

drawing the line

ARTIST TIM BAVINGTON TRANSLATES
ROCKING GUITAR LICKS INTO LUSCIOUS, VISUAL SYMPHONIES

BY KELLE SCHILLACI PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRIAN BROWN



Praiseful critics and fans alike have a field day flipping through their color-chart thesaurus when describing artist Tim Bavington's work by its every gleeful hue: cotton candy pinks snuggle up against wispy lavender lines; tangerines chase indigo in a perfect sort of symmetry, lining up just in time to compose the catchy refrain.

While the seductive simplicity of the vertical designs conjure comparisons to everything from technicolor barcodes to nerve-wrackingly obsessive wallpaper patterns, there is a method behind the work; a carefully executed formula that owes less inspiration to years in highbrow art classes than it does, perhaps, to a collection of warped, classic rock LPs by bands like Kansas, Toto and Neil Young.

Of course, Bavington's British roots are also evident in works like "Roll With It" and "Love on the Rocks (with no ice)," titled after songs by Oasis and The Darkness. As famous art critic (and Bavington pal) Dave Hickey warns his artistic disciples: "Don't bore us, get to the chorus."

Bavington takes us there, both literally and figuratively, translating the language of music into a truly symphonic visual experience.

Bavington's knack for translating popular culture into visual art may have derived in part from his nearly dozen years working as a freelance illustrator for *The Simpsons*, a gig he scored fresh out of Pasadena's Art Center College of Design. But it was the exuberance of his large-scale, musically fueled inspirations that he focused on while securing his master's in fine arts at UNLV that captured the attention of art dealers and museum curators worldwide. His work is on permanent collection at LA's Mark Moore Gallery, Oregon's Portland Art Museum, the Museum of



Contemporary Art in San Diego, and can be seen at various Las Vegas locations, including the Wynn Las Vegas Resort and the Fashion Show Mall. A recent solo show at the Jack Shainman Gallery in New York's Chelsea district resulted in what may be the artist's greatest validation thus far: the acquisition of his piece "Physical S.E.X." into New York's famed Museum of Modern Art.

This spring marks Bavington's first solo show in Vegas, "Tim Bavington: Drawings 2002-2006," which runs through mid-May at downtown's Godt-Cleary Projects. 944 caught up with the artist at his home studio, where he shared his thoughts on art, theory and living in Las Vegas.

on substance

"Basically, [in my art] I'm combining the two things I'm most interested in: painting and popular music. We all worship our rock stars, and this is my way. Most of these works are based on pop or rock 'n' roll. They come from my own immediate taste, but doing this also makes me listen to music I wouldn't have normally listened to, like more classic rock with big guitar solos. So I listen to Kansas and Toto and a lot of other things. Twenty years ago I used to go to more jazz clubs and listen to jazz. I haven't done anything based on jazz, but I think I'd like to."

on style

"There are different theories as to what notes resonate with what colors. The most common is that middle C is represented by a middle red. I don't have such a fixed approach. For me, any color could be the key just like any note. So there's a structure, but when it comes to mixing the colors and putting the piece together, it's all open to interpretation and arrangement. What it has in common with music is really just the score. If you were to use a score to play a piece of music, it is going to be played differently by different people and different instruments. Even though there are fairly specific directions as to timing and to speed, everyone still interprets it and plays it differently. When it comes to making a painting out of it, the results are something different every time, even if I do the same composition twice."

on technique

"If I used a brush [instead of a spray can, the artist's preferred method], there's always the evidence of the brushstroke on the canvas, which signifies the touch of the artist. I want to remove myself from the equation in that way. With the sprayed line, I get the opportunity to make a line that's sort of expressive, and can have expressive qualities, but it's sort of impersonal too. I'm not so present in the work. Brushstrokes trace the mark of the person who made it. British painting, and maybe even British attitude in general, is just about taking a sort of cooler approach to expression."

on living and working in vegas

"Nevada itself is one of the best states for that sort of old American spirit of pioneering and slight lawlessness. Vegas, culturally, is an interesting place. It's more cosmopolitan than people think. If I'm selling work, it means other people from here can, too. When artists from here are successful outside of here, then that sort of validates it. I love it. I just love it. Something about the permissive atmosphere of the city. It's all about freedom, and that's what making art is about. It all lives pretty well."

For more linear expression go to www.timbavington.com

HOLDING MY OWN 2005
acrylic on canvas, 77x48



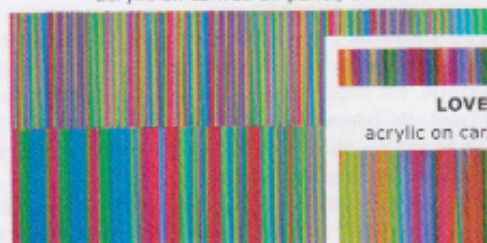
HEY, HEY (INTO THE BLACK) 2005
acrylic on canvas on panel, 48x72



JOE, JOE 2005
acrylic on canvas on panel, 120x43 overall



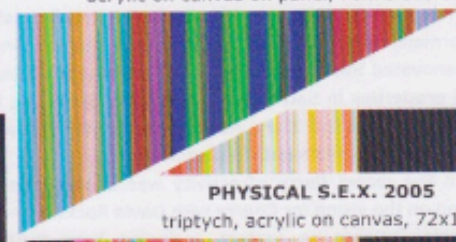
ELEPHANT STONE (FULL FATHOM FIVE) 2005
acrylic on canvas on panel, 60x48



LOVE SONG 2005
acrylic on canvas on panel, 64x64



WAYWARD #4 2005
acrylic on canvas on panel, 76x76 overall



PHYSICAL S.E.X. 2005
triptych, acrylic on canvas, 72x161



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