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# SPECIOUS I SPACIOUS

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*University of Nebraska-Lincoln*

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SPECIOUS | SPACIOUS

by

Amanda Smith

A THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of

The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements

For the Degree of Master of Fine Arts

Major: Art

Under the Supervision of Professor Aaron Holz

Lincoln, Nebraska

March, 2008





## SPECIOUS | SPACIOUS

Amanda L. Smith, M.F.A.  
University of Nebraska, 2008

Advisor: Aaron Holz

The way that I think and the way I develop paintings might qualify as an “obsession to know more by organizing what we know in new ways.”<sup>1</sup> I have a particular attraction to paradoxes and dualities; in order to know something, I need to examine what it is not. This notion establishes the foundation for a relationship between painting and film in my studio practice.

I look to cinema as source material -- visual information to break apart, analyze, and synthesize into new worlds of my own invention. In my paintings, I seek to represent the confusion of spatial experience as mediated by film, by transferring the way an environment is presented in film into the compressed space of a painting. My concern with spatial experience stems in two directions, involving the way that film and like media might interfere with memory, and the way space is built and experienced *for* us in cinema.

By abandoning literal time and space, film mimics memory and internal thought. Films are composed of fragments that suspend and edit time to summarize and heighten emotion. This is similar to the way we experience memories. Remembrance asks that we suspend time to experience the past in the present. In many ways, to remember is to create a new world by evoking things that no longer exist, and never actually existed exactly as we recall. The accessibility of film complicates this issue, in that we now have

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<sup>1</sup> Saltz, Jerry. “Fever Dreams,” *New York Magazine*. Feb 21, 2008

"universal" memories – for example, having a conversation about a film can feel like uncovering a shared past. I am interested in using this collective imagery to create distinctive, imagined scenes.

Painting and film offer completely opposite ways of analyzing spaces in two dimensions. Film is a unique medium, architecturally. Other visual media offer the opportunity for an "all at once" view. We typically understand works and the space that they embody by first seeing a whole, and then examining details. Film reverses that process; we understand space the same way that we understand narrative, building a whole by slowly accumulating its parts.

In painting, I take fragments of places as portrayed in film and combine them into single spaces. The combinations of different locations and juxtaposed interior and exterior environments allow multiple places and times to be viewed and experienced simultaneously. I use sources including film stills and interior-decorating patterns that become constructed maquettes, which I then flatten into a photographic image. The resulting images can confound space, yet be strangely believable. The availability of film and the commonness of its visual tropes add a strange familiar or universal sense to my invented scenes. Through the translation of various sources into painting, I invite exploration into the synthesis of real and contrived environments.





SPECIOUS | SPACIOUS

Amanda L. Smith

University of Nebraska, 2008

Contents of Disk:  
(Photos by Larry Gawel)

**AmandaSmith01.jpg**

untitled, 2007  
oil and acrylic on canvas  
60 x 80 inches

**AmandaSmith02.jpg**

*Marsh*, 2007  
oil and acrylic on canvas  
60 x 74 inches

**AmandaSmith03.jpg**

*Tuwallu*, 2008  
oil and acrylic on canvas  
52.5 x 60 inches

**AmandaSmith04.jpg**

*What's on the leaves ain't dew no more*, 2007  
oil and acrylic on canvas  
45 x 60 inches

**AmandaSmith05.jpg**

untitled, 2007  
oil and acrylic on canvas  
45 x 60 inches

**AmandaSmith06.jpg**

untitled, 2007  
oil and acrylic on canvas  
45 x 60 inches

**AmandaSmith07.jpg**

*Bathysphere*, 2008  
oil and acrylic on canvas  
30 x 64 inches

**AmandaSmith08.jpg**

*Plot*, 2007  
oil and acrylic on canvas  
30 x 40 inches

**AmandaSmith09.jpg**

*Req. Room*, 2008  
oil and acrylic on canvas  
45 x 60 inches

































