

TIM BAVINGTON TAKES A MEDITATIVE ROUTE IN HIS NEW MCQ WATERCOLOR SHOW

C. Moon Reed Thu. Dec. 14, 2017 (12:00am)



Even if you don't follow art, you probably know the work of Tim Bavington. "Pipe Dream," his colorful tube sculpture outside the Smith Center, has become a Downtown icon since it made its debut in 2012—not to mention the background of countless selfies.

The sculpture is a variation on his usual two-dimensional method. Bavington is famous for transliterating music (generally classic rock) into bars of color using an automotive spray gun to apply acrylic to canvas. *The New York Times* describes his work as "optically ravishing ... psychedelic hedonism."

The artist and UNLV professor has a new show at MCQ Fine Art Advisory, but it isn't as loud as all that. Titled *Sounds of Silence*, the show features a more meditative medium: watercolor. "It was exciting to see how Tim has used what can typically be a very quiet and traditional medium and bring it to new life through his use of color and technique," gallerist Michele Quinn wrote in a statement.

What led him to try watercolor? Teaching painting at UNLV. “I hadn’t used the medium in a long time,” Bavington says. “But through teaching it, I rediscovered its beauty. I’d forgotten about the magic of the liquid of the medium.”

Bavington is always curious, reading books and even exploring the latest YouTube tutorials. Watercolor offered a new way of seeing and creating, a new chance to experiment and discover. “I would try different papers, I’d try different types of watercolor. It does require some investigation,” Bavington says. He makes gradations with watercolor washes in the same way he would spray acrylic paints. But the return to the simplicity of water, pigment and paper offered a certain tactile joy. “I get to do a manual version. I get to use brushes and work on paper. The end result is a different experience—more intimate, handmade. It’s nice to make contact with the surface, which I don’t do on paintings.”

The show’s title references ’60s-era Simon and Garfunkel music, and also nods to the quiet nature of watercolor. “It’s the paradox or absurdity of making visual work based on sound,” Bavington says, clarifying that none of the paintings are specifically based on Simon & Garfunkel’s music (“that would be attempting something direct, too referential”).

Instead, this show consists of works inspired by Maybelle Carter’s “Wildwood Flower,” Cream’s “White Room,” and music by Santana and George Harrison. “This year in particular makes you yearn for something spiritual and peaceful, which is again what the show is about,” Bavington says. “Turbulent times create a desire for peace and serenity, and that’s where I’m at. I [want] to give people in the form of an exhibit the wish that you must have at the end of this year: peace on earth.”

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Tim Bavington: *Sounds of Silence* on view through January 5, Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm.

MCQ Fine Art Advisory, 620 S. 7th St., 702-366-9339.