

**JOSEPH DAWS**  
Painting

COVER  
**Untitled (detail)** 2012  
oil on canvas 91.5 x 111.5cm

RIGHT  
**Untitled** 2012  
oil on canvas 91.5 x 76cm



# JOSEPH DAWS

## Painting

QUT Visual Arts PhD Graduation Exhibition

QUT Art Museum  
24th January—10th March 2013

Joseph Daws would like to express his gratitude to the Queensland University of Technology; to Dan Mafe for his support and guidance throughout this research project; to Megan Williams for the catalogue design and to Nathan Shepherdson for his preface to this catalogue.



Untitled 2012  
oil on canvas 91.5 x 76cm



Untitled 2012  
oil on canvas 111.5 x 91.5cm

*still* in front of you

Painting. Try thinking of other art forms where the action is also the object. Language is an arrangement. For instance I have decided that the last word in this sentence will be painting. Clearly painting is word. Is the opposite possible? Can a word be a painting? To extend the question. Can a word be a painting and not be literal? To reduce the question. Can a word be a painting and not be? Language can be ignored, but this also gives permission to the sense that it is unavoidable. To ignore language requires great concentration (exertion even), where nothing is asked to keep something on the other side of a silent fence constructed of individual and collective thought. Joe Daws marks out this boundary by hanging paintings on it. He uses the energy along this visual tide-line between something and nothing. In knowing where something is, the decision then is whether to go there. Doing nothing is in itself a gesture. Doing nothing more enables the same gesture to imply what went before. In art the map can also be the destination.

we must set foot on the blank space  
light is absorbed by the wall

Royet-Journoud

In his recent work Joe Daws initiates arguments with himself in vertical space. He seems content to walk away when the argument is at its tipping point. This unresolved energy is what illuminates the work. The maturity of this recent work comes from recognising the changing anatomy in a thought as it occurs in its physically malleable arena. The definite is not a necessary outline. The thought is not concluded and therefore remains in thought. The percentage of the thought represented also represents how much of the thought is left to explore. This could be done by the artist in his next work, his last work, by the viewer, even by another artist, or not at all. What matters is matter. The constant is to describe through abstraction – which equates to all moments preserved or unpreserved.

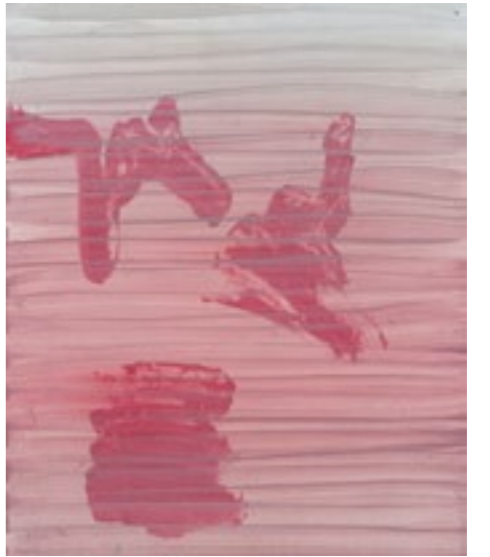
Technically painting is often about problem solving. In this Joe Daws is no different from other painters. But technique still needs to rub up against ‘what it’s about’. Even if it’s about nothing, technique is still the vessel used to arrive at that point. Thematically Joe Daws is attempting to depict the problem as the thing in itself. To show the problem not as a conundrum begging solution, but to weigh the constituent particles of the problem as a painted surface – to show discipline in not chasing down an answer – to let it mutate into a static freedom that skilfully denies the quest for logic. This non-resolution is our ticket to the space where something could be, where something might exist. Meaning is not refuted, nor is it offered.

Titles are also not on offer with these recent works. This strategy is deliberate, so as to maximise the potential deliberation for both artist and viewer. Although the works are bracketed by the period in which they were created, Joe Daws wishes to extend the ‘untitled’ notion – to enhance an isolated sensibility in each work. He does not see these paintings as a series. Interaction is inevitable, but he has no desire for the works to be ‘read’ in sequence. For a particular exhibition he numbers the works for convenience. ‘Untitled 12’ in one show will be a different ‘untitled 12’ in the next show. The numbered specifics last only as long as the exhibition.

The non-sequential also has a parallel in how the works are produced. In his studio there is a purpose built drying rack, allowing him to work simultaneously on different paintings in various states of completion. This breaks the pattern of thought versus process. In a way he is swapping the opponents within each on-going conversation until one of them says ‘enough’. Control and chance fluctuate. (Are paintings one-sided coins?) Intelligence and skill are subservient to what is ultimately aesthetic gambling. In terms of process he keeps shuffling them until he gets the hand he wants.

on the brink of dissimulation  
which jostles space

Royet-Journoud



TOP LEFT  
**Untitled 2012**  
oil on sealed marine ply 48 x 40cm

TOP RIGHT  
**Untitled 2012**  
oil on sealed marine ply 48 x 40cm

LOWER LEFT  
**Untitled 2012**  
oil on sealed marine ply 48 x 40cm

LOWER RIGHT  
**Untitled 2012**  
oil on sealed marine ply 48 x 40cm

In addressing the words on this page which attempt to address the work of Joe Daws, the handles can only be as solid as their connections. The lack of titles, narrative or serialisation can make description a clumsy occupation. The paintings lean heavily (but hang lightly) on their right to remain silent. Under interrogation they can only give us the invisible note which confirms 'this is a painting'.

So instead of embarking on a path to specific description, analysis or comprehension, I have decided to insert a list. The list is comprised of statements which I have perceptually attached to the work of Joe Daws. It is suggested the reader be equipped with a red pen in order to affirm, deny or add question marks to the following:

. . . chalk textures further eroded when we blink . . . / . . . geometry estranged from its shadows in the under-painting . . . / . . . some marks inhabit – other marks invade . . . / . . . generally the colours hold their breath . . . / . . . they become trampolines for the eye in slow motion . . . / . . . they seem excised from larger versions that did not exist . . . / . . . ideas are safe in their camouflage . . . / . . . tension is committed to a regular roll call of the corners . . . / . . . suspended horizontals like ticks unfolded and ironed flat . . . / . . . uniformed verticals will not escape despite their best intentions . . . / . . . other forms congregate in the casual aesthetic of forgotten memory . . . / . . . in its layers the ego of each work resides . . .

The works are 'ellusory' rather than illusory. They are not deflections predisposed to avoidance. The ambiguity does provide resistance. What you might not see in the initial contemplation is still in front of you. In disclosing the enigma, the paradox wryly gives itself up as an undefined target floating to its own surface in the viewer's eye. Is surface a state of mind or a surface? In a moment's discord the viewer can become the thing decided. What violence there is in these works is forensic in nature. It makes sure the blood is stable in canisters stored at the correct temperature. Paintings become slides under the 'macroscope' of the studio itself. What is discovered is that it's better to worship the accident than to pray for relative safety. It is as if the

works are built around painless, Promethean jump-cuts of repetition. All things are one and the same because they are different.

consolidation of the intelligible  
this word we open in sleep  
first and foremost, inert adjective colour

Royet-Journoud

In a subtle way Joe Daws might be subverting Kierkegaard's titular edict Either/Or into the more inclusive Either/And. Presence and absence are quantities. What is absent in the work is present in the viewer. What it suggests it is what it is. The success of a particular work perhaps depends on the variation within its possibility.

As an object what can a painting do? Not much. They are stone-still actors content in artificial space. They can have impermanent purpose as hypnagogic tiles for walls belonging to anonymous lives. Or at best they might be carried as platelets of memory inside a viewer's conceptual luggage. In staring at the graffiti spat out by the big, clown-profound duopoly of Life & Death, it is not always easy to guess the respective authorship. Should we put on these blindfolds so we can see?

In contemplating painting the artist is perhaps indulging one type of birth and one type of death with the same fingerprint. In its most primary sense, painting allows the painter to edit time through a series of movements and applications. Because time is the only equation, it concludes itself in negative space – because what is becomes a record of what was.

behind the image  
there is no further recourse  
the inertia of things empties out emotion

Royet-Journoud



Untitled 2012  
oil on canvas 111.5 x 91.5cm

Joe Daws has found a way to present his own tableaux of the elements. The works act as filters both for and against the build up of existential dust. His work invites regular shifts in philosophical gender between question and answer. Paintings are not complete until silence grows over the brushwork. Complete this picture.

**Nathan Shepherdson**

December 2012

**NOTE**

Poetry included comes from *i.e., the notion of obstacle and theory of prepositions* by the French poet Claude Royet-Journoud (1941 — ). Translations by Keith Waldrop. This is a personal association. In thinking about Joe's work the poems of Royet-Journoud resonated as a type of philosophical passenger throughout the process.





Untitled 2012  
oil on canvas 91.5 x 76cm



Untitled 2012  
oil on canvas 111.5 x 91.5cm



TOP LEFT  
**Untitled 2012**  
oil on sealed marine ply 48 x 40cm

TOP RIGHT  
**Untitled 2012**  
oil on sealed marine ply 48 x 40cm

LOWER LEFT  
**Untitled 2012**  
oil on sealed marine ply 48 x 40cm

LOWER RIGHT  
**Untitled 2012**  
oil on sealed marine ply 40 x 48cm



Untitled 2012  
oil on canvas 71 x 61cm



Untitled 2012  
oil on canvas 76 x 91.5cm



TOP LEFT  
Untitled 2012  
oil on sealed marine ply 48 x 40cm

TOP RIGHT  
Untitled 2012  
oil on sealed marine ply 48 x 40cm

LOWER LEFT  
Untitled 2012  
oil on sealed marine ply 48 x 40cm

LOWER RIGHT  
Untitled 2012  
oil on sealed marine ply 48 x 40cm

## Joseph Daws

### Education

- 2002—05 BFA Visual Arts (Honours), QUT  
2010— PhD Visual Arts, QUT (expected completion 2013)

### Solo Exhibitions

- 2012 **Paintings** Jan Manton Art, Spring Hill, Qld  
2011 **Semblance** The Art Factory Gallery, South Brisbane, Qld  
2009 **Landscape** Doggett Street Studios, Newstead, Qld  
2008 **Paintings and Ceramics** The Art Factory Gallery, South Brisbane, Qld  
2007 **Paintings and Ceramics** The Art Factory Gallery, South Brisbane, Qld  
2006 **Oil Studies** 5F/172 Oxlade Drive, New Farm, Qld

### Group Exhibitions

- 2009 **Winter Show** Doggett Street Studios, Newstead, Qld  
**Other Places—Dan Brock & Joe Daws** The Art Factory Gallery, South Brisbane, Qld  
2008 **Jingdezhen International Contemporary Ceramic Exhibition**, Jingdezhen, China  
**New Paintings—Dan Brock & Joe Daws** The Art Factory Gallery, South Brisbane, Qld  
**Launch: Clayton Utz Traveling Scholarship Exhibition** Metro Arts, Brisbane, Qld  
Finalist, honourable mention (Judge: Nick Mitzevich)  
2006 **Nascent: QUT Visual Arts Graduates** QUT Art Museum, Brisbane, Qld  
2005 **Nascent: QUT Visual Arts Graduates** QUT Art Museum, GP campus, Qld  
**The Graduates** Jan Manton Art, South Brisbane, Qld  
**Proper Primitives Two-Man Show** co-curators Lachlan Glanville and Joseph Daws  
QUT Kelvin Grove Campus, Qld  
**15 Artists** Redcliffe City Art Gallery, Redcliffe, Qld

### Residencies

- 2008 **Sanbao Ceramic Art Village** Jingdezhen, Jiangxi, China

BACK COVER  
**Untitled** (detail) 2012  
oil on canvas 91.5 x 76cm

All photographs courtesy of Carl Warner

