangement of elitism, social capital, and inclusiveness derived from social values. It is a connection point, a portal. If only the lavatories enabled teleportation, we could vanish from a cubicle in the National Gallery of Victoria to access another contemporary gallery on the other side of the world, comfortably strut around and pop-back to the loo, only to re-appear somewhere else. All—the-while wearing the same clothes, talking the same way, seeing the same artists, the same TV screens, the same framing systems, hanging systems, projectors, designer chairs, LED lighting, smartphones, and white walls – all of which are being tendered by their diligent human repatriates. We may notice subtle variations in skirting boards, power points, floor coverings, and ceiling beams. But generally speaking, we could experience one continuous exhibition and would likely perform such travel without arousing suspicion.

The opportunities of international connection through the gallery are not only attractive to the middle and emerging classes, the uber-wealthy have found value within the white cube too. If there is a global template of sophistication for the rich, it is the private museum. Our rich, no longer distinguish themselves via conspicuous consumption. Their wealth was previously flaunted with luxury boats, fast cars, holiday islands, and jet planes. While this still exists, the private museum is the new ‘billionaires’ must-have’. Many wealthy elites have turned to contemporary art for investment and exchanged some of their conspicuous consumption for cultural capital. ‘Today’s mega-collectors have become the tastemakers of our time’, in some way, through their ability to influence the reputation of artists and support culture through philanthropic styling. They supersede the role of curator and have more buying power than national institutions.

Australia has numerous private museums that rival state collections and Hobart’s Museum of Old and New Art (MONA) is significant, not only for its dramatic impact on Tasmania’s tourist economy, but also for its successful challenge of the white cube model. MONA switched off the lights and up-ended godliness. The ‘emotional quietude of the white cube was reversed,’ accompanied with a constant flow of wine (from the onsite winery) and live music. Not only does MONA’s strategy re-frame the artwork within, it is an attempt to better execute notions of democratic inclusion, and successfully identifies the associated values that surround the art world (wine, food, music and design). By removing modernist notions of sophistication and institutionalised control, including exhaustive academic language to support the work, the Mona team wanted the artwork to speak for itself, to ‘generate wonderment, curiosity, independent thought and discussion;’ for art to be seen ‘as a transformative force.’ A qualitative evaluation of visitor experience was conducted by Adrian Franklin and Nikos Papastergiadis and published in their article ‘Engaging with the anti-museum? Visitors to the Museum of Old and New Art’. The research concluded that MONA’s ‘anti-museum’ approach successfully accomplished its goals with an overwhelming majority of regular and first-time contemporary art viewers having positive experiences, and with 30% reporting a ‘life-changing’ experience. The anti-museum approach (in the case of MONA at least) focuses on the transformative quality of the gallery through social inclusion, while consciously and experimentally seeking improvements on the white cube to deliver on

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80 Ibid.
82 Ibid.
such embedded ideas; which confirms the existence of such beliefs (of social and moral goodness) being associated with the white cube. Such seemingly universal notions are consistent with modernism, and further develops utopian notions within contemporary art.

The enduring concept of a fair society underpins many political and social ideologies. Such concepts are often characterised as utopian, owing to Thomas More’s engaging fictional account of a perfectly organised society living on the island of Utopia. Notes of a perfect society are alluring and seemingly noble. Is this what the gallery does? The white cube and its’ anti-museum counterparts may actually provide real change to people’s lives, and facilitate international connections, social improvement, and dialogue towards a fair and equitable society. It may provide meaningful wonderment, enrichment, knowledge and respect beyond the capitalist advantages it can also entail. There are indications that people across the world are moving toward a homogenous international culture, and for those who can access it, much of it could be considered an international success.

The social ambitions of the gallery, and its underlying ideology, leads me to question and test its laws to better understand its function. When does the art frame the laws of the gallery? And, to what extent do the conditions of the gallery influence other cultural conditions? It is my aim to explore such questions through a low-brow repurposing of design trends within mid-century home interiors, which are likely inspired by the Colour Field paintings of modernism, and re-present them within the gallery to reveal their possibly polarising role as a democratically inspired design-utopia. This methodology uses aesthetic standards as conceptual tropes and engages with an anti-museum, anti-art or anti-design approach, in an attempt to challenge the viewer; while challenging my own attraction to international-style architecture, the white cube gallery, and modernist design trends in contemporary life.

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Conclusion

Contextualised within a contemporary art practice, this dissertation is presented in conjunction with a studio-based investigation, and is centred around three distinct, but inter-related templates for display: the generic living room TV wall unit; the painted canvas; and the gallery. I have considered how each format conditions our reception of cultural information by influencing our sense of individuality, whilst at the same time signalling our inclusion in a unified non-culturally specific world view that is rooted in western modernism. The artworks I have produced in conjunction with this paper have sought to use materials and compositions, intended to provoke awareness of their qualities through using critique and humour (dead-pan). The works operate within a spectrum between the banal and the sublime with the aim of evoking psychological responses that may attach to a viewer’s personal history, concept of taste, aspiration and sense of status. The conception and construction of particular artworks which include, photomontage, sculptural relief works, minimalist-style constructions, video, spatial intervention, sound and installation, have been approached with the intention of reducing the incidence of ‘art-making’ in favour of using compositions derived from functional design with the intention of generating a low-brow anti-art agitation within the margins of visual art, design and architecture.

Within the research, particular consideration has been given to the normalisation of our intimate relationships with technology and related changes in global attitudes—including increasing the value placed upon design within broader popular culture and a contribution to expanded moral notions of social equity. The democratic access promised by the online world also becomes subconsciously associated with the finely-designed smart devices that allow for Internet access to happen. Just as we might mistake information for knowledge, we might also mistake design for democracy. ‘Smart design’ has become increasingly popular, so too has contemporary art. The global currency of inspirational design principles and their association with cultural institutions (such as galleries), displaces religion with contemporary moral principles, including notions of social equity and to some degree spirituality.

A potential risk associated with putting faith in design (as a general principle), is that it is influenced by movements in fashion and hype cycles (unless of course it is consensually perceived as attaining an excellence that somehow transcends its own time to be regarded as ‘timeless’). If the gallery presents itself as democratic, tasteful, and sophisticated—and is a timeless place for purposeful socialising that occurs along the stable path of the white cube—then perhaps minimal design might also be regarded as timeless—(or, at the very least, a new form of classicism). Contemporary artists often play a role within the design world, yet when it comes to making works of art ‘design’ becomes a problematic term, due to its implicit requirement to performing a function. The term ‘design’ is often avoided unless addressed directly within the concept of a work of art. And similarly, contemporary art superficially distances itself from explicit corporate involvement. Yet the wealthy private art museum builders who benefit from internationalised trade certainly have a great influence upon contemporary art. Fashion, design, and architecture all surround contemporary art and our major galleries like a reaffirming impassive force. It is a form a ‘noble rot’ that provides part of the allure and helps to over-come the often-cited public confusion about how to understand
post-conceptual work. If we feel good before we go in, and we feel good when we leave, then the complexity of the work becomes effectively secondary.

There are already signs that the social equity tied to modernist utopianism and minimalist design is being targeted for change. In 1997, IKEA’s ‘Chuck out the Chintz’ campaign challenged their potential customers to throw away their old furniture for a brighter future. This was a deliberate campaign of cultural intervention aimed at people’s insecurities around concepts of taste. Now, it has come full circle. The recently released 2019 IKEA catalogue campaign (released in August 2018) is based upon the notion of debunking ‘the myth of minimalism’. The floral coverings and Victorian shaped furniture that were targeted as unfashionable relics of the past in ‘Chuck out the Chintz’, now feature in this year’s catalogue (perhaps they should call it ‘Mulch the Minimal’); clutter is back!! This may not necessarily point towards anything, other than IKEA confirming that they are a big business motivated by profit and will use any means to sustain profit growth. Or, it may signal a shift away from a generic internationalism reflected within the nationalistic decisions bringing about Brexit and the current American President. Again, IKEA’s strategy is to change attitudes around design to entice us into throwing our stuff away, to buy more. This becomes symptomatic of the global problem of internalised cultural influence exerted by entities collecting data on our actions via the Internet, where the depth of data is useful enough to predict our next, herd-like, moves; or worse, determine them. It is my proposition that while there is widespread support for international social equity, modernism and minimalism will continue to be dominant as an aesthetic representation of democratic freedoms. Although, if regionalism develops as a reaction to an increasing homogeneity with international culture, we will see aesthetic trends away from the so-called neutrality of the minimal interior and possibly the white cube, towards locally responsive aesthetics and designs.

It is, however, probably safe to assume that the living room will continue to feature sofas, lighting, heating, and a display-and-consumption dialogue with the broader world. Meanwhile, painting will continue to be a form of cultural and financial currency, a representation of human intimacy, and at times, a living room decoration. The gallery model will presumably continue on, although it is hitherto unknown whether neutrality and timelessness continue to function as an implicit vehicle for promoting a democratically centred sense of morality. The gallery will most likely adapt to accompany new forms of power and taste presented in concert with utopian visions of a supposedly equitable world.

We were phenomenologically prepared for smart-screen technology years ago via the television. We were also primed through science fiction and utopian principles of design towards fantastical imaginations. The parental reassurance of the television had the benefit of ‘on or off’—something our devices rarely do. Today, to realise Warhol’s famous prediction, everyone is famous, everyone is watching (often themselves), and everyone has an opinion. Through large amounts of information there is an ability to diminish empirical evidence as some form of belief system, where global warming is a debate about whether-you-believe-in-it, instead of a discussion about how to attain correct and evaluable evidence. Complexity is

84 Noble rot is a necrotrophic fungus called botrytis. It attaches to the bruised flesh of a grape after it has been damaged by frost. It is often used to create a sweet sticky desert wine due to the higher sugar content created by the fungus. Source: Madeline Puckette, ‘They Call it “Noble Rot” (Botrytis)’ Wine Folly, last accessed 31 October, 2018, https://winefolly.com/tutorial/they-call-it-noble-rot-botrytis/.
re-packaged within digestible and dissolvable simplicities. And consequently, we no longer need to consider a future in a timeless world. With past, present and future are all available at once through the Internet—all easily searchable and recallable like phantasmagorically resolved memories. Our faith in technological advances—along with sleek design—reassures us that computers, algorithms and artificial intelligence can solve problems emanating from growth, prosperity and consumption. So, we put our faith in good design. And, whilst at home, we augment our physical reality with inspirational design. We make our world look good and feel better within self-contained living spaces—all fitted with affordable lighting, air temperature control, reclining chairs, thriving pot-plants and large double-glazed windows. And, if this all gets a bit much, we can always stare thoughtfully into our fully integrated log-fire heating system. Perhaps, all the comfort, reassurance and aesthetic pleasure that we need is already right here in our living rooms.

Figure 27. Luke Adams, Completion Seminar Install - detail, 2018.

Figure 28. Luke Adams, Completion Seminar Install - detail, 2018.
Appendix

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