

BROADWAY

Tom Lawson
What's Already There
August 5-27, 2021

Broadway is pleased to present *What's Already There*, a solo exhibition of new abstract paintings by Brooklyn artist and musician Tom Lawson.

Made on sheets of Masonite used to protect the floor in domestic worksites where Lawson is a cabinetmaker, the paintings begin themselves with the inevitable spills and scuffs of interior latex paint, and then are selected and gently cajoled and coaxed to completion in the studio with interventions both subtle and dramatic. Rough, obliterating swoops and skids made by dragging a rag through puddled pigment exist alongside more delicate and feathery paint handling and ample negative space. On occasion, anthropomorphic and depictive associations emerge suggesting taunting tongues and smiles, clouds, surf and other elements of the landscape.

Importantly, as it is mostly not chosen by the artist, the palette is instead derived from the popular interior colors of the moment—dusty pink, sea foam blue, pea green and muted putty. This not only employs a readymade aspect to the surfaces, but creates a clever collusion of the painting and the wall on which it will likely hang, and the stickier issue of trends (and the passé) that implicates abstract painting itself.

Lawson approaches these works with a mixture of wabi-sabi “just-so” and a laser focus that has also characterized his output as a musician and songwriter. The benefits of chance operations and the freeing power of strategic deskilling guide the process that he once described (in reference to his guitar playing) as “hack with a knack”. All modesty aside, this self-assessment feels applicable to the paintings, where raw incident meets taste with invigorating results.