

*Invitation* an exhibition of work by Alison Jones and Annie Whiles

An invitation to do what - an exhibition of works of art usually provides the viewer with an opportunity to look at what is on display. We might assume a sense of purpose, and want to consider ourselves in relation to what we can see.

Although I have to say through my own experience of looking at art I do not always understand what it is; what am I supposed to do with the experience of looking at something called art? Is there a correct or a more efficient way to figure it out? Do I think about myself or about the artist's reason for making the work; I am not sure. The work of art is like a residue of something that remains that becomes what it is; itself. And I don't think there is a right way to think about that.

Alison Jones looks at images published in *W* magazine online, and represents these images through a series of pale, almost translucent paintings. She knows what she is doing; she is setting a scene. Her brush strokes are light, invincible. They land on the surface of the paper and destroy the clean white surface forever. As the brush strokes settle into the paper I can see what I think I am meant to see; a room full of people drinking wine, smoking cigarettes, having a conversation about whatever they are having a conversation about. In the background and in the foreground there are objects that look like art, and other objects that look like interior decoration. Now they have all become a part of the same scene. I can only imagine this world; a world of private views for ladies that lunch, and for people who know what money can buy; an intermediate transcendental experience, or a moment away from the hoi polloi.

Annie Whiles looks at arrangements of things that have been placed on or around specific pieces of furniture. There is no way of knowing to what extent these arrangements have been discovered like this, or are they only what they are now because this is what Whiles has made them all become through a series of carefully constructed linear compositions. Whiles invites us all in to look at a specific moment where a floral arrangement has been placed on a table that seems too small to hold the weight of such a large triumphal gesture, or into another moment where a bed sheet seems to hover above, what looks like a very firm futon, as if it is about to settle down. But we can never be sure it will ever settle down. Isn't that the point of making a work of art that it offers us all an opportunity to think about ourselves and the sort of world we live in?

Bernard Walsh