

PRESS RELEASE

CUSTOT
GALLERY
DUBAI

Ian Davenport: Signal

28 February – 8 April 2023



Custot Gallery Dubai is delighted to present *Signal*, the second solo show of British contemporary artist Ian Davenport at the gallery. A selection of 12 new works plunges the viewer in an adventure across colours. Hundreds of vibrant hues and nuances form these studies of expressive colour interactions.

Signal is the first exhibition that Ian Davenport has dedicated to his works on paper. Whilst many of Davenport's works usually feature lines of colour poured sequentially from left to right or vice versa, these works provide something more percussive and compositionally spontaneous. When lockdown restrictions were introduced in many countries during the COVID-19 pandemic, Davenport realised that this would be the perfect opportunity to focus on a different series of works which allowed for his practice to be done isolated in his London studio. His paintings ordinarily require the help of studio technicians, however the works on paper were lighter, enabling him to maneuver them easily on his own.

Davenport was inspired by the visuals that pyrotechnics can provide, with amazing rocket fireworks, explosives and illuminations. Derived from these forms, the artist developed a way of dramatically replicating the firework marks in acrylic paint. Relationships of colours were then developed and explored with some of the artworks showing multiple layers of reworking. The finished pieces have splinters and traces of colour interspersed with the large splats of paint.

Left: Ian Davenport, *Finale (Grey)*, acrylic on paper, 2022, 185 x 145 cm. Right: Ian Davenport, *Girandola*, acrylic on paper, 2022, 185 x 145 cm.

BIOGRAPHY

Ian Davenport (b. 1966, Sidcup, Kent) is an abstract painter recognised for his complex colour compositions and whose work is informed by a deep understanding and enjoyment of paint. Since graduating from Goldsmiths' College of Art in 1988, Ian Davenport has experimented with everyday tools such as watering cans, electric fans and nails, designed to exercise and limit his manipulation of paint. His various means of execution are driven by a desire to investigate the paradox between control and chance. It has led him to emphasise the action of painting as his subject matter, observing that 'the how to paint became the what to paint'. He is well-known for using hypodermic syringes to pour liquid household paint onto surfaces. In 2008, Davenport noticed that the poured paint pooled into puddles on the floor; this visual contradiction between controlled, precise lines that then merged freely, autonomous and self-determining, embodied the paradox between control and chance. He has incorporated the puddles into his recent 'Puddle Paintings', which demonstrates Davenport's process-led approach. He contemplates the colour harmonies of each composition, each possessed of their own visual sense of timing, rhythm, interval and accent.

Davenport received early recognition participating in *Freeze*, a student-curated exhibition at the Surrey Docks in London Docklands in 1988, which exhibited the work of Goldsmiths' students who would later come to be loosely known as the 'YBA's' (Young British Artists). Only two years after graduation, Davenport had his first solo exhibition at Waddington Galleries in 1990, and in the same year, his work was included in *The British Art Show*, touring to Leeds City Art Gallery and Hayward Gallery, London. He was nominated for the Turner Prize in 1991, and in 1999, was awarded the John Moores Painting Prize.

Davenport has exhibited extensively across the globe, where his works are included in many celebrated collections such as Tate Britain, MoMa, and Centre de Pompidou. He recently completed a large site-specific installation at the Chiostro de Bramante in Rome and in 2017, he created a 14 metre mural for the Venice Biennale, commissioned by Swatch.

This summer, Davenport will be launching a Thames and Hudson publication devoted to his works on paper that encompasses the last 30 years of his career.