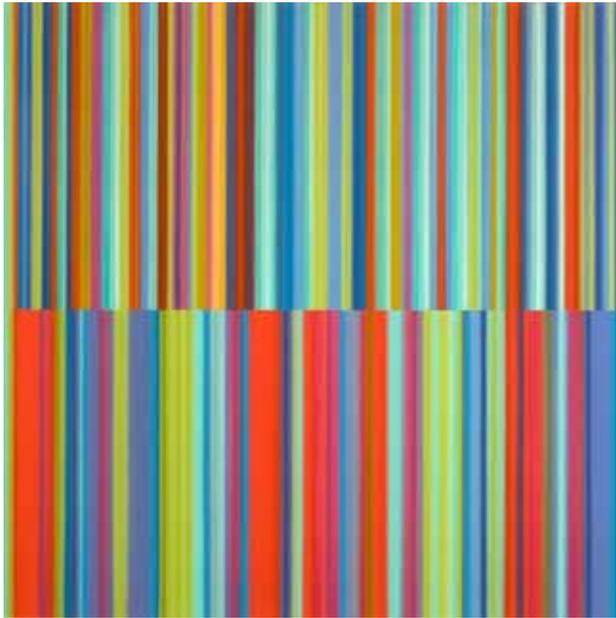


September 2010



Tim Bavington: Long May You Run, 2010, synthetic polymer on canvas, 64 inches square; at Mark Moore.

LOS ANGELES TIM BAVINGTON MARK MOORE

What is the deal with painters and stripes? Pondering this art historical quandary, I was pleased to find myself riveted by the work in English-born, Las Vegas-based Tim Bavington's knockout show (all works 2009 or 2010), his fifth solo at Mark Moore.

Made of synthetic polymer applied to canvas with an aerosol dispenser, these vividly colorful paintings appear pristine and sharp from a distance but are maddeningly blurred up close. Bright and hazy, the stripes resemble neon signs in fog, and don't evoke other paintings so much as Dan Flavin's glowing fluorescent tubes. Inspired by pop music—hence the titles of these paintings—Bavington seeks to translate aural experiences, such as specific instrumental solos, into visual ones. The large *Can't Take It With You* strikes an optical xylophone of hot pinks and swimming-pool blues, with a steady rhythm of greens and reds humming in its center. A sense of music-fueled color continues in *Witchcraft*, where diagonal stripes in a mild, country club palette of

pale pink, army green and teal are framed by calm swathes of peach. In *Long May You Run*, two fuzzy combs meet cleanly in the middle of the canvas, forming a lifeline of clarity amid out-of-focus fields. Bold as *Love* branches off in a different direction, reflecting the thick, mellow atmosphere of the Jimi Hendrix song it borrows its name from. Suggesting a saturated sunset of deep blues, lavenders and yellows, it is distorted like a screen saver on the fritz, with stripes surfacing and dissolving into what look like ripples of light seen through water. These paintings make you work: it was impossible not to squint and blink, trying to pull the patterns into focus.

A second series of paintings left stripes and music behind to focus on album covers. Also sprayed on canvas, these images are blurred enough to resemble iconic abstract paintings. For example, the background of The Clash's *Give 'Em Enough Rope* album cover sports sharp bands of red, blue and yellow; in Bavington's hands they become blurred blocks of color against a buzzing purple ground, à la Rothko. Bavington's version of New Order's *Blue Monday*, which features concentric circles, nods toward Kenneth

Noland, though it is hardly different from looking at the album cover through a very unfocused camera lens. If the journey from cover art to *Color Field* or to *Ab-Ex* painting felt a bit hokey, Bavington's synesthetic translation of melody into visual tone is a shining update of a century-old modernist tradition.

—Lyra Kilston