

MARK MOORE GALLERY

Los Angeles Times, March 21, 2008

Around the Galleries

By Christopher Knight, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer

His Stripes are a Wonderwall

Las Vegas artist Tim Bavington's exhibition at the Mark Moore Gallery shows him deftly elaborating the stripe format that he's brought back into abstract painting with such compelling force in recent years. As he moves forward, we also get to look back: The show includes an enlightening selection of studies that demonstrate how he uses musical notation as a structural basis for his art.

The centerpiece is a mammoth stripe painting 48 feet long. Painted on 18 panels, each just over 4 feet tall, it can be shown in various configurations -- stacked in two rows of nine or three rows of six, or unfurled in all its glory as it is here, spread across three walls. The palette of orange, violet, lime green and other vertical stripes, made with a spray gun and fuzzed at the edges, hovers a few inches in front of the gallery wall.

To achieve the effect, Bavington has beveled the stretcher bars, which pushes the surface of his canvases out from the wall. Free of brushwork, the sprayed color has optical depth that varies according to intensity and juxtaposition, so the lateral sweep of the rhythmic stripe pattern is at once emphasized and counterbalanced.

Titled after the Oasis song, "Columbia" is a work of gorgeous sensory overload. By contrast, "Live Forever" (based on another Oasis track) revels in sensory deprivation.

The stripes on this 8-foot-square canvas have been nearly obliterated by two rectangular blocks of black over-paint, leaving a strip of chromatic exuberance in a thin band across the middle. Now mostly hidden, the stripes bleed through the blackness like warring forces of darkness and light.

Among the studies in the side gallery is the working drawing for "Step (In) Out," the monumental stripe painting in the exhibition "Las Vegas Diaspora: The Emergence of Contemporary Art From the Neon Homeland," currently at the Laguna Art Museum. The studies show how Bavington orchestrates his pictorial compositions. Musical scores are used almost as found objects, with the colored stripe pattern following a dispassionate logic worthy of Conceptual master Sol Lewitt. The results are anything but cool and common-sensical.

Mark Moore Gallery, Bergamot Station, 2525 Michigan Ave., Santa Monica, (310) 453-3031, through March 29. Closed Sundays and Mondays. www.markmooregallery.com