

Talent on the wane

By [Nick Hackworth](#) [Evening Standard](#) | 15 July 2003



In another place and time, Ian Davenport's paintings - along with those of his contemporaries Gary Hume and Damien Hirst - might have been part of a movement in painting that sought to eradicate the trace of the hand of the artist.

Davenport, who was nominated for the Turner Prize in 1991, aged 25, and was included in the Tate's Days Like These this year, has made a career from the process of pouring.

His first well-known works consisted of household gloss poured in successive layers on to the tops of narrow rectangular canvases, creating semi-circles that flowed down into curtains of paint, leaving only thin bands of the previously applied colour exposed.

Like Hirst's spot paintings and the "Hospital Door" series that Hume was painting up to the early Nineties, Davenport's works combined a nod to the demotic - in the use of household paint - with a disavowal of personal expression.

However, like most of the YBA crowd, Davenport isn't interested in theory,

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being, as he observes in the catalogue accompanying this show, more "post-pub" than "post-modern".

A decade on, the rectangles have become squares and the poured shapes are now circles made using a watering can. The squares are occasionally fitted together to create larger works that explore various colour relationships, but the work looks increasingly banal. Where the poured shapes of his older paintings had some grace to them, these circles are diminished by their domestic scale.

The choice of colours, meanwhile, is strangely naff. One work of six square panels coloured various shades of red and pink resembles an abstract homage to Valentine's Day. Meanwhile, the two largest multicoloured works, each made up of 12 panels, are bright enough to adorn the walls of a primary school.

The two most attractive paintings here are made in the old vein, with expanses of black gloss framed by thin, elegant red and blue lines.

Until 25 July. Information: 020 7851 2200.
