

From left: Bavington in his studio; *Up in Suze's Room*, 2009; and a photograph of the artist.



MY BRILLIANT CAREER **TIM BAVINGTON**

The Las Vegas-based painter, 42, looks back at some of his professional turning points on the occasion of his solo show at the Jack Shainman Gallery, in New York. His latest works—vibrantly hued, striped paintings composed according to the chord structures of songs—can be seen there from September 10 through October 10.

Bridget Moriarity

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VEGAS, BABY: "The first time I set foot in Vegas was in 1980, when I was 14. My mom and dad had divorced, and I flew over from England to visit my dad, who lived there. It was mind-blowing. He picked me up from the airport in a Cadillac, a car I'd never seen before. I think Vegas has had more of an attitudinal effect on my art than an aesthetic one. It's the permissive atmosphere, and the way the city takes history lightly and is prepared to tear it down."



SOLD: "While I was in grad school at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Bill and Debby Richards—of L.A.'s Fellows of Contemporary Art, which has supported young artists for over 30 years—came by my studio and bought *Driving Nowhere*, 1998 [detail above]. It's composed of vertical lines of color, similar to my work now. I titled it after a song by the British rocker Paul Weller, but there isn't a direct compositional correlation to music."

BEFORE THE FALL: "I had my first solo exhibition in New York at Feigen Contemporary. It opened the weekend before 9/11. I flew back to Vegas on Monday the 10th and woke up the next morning to the news. Only a few works were in the show, and all of them eventually sold, but the market was definitely frozen for a bit."



MAN OF INFLUENCE: "Dave Hickey [an art critic and professor at UNLV] has been a friend and mentor for 15 years. I met him after I settled in Vegas, in 1995. He talked me into going to grad school. I was pursuing painting, but I had a career as a graphic designer and illustrator, mostly for *The Simpsons* television show. I thought that's pretty much the way it would always be."



THE BREAKTHROUGH: "In 2002, I took a guitar solo by Hendrix and translated the notes and note lengths and the keys into colors and made a painting out of it called *Voodoo Child (Slight Return)*, after the song. It was the first time I used music as an underlying structure to compose a painting. The Portland Museum of Art purchased it."



HITTING THE STRATOSPHERE:

"My debut exhibition with Jack Shainman Gallery was in 2005, and it was from that show that the

Museum of Modern Art acquired one of my works: *Physical S.E.X.* [above]. The painting was based on a guitar solo by a British band called the Darkness. They were a Spinal-Tap sort of band, but their guitar solos were really good. The curator Joaquim Pissarro picked it out. That's big for an artist, isn't it?"