

**ANDREW BROWNE**

Paintings and Photographs

23rd October - 28th November, 2003 @ **LISTER**

**CALDER GALLERY**

Reviewed by Judith McGrath

Parts of architecture, road signs, power poles, trees and the sky are what contemporary urban dwellers glimpse as they rush through the cityscape on their way from here to there. These pieces of everyday objects, so often ignored, take on a new contemplative aspect when Browne brings them together in his flawless paintings and photographs.

The paintings here employ a limited palette of pale blues, warm greys, white and a solid black panel, a lamp post or tree trunk perhaps, that is found in many of the images. The arrangement of familiar urban glimpses provides a sense of reality but the white light and that black unknown have us considering doorways between one reality and another. The black structure places the work on the edge of the surreal, in mood not imagery. Then the surfaces are smoothly finished so the paint seems to have been breathed, not brushed, onto the canvas. This effect takes us one step closer to the idea of travelling from landscape to mindscape.

In three images from the series *Light Effect*, the artist's black obelisk like structure offers different interpretations. On the right side of the composition *Light Effect: August*, denuded branches of a Plain Tree reach toward a white building on the far left. The natural and constructed elements of the composition are separated by a solid black panel that obscures the source of searing white light. The light is so strong it bleaches the edges of the black object, softening it to suggest it

could be organic, a tree perhaps. In *Light Effect: Cross* we see a tree's topmost branches reaching toward the blue sky but our view is interrupted by an oblique black cross that may be a window frame. These two works could represent the same subject from two points of view; the outsider wanting to get in and the imprisoned looking out. Then the black obelisk is again rendered pliable by bright light in *Light Effect: Russell St.*

The atmospherics of misty dawn, bright days and cool evenings are well depicted but the most effective image of light is found in an untitled work that shows sun rays fallings between the viewer and a billowing dark cloud. It captures the eye, the mind and the emotions. What more do you want?

Browne's photographs are intriguing abstract studies in black and white. Some record sections of the exhibited paintings to offer yet another interpretation of his work. All are complete and highly satisfying works on their own.

It's a brave artist who refrains from telling us what we are supposed to find in such precisely drawn and painted exhibits. Browne does just that, he allows each viewer to discover what they want in his excellent works, making this exhibition a highly satisfying experience.