

Trevor Brett – *Architecture as Threshold*

Visual Description

This exhibit is of 8 oil on canvas paintings by Trevor Brett. I will describe 5 of the works. The paintings are oil on unframed, stretched canvas. They are arranged one to a panel on the large, freestanding gallery panels. There are four double sided panels, covered with a beige carpet-like material, stacked in a line, running north-south. The panel faces also point north-south. The panels are numbered 1 through 8, with 1 being the northernmost panel, 2 being the south facing panel on the rear side of panel 1, and so on, through panel 8 being the southernmost panel.

Trevor Brett recently graduated from the Emily Carr University of Art and Design with a BFA in Visual Arts. His work combines his interest in the significance of imagery and meaning in architectural elements and how the use of colour affects the experience and meaning of these elements. The oil paintings in *Architecture as Threshold* have bold colours and clear shapes, and are framed in a way that makes us think critically about the spaces we inhabit and the monuments we revere.

Panel 1 – Cathedral 1 (36”x30”)

This image is divided into four quadrants by a pink window frame outlined in turquoise. The pink of the frame is the same as the colour of the sky in the image beyond the ‘window frame’. The pink sky and frame have visible brush marks from both the coloured paint and from the gesso underneath. Some other colours in the image, and especially the turquoise frame, are more opaque, as the paints have been applied thickly or in more layers, and do not have brush strokes. The top left quadrant has three rectangular towers, one of which extends beyond the top of the frame, and is outlined in dark purple with a greenish fill. This green is semi-transparent and we can also see the orange colour underneath. The other two towers are shorter, are outlined in a darker purple, and have pale pink triangular roofs. They do not have a distinct fill colour but are pink like the sky behind them. The top right quadrant is taken up with the dome of a large building, with pale purple outlining and an orange roof. The peak of the roof is just beyond the top of the frame. The bottom two quadrants show the lower part of the cathedral-like building arranged to seem like a grid-like series of windows, some of which have pink circles inside the squares. There is a darker dome directly underneath the large dome, but this one has darker purple outlines. In front of this building are many smaller buildings in lighter yellowish-green with pink triangular roofs. These are of various rectangular shapes, some taller, some shorter, some lighter, some darker, giving the appearance of a whole range and depth of buildings.

Panel 2 - Cathedral 2 (30”x36”)

This painting is in portrait orientation and the picture is divided into four quadrants with a foregrounded ‘window frame’. The bright yellow window frame is outlined in red. The sky behind the building and the windows in the building are the same yellow colour as the outer window frame. The scene beyond the window frame is a gothic-like cathedral with the tallest point of its central spire directly behind the middle of the window frame. This tallest section is pale green, with dark purple divisions between the three levels. There is a single arched window in the centre, a smaller arched window or doorway at the bottom, and a row of small arched windows across the upper level. The windows have thin lines outlining the sections like stained glass. On either side of the central piece are thin rectangular turquoise towers with pink peaked roofs. Further down are two more turquoise towers, but much smaller, connected by another pale green wall, this time with two levels. Behind the smaller wall are flying buttresses on either side, stepping up toward their own peaked tips. The buttresses are more transparent and we can see the yellow coming through the turquoise.

Panel 3 - Cathedral 3 (36"x30")

This canvas is in a landscape format and is also framed by a foregrounded 'window frame' with four panes, this time in turquoise with yellow outline. The buildings visible beyond the window are of a less cohesive style, but have elements that are recognizable. In the bottom left quadrant is a dark green colonnaded temple façade with a triangular roof above, like a Greek temple style. In the bottom right is a façade with three orange doorways and a small dome atop the middle door, like a miniature Mosque or prayer hall. Behind these two smaller buildings are two other, matching ones. Behind the Greek temple is a single tower with a viewing gallery near the top in alternating tones of light and dark green. Behind the mosque façade is a larger orange and purple building with a colonnaded front, two Islamic towers on either end, and several small windows. The contrasting colours between the green and purple/orange buildings, set against the turquoise background is striking. The flattened perspective is further complicated by a second set of window frames within the first, this time with purple outline but behind the buildings not in front of them.

Panel 6 – Coliseum (24"x30")

In this vertically-oriented picture, three rows of arched openings, gradually decreasing in size as they go up, are topped by a single dome set with four small squares. Separating each of the levels of arches are dark blue lines that extend to the edge of the frame. The painted frame around the main image is not as window-like as the other paintings and is rather more like a floating frame. The very outside edge of the painting is a medium pink, with purple squares in the four corners of the painting. Set slightly in from there is a dark blue frame that goes around the architectural forms. This dark blue frame overlaps to light blue where it intersects with the purple corner squares and where the other lines intersect. This gives the framing a geometric and also plaid-like feel. The dark colours of the framing contrast with the bright light of the inner image. The inside of the arches are peachy orange and are outlined with red and a light yellow. The walls they are set into are a dark yellow. The big arch at the top is pale yellow outlined in light blue, and across the middle of it are four small orange squares outlined in red. The red lines of the arch outlines are also reflected in some curved red lines at the top corners.

Panel 8 - Temple 1 (30"x24")

The final image in this exhibit is Temple 1. It has a frame in pink around the outside edge, but one that doesn't seem like a window frame as in the other paintings. This one is a straightforward border decorated with a simplified Greek key design in turquoise. The painting shows a main temple, with pink outline and columns, topped by a triangular roof section, and with many pink steps leading down from the front. The steps alternate lighter and darker pink, and appear to change direction toward the right about halfway down. The flat walls on either side of the stairs are yellow, and extend wide at the bottom, tapering toward the building, giving the whole temple the appearance of sitting atop a pyramid. There is a second, smaller temple that sits in the top right corner of the painting. It also sits atop a taller pyramid shape, but is simpler than the main temple building. We see it from the side as just 4 simple columns topped with a flat roof. The smaller temple is also pink with stairs leading down from it, but these stairs we only see from the side. In the foreground is what appears to be a dark pink wall with three different towers along it. One tower has a striped roof and a single window, one has a doorway in it and the tallest one has a peaked roof and a single circular window. The dark blue of the sky behind the temples contrasts with the yellow of the stairs and the dark pink of the foreground buildings.