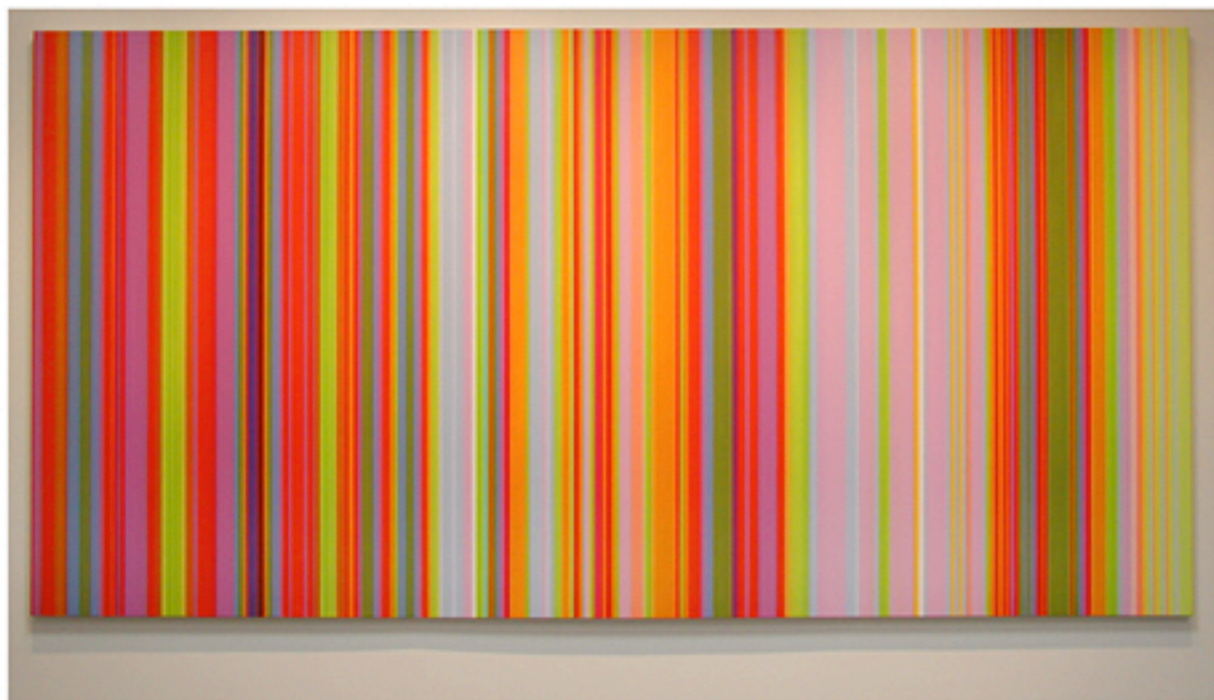




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Tim Bavington Sprays Exuberant, Visual Music



Mark Moore Gallery

"Aqualung (Solo)" (2002), by Tim Bavington, meshes mechanical qualities with fluid and organic ones.

By CHRISTOPHER KNIGHT
TIMES STAFF WRITER

From across the room, the largest painting in a show of new work by Tim Bavington at Mark Moore Gallery practically hollers, "Come look at me!" The Las Vegas-based painter betrays no fear of being flamboyant—and it's easy to see why: His art delivers.

The 6-by-12-foot painting is titled "Aqualung (Solo)." Along with the four other paintings and one drawing in the show, it continues an excursion into musical analogy evidenced in Bavington's first exhibition at the gallery two summers ago. Links between abstract art and music are as old as abstraction itself, but at this late date these paintings don't need the connection to provide justification for eliminating recognizable subject matter. Instead, Bavington's work amps up the ordinary rhythms of life into something fierce and exuberant.

"Aqualung (Solo)" is composed from intense acrylic hues—cherry red, wisteria, lime, orange, sky blue, olive—that are often made more dramatic through juxtaposition. Like the diving apparatus of the title, the synthetic pigments extend the colors of nature—or, in the pop words of the 1971 song by the eponymous Jethro Tull, "the flowers bloom like madness in the spring"—allowing entrance into an alien realm. The stripe painting brings forth rapture of the shallows.

Bavington paints with a spray gun. Often one stripe is overlaid on top of another. The vertical stripes are not taped, so the edges fuzz. The reiteration of narrow vertical lines suggests mechanical repetition; the longer you look, the more a pattern of broad bands of color seems to anchor the wide expanse.

Yet any attempt to decode a strict sequence or methodical arrangement of colors will be defeated. Mechanical qualities are enmeshed with fluid and organic ones. You scan the paintings at random, and complex visual rhythms, feints, pauses and breaths emerge.

The show also includes two diptychs. "Hey Joe (Solo)" piles two 4-foot-square stripe canvases on top of each other, one all soft pastels and the other loud and vibrant. "Babe, I'm Gonna Leave You (Solo)" pairs horizontal canvases, the bottom one composed of stripes in identical widths and the top one syncopated. A large drawing shows how Bavington works out his compositions with pastels before pulling out the spray gun.

The diptychs struggle against themselves and don't yet feel resolved. What really wails is the visual wall of sound in "Aqualung (Solo)"—as well as in the slightly smaller "Crossroad Blues," which is played in the complementary key of orange. Pump up the volume!