



Art in Review

By KEN JOHNSON
Published: September 25, 2009

TIM BAVINGTON

'Up in Suze's Room'

Jack Shainman Gallery

513 West 20th Street, Chelsea

Through Oct. 10

Chromophobes -- people who hate and fear color -- should steer clear of this optically ravishing exhibition. Tim Bavington creates a type of updated Color Field painting. His medium-large paintings most often consist of thin vertical stripes whose edges blur into one another. The colors are so intense that it is as if you were seeing them on a flat-screen television, or your visual perception had been amplified by a hallucinogenic drug.

As if to pre-empt criticism that his paintings are just so much eye candy, Mr. Bavington has added notes to the exhibition checklist explaining that his decisions about color and pattern are determined by the structure of certain rock 'n' roll songs. "Cold Fire," in which a field of jade green stripes is interrupted by flame-shaped bursts of watermelon pink, is named after a David Bowie song and "loosely based on the guitar solo." "All I Want to Do Is Rock (Fretboard)," a nearly 20-foot-long, Mondrianesque painting of a guitar fretboard in blocks of confectionery color separated by black lines, takes its title from a song by Travis.

Another piece, "What's the Frequency, Kenneth?" refers not to the famous mugging incident involving Dan Rather but to the title of an R.E.M. song and to Kenneth Noland, whose stripe paintings were promoted by the critic Clement Greenberg in the 1960s. But where Greenberg favored reductive purity in abstract painting, Mr. Bavington offers conceptual mongrelism and psychedelic hedonism. Against a morality of Puritan restraint, he asserts an expansive aesthetics of seduction and sensory intoxication. KEN JOHNSON

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