



REVIEWS



JORDAN BROADWORTH
Snakes in a Box 2010 Oil on canvas

Jordan Broadworth's paintings remind one of the afterimages one experiences when glimpsing illuminated signage in the urban landscape. I can recognize letters in the negative impression left behind my eyelids, but can no longer scan the rest: the text no longer exists. For more than a decade, Broadworth has been serving up paintings based on calligraphic gestures mediated through an increasingly complex series of painting techniques. His diligence has paid off: the paintings in this show and in his recent touring exhibition, "Turn," show us an artist still rooted in tradition but emerging from the fray equipped with a personal lexicon of dense and haunting images. Broadworth's paintings speak the language of late abstraction fluently—it is possible to see Brice Marden's "snakes in a box" in Broadworth's use of undulating line and observance to the edge, as well as Gerhard Richter's blurring, a reference to focus and thus photography—yet offer their own insight and inflection. Though these paintings imply space in their overlapping forms and lines, the space is illusionistic: they are as much about the removal of paint as its application. The paintings are hyper-compressed, built up exactly, with chosen elements or layers allowed to hold sway to varying extents. In this respect Broadworth has his process down to a science. While these works are based on written signatures, they end up being about the absence of paint from the space the signature occupies. In what is his most devious manoeuvre, Broadworth carefully paints the signature upon a layer of uncurd paint of the same colour—the signature at this point is invisible but has reactivated the layer of paint underneath. Upon completing this gesture, Broadworth excavates the surface with an assortment of blades and scrapers, removing not only the signature but also the layer of paint immediately below, creating and destroying in the same moment. The presence of the signature is revealed through its absence; what remains is its image in negative. The revelation that these signatures are culled from the artist's personal collection of rejection letters and legal documents from the past 15 years only heightens the negative metaphor. In an electronic world, the act of making one's signature often represents the only time one picks up a pen. Broadworth's paintings suggest that personal expression and individuality may indeed be eroding, but in describing this phenomenon, they ingeniously demonstrate that he is not subject to it.

TORONTO
LED KAMEN GALLERY
JORDAN BROADWORTH
by Paul Walde

110 CANADIAN ART • SPRING 2010

"Jordan Broadworth" by Paul Walde, Spring 2010, p. 110

REVIEW

Jordan Broadworth

By Paul Walde

POSTED: MARCH 1, 2010

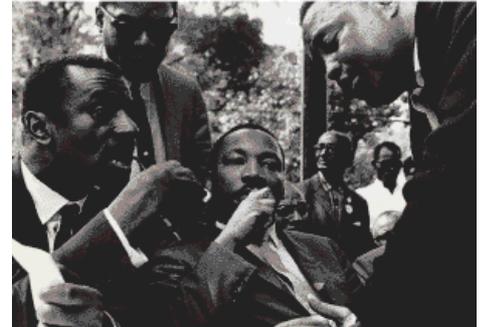
Jordan Broadworth's paintings remind me of the afterimages one experiences when glimpsing illuminated signage in the urban landscape. I can recognize letters in the negative impression left behind my eyelids, but can no longer scan the rest: the text no longer exists.

For more than a decade, Broadworth has been serving up paintings based on calligraphic gestures mediated through an increasingly complex series of painting techniques. His diligence has paid off: the paintings in this show and in his recent touring exhibition, "Turn," show us an artist still rooted in tradition but emerging from the fray equipped with a personal lexicon of dense and haunting images. Broadworth's paintings speak the language of late abstraction fluently—it is possible to see Brice Marden's "snakes in a box" in Broadworth's use of undulating line and observance to the edge, as well as Gerhard Richter's blurring, a reference to focus and thus photography—yet offer their own insight and inflection.

Though these paintings imply space in their overlapping forms and lines, the space is illusionistic: they are as much about the removal of paint as its application. The paintings are hyper-compressed, built up exactly, with chosen elements or layers allowed to hold sway to varying extents. In this respect Broadworth has his process down to a science. While these works are based on written signatures, they end up being about the absence of paint from the space the signature occupies. In what is his most devious manoeuvre, Broadworth carefully paints the signature upon a layer of uncurd paint of the same colour—the signature at this point is invisible but has reactivated the layer of paint underneath. Upon completing this gesture, Broadworth excavates the surface with an assortment of blades and scrapers, removing not only the signature but also the layer of paint immediately below, creating and destroying in the same moment. The presence of the signature is revealed through its absence; what remains is its image in negative. The revelation that these signatures are culled from the artist's personal collection of rejection letters and legal documents from the past 15 years only heightens the negative metaphor.

In an electronic world, the act of making one's signature often represents the only time one picks up a pen. Broadworth's paintings suggest that personal expression and individuality may indeed be eroding, but in describing this phenomenon, they ingeniously demonstrate that he is not subject to it.

RYERSON IMAGE CENTRE



Important
Tips



REEL ARTISTS
FILM FESTIVAL

FESTIVAL PASSES ON
SALE JANUARY 25-
FEBRUARY 1 ONLY

get yours now

Reel Artists
CANADIAN ART FOUNDATION
FILM FESTIVAL

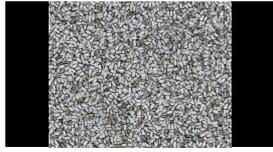
Related Articles



REVIEW

Kissick, Craven & Broadworth: Small Is Beautiful

Three large-scale painters
—John Kissick, David Craven
and Jordan ...



SEE IT

Chris Jordan: Wonders Of Industrial Wasteland

Seattle-based photographer
Chris Jordan makes beautiful
images of ...



REVIEW

Laurel Smith

Laurel Smith's paintings
question excess, finding
parallels between ...

[Sign up for the free Canadian Art Weekly newsletter](#)

Email Address

[Sign Up!](#)

[advertise](#)

[subscribe/renew](#)

[donate](#)

[buy tickets](#)

[sitemap](#)

[faq](#)

[rss feeds](#)

[privacy policy](#)

Canadian Art Foundation | 215 Spadina Avenue, Suite 320 Toronto, Ontario M5T 2C7 | (416) 368-8854 | info@canadianart.ca

