

For Immediate Release

Ian DAVENPORT

Exhibition from March 24 to April 28, 2001

Vernissage : Saturday, March 24, 2001

The works of Ian Davenport bear witness to a structural and analytic approach to painting. Each piece reveals his inclination to set up investigative procedures leading him to explore the properties of the medium. The use made of color and paint seeks a sculptural approach to the work; the act of painting is physical and the color asserts itself as a solid material.

Despite the seductive aspect of the material he uses – an industrial enamel - Davenport attempts to free us from any illusory emotion. His paintings constantly refer back to their mechanical process of creation. The palette is composed of a range of colors varying from pastel pink or electric blue to yellow, purple, or intense red. The use of house paint expresses the refusal of interpretation, and reveals the attachment to the painting as object. In this work, the physical process of the act of painting and the materiality of the paint block off the viewer's habitual references and associations.

Each of Davenport's paintings is a combination of two contrasting colours, either pure or subtly nuanced. The paintings are carried out in three phases. First a ground colour is sprayed onto an aluminium or fiberboard panel. Once dry, he pours the second colour onto this monochrome ground, forming a naturally occurring circular or elliptical shape, before tilting the surface so that excess paint runs off leaving the remaining surface to dry. He repeats the procedure using the initial colour but stops the spreading movement just short of the area covered by the first pour. A tense sinuous line occurs, arching through a field of unmodulated colour, an extraordinary elegance out of a set of basic physical gestures. The control necessary to make these works contrasts with the random nature of his materials. The artist is concerned with chance and this procedure allows him to observe the limitations and transformations of the liquid.

Yet Davenport makes a clear distinction concerning the use of the process in his work: *"The process is a tool, it is not the point of the paintings... The point is the richness of the final outcome, which is intertwined with a set of procedures."*

For his second one-man show at Xippas Gallery, Ian Davenport will present the group of works exhibited from November 14, 2000 to January 21, 2001 at the Tate Gallery of Liverpool, in its "Project Space." Here the works are all composed with the same elongated arch. They are essentially polyptychs. They lend a rhythmic structure to the space. The associations of color, the shiny surfaces, smooth and satiny, sometimes act as veritable mirrors, reflecting the architecture of the space and reinterpreting it for us.

Ian Davenport was born in 1966 in Kent, Great Britain ; he lives and works in London. A graduate of Goldsmiths' College of Art in London in 1988, he was nominated for the Turner Prize in 1991. Since then he has held numerous one-man shows. In 1999, Dundee Contemporary Arts devoted an exhibition to his work; Waddington Galleries has presented his paintings regularly in Great Britain since 1990. In 1996, he took part in the important group exhibition, *Nuevas Abstracciones*, mounted in Spain at the Palacio de Velázquez and the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in Madrid, at the MACBA in Barcelona, then at the Bielefeld Kunsthalle in Germany. In 1999, he participated in the traveling exhibition, *Examining Pictures*, presented at the Whitechapel Art Gallery in London, then at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago and the Armand Hammer Museum in Los Angeles.