

SEAN KELLY

Moore, Alex. "'Cornered' by James White at Max Wigram Gallery, London," *Wallpaper*, June 25, 2012.

Wallpaper*
THE STUFF THAT REFINES YOU

'Cornered' by James White at Max Wigram Gallery, London



Cornered #1, by James White

Critics often wax lyrical about the conceptual weight of an art piece at the expense of the craftsmanship involved in its making. This could easily be the case with the work of London-based artist James White, whose paintings positively invite erudite speculation. His monochrome snapshots of mundane scenes - from messy sinks to plastic packaging from in-flight meals - seem so trite that they cry out for explanation. But this would eclipse the photo-realism of the oil paintings, which is a marvel in itself.

White's latest series of works, claustrophobically titled 'Cornered' (on show at Max Wigram Gallery), focus on the surface of materials, in particular the reflections of objects (glasses, balloons and mirrors), all positioned in corners. The artist's attention to detail is painstakingly meticulous and the results are a testament to the weeks of work that go into each painting.

Of course, when you look at the pieces, you can't help but try to conjure a narrative. Paintings such as *Cornered #1*, a particularly prosaic wet-room plughole, are certain to encourage their fair share of chin-stroking. They also induce an urge in the viewer to zoom out - to see the room in its entirety. In a world in which picture cropping and Photoshopping is the norm, it's a canny way to play with the role of photography, while hammering home the exactitude of his art.