

TERRI BROOKS

OVER THE EDGE

9 - 27 August 2011

The neglected zones of urban existence - alley ways, awnings, walls, gutters and shutters - occupy a unique place within the history of painting. Perhaps inadvertently, artists have been depicting such insignificant elements as cracked window ledges and the dark recesses of architraves since the time of Giotto. Ubiquitous, utilitarian and often worn down, the marginal nature of such sites and the phenomenological questions they raise have dominated Terri Brooks practice for the past two decades and continue to inform her work today.

Navigating a territory between material awareness and perceptual sensitivity, Brooks' practice hinges on the ability to perceive beauty within the decayed. Informed by her observations of the streets around her Northcote studio, Brooks refers to herself as an 'urban archaeologist', searching the built world for traces of action and deterioration. The broken edge of a concrete footpath or paint peeling off an overpass railing becomes thrilling subject matter. Reduced to a series of pure forms, textures and lines these visual fragments serve as reference points for her condensed and subtle images.

The impasto applications of her paint hint at an artist delighting in the act of replication. Gleaning her physical surroundings excavating the fractured and forgotten, Brooks brings to light the incidental poetry of a site. Blackwhite echoes the thick, chalky quality of road boundaries, inspired by watching workmen as they lay down markers outside the local paper mill. Dense white layers are built up and ooze at the seams. Uneven in their application but sure in direction, they expose the act of a brush steadily moving across canvas. Paint spills over the edges to pool and settle like the crust of icing over a cake. A final glaze of pale brown is encrusted within the white, transforming it to an old creamy hue, solid against the black tarry gloss beneath.

Resplendent in blue and white, Northcote pays homage to the Greek heritage of the area and suggests the ramshackle front yards of its inhabitants. Like the faded shade cloths and ever-present concrete slabs found there, the bulk of this canvas, weighed down by so many layers of paint, suggests a corporeal quality that crosses over momentarily into the sculptural.

The refinement of her technique intentionally disrupts any standard readings of the everyday. These works operate within the margins of discrete easel painting and architectural reality. Suspended within each canvas is an intentional exercise in reduction, true to the principles of minimalist practice. The recurring motif of line, laid down in slow and clear sequence, indicates a subtle meditation on labour and the humble truth of the wearing effects of time. Brooks' abstraction rejoices in the objective experience and emphasises the procedural nature of painting. By repeating a simple form, reiterating the embodiment of a pattern or gesture, these works in themselves become a moment, an act. A guide to how they have been constructed is embedded in the strata of layers. Akin to the histories of the built environments Brooks references, her paint slowly slips over the edges of the canvas, congealing, shrinking and drying at different rates, gesturing the fragile and residual nature of decay itself.

Phe Luxford 2011



Black Dot, White Stripe
 oil, enamel, pigment
 and PVA on canvas
 46 x 34cm



Hazardous Painting
 oil, enamel, pigment
 and PVA on canvas
 42 x 34cm



Black and White
 oil, enamel, pigment
 and PVA on canvas
 44 x 35cm



*Black and White
 on angle*



With Black Dot
 oil, enamel, pigment
 and PVA on canvas
 45 x 35cm



Blossom
 oil, enamel, pigment
 and PVA on canvas
 43 x 34cm



Road Rules
 oil, enamel,
 pigment
 and PVA on canvas
 42 x 34cm



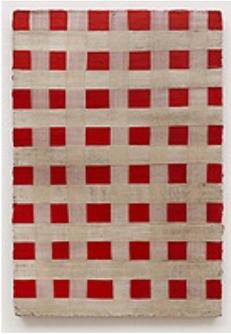
Red and White Edge
 oil, enamel, pigment
 and PVA on canvas
 44 x 34cm



artworks in-situ on 3.7m wall



Installation view



Digger
oil, enamel, pigment
and PVA on canvas
93 x 63cm



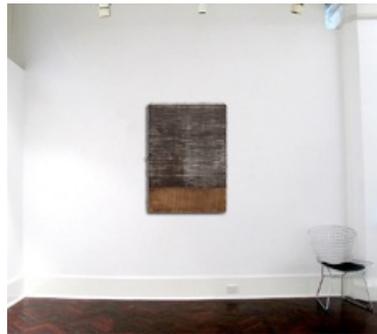
artwork in-situ on 3.7m wall



Installation view



Weathered Ridges 2011
oil, enamel, pigment
and PVA on canvas
109 x 78cm



artwork in-situ on 3.7m wall



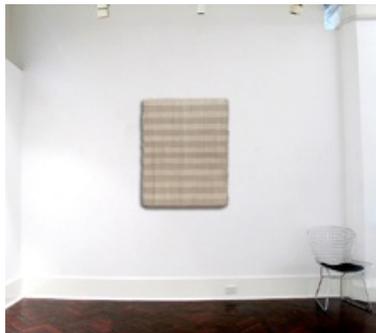
Beige Rules
oil, enamel, pigment
and PVA on canvas
64 x 54cm



Installation view



The Line Marker 2011
oil, enamel, pigment
and PVA on canvas
108 x 85cm



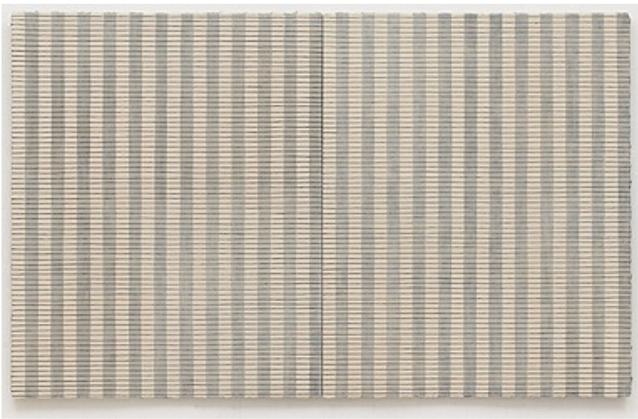
artwork in-situ on 3.7m wall



Half Dot 2011
oil, enamel, pigment
and PVA on canvas
123 x 85cm



artwork in-situ on 3.7m wall



Ribbons 2011
oil, enamel, pigment and PVA on canvas
153 x 244cm



artwork in-situ on 3.7m wall



Installation views