

My Batchelor Series

My Batchelor Series consists of two works: *My Batchelor Series I – Dirty & Shiny* and *My Batchelor Series II – Colour Chart & Monochrome*. Both of them reference David Batchelor's (1951-) works in miniature form. Many of Batchelor's work are about how he combines an abandoned, readymade support and a monochromatic surface together in a contingent way. An example is a work using abandoned trolleys: *I Love King's Cross and King's Cross Loves Me I* of 1997 (fig. 1). In this work, the idea of juxtaposing an acrylic sheet on the surface of a trolley is from Batchelor's accidental discovery in his studio, when he put a panel of painted acrylic on the trolley in order to dry it. Batchelor's wheels suggest mobility and provisionality, as well as a support of the surface and the flat monochrome, a topic which he often discussed such as his photography project *Found Monochromes of London* of 1997-2003. Monochromes were often exhibited in elegant, grand galleries for discussing its aesthetic and philosophical contents, but Batchelor left them on old trolleys and exhibited them on the floor to move around. The monochromes with wheels are a bit like singing "Hallelujah" in a night club. I just wanted a bit of *déjà vu* after Batchelor, so I named my works "My Batchelor Series" and employed his methods of using abandoned materials and readymade supports; in my case, my own abandoned art and mass-produced, cheap quality, small stretched canvas.



Fig. 1. David Batchelor, *I Love King's Cross and King's Cross Loves Me I*, 1997, found objects, acrylic sheet, and enamel paint, dimensions variable, collection of the artist.
(Installation view, Economist Plaza, London)

My Batchelor Series I – Dirty & Shiny (fig. 2) uses an abandoned dirty painting with which I layered a series of coloured bars.¹ These colours are artificial colours which are bright, industrial, luminous, and shiny. They are often used by Batchelor in his works as embodied colour, that is, coloured Perspex. This is meant to mimic glowing neon colours in the modern cities where Batchelor chooses his colours from. However, my work is painting. It uses the applied layers of paint to generate the colour sensation. In this work, the partial exposures between the bars reveal the abandoned art work, which corresponds to Batchelor's idea of using dirty, abandoned readymades.

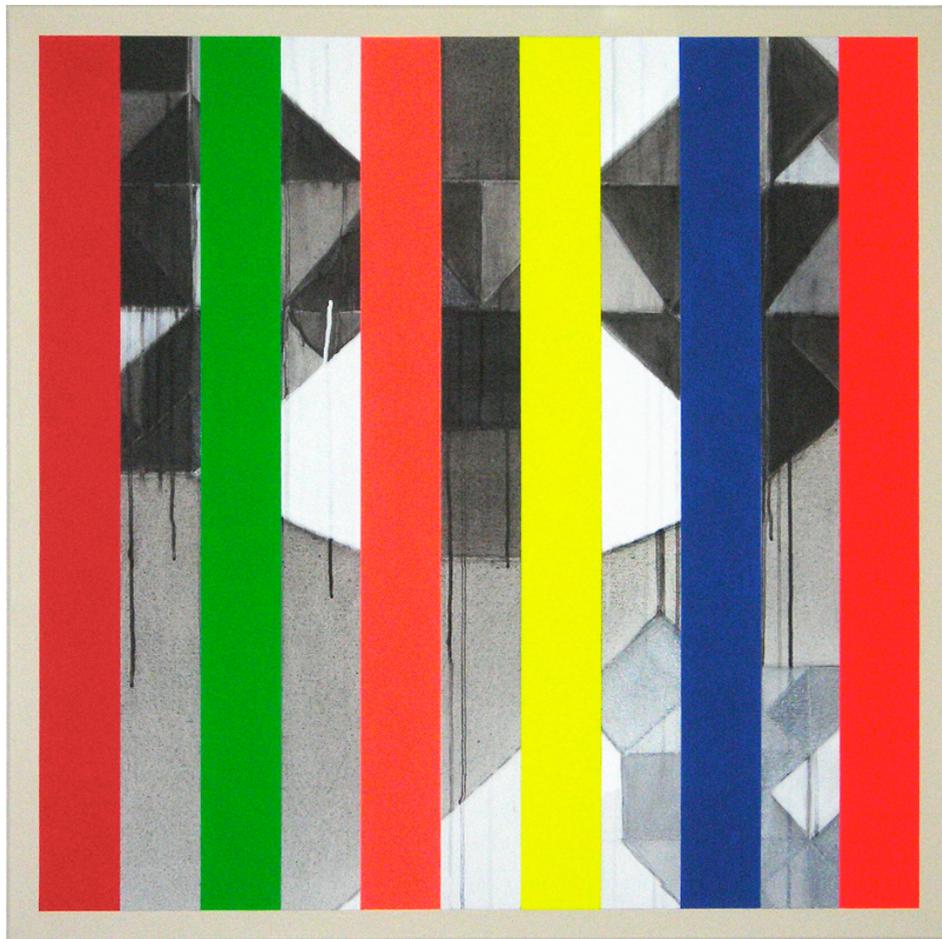


Fig. 2. Shiau-Peng Chen, *My Batchelor Series I – Dirty & Shiny*, 2009, acrylic on canvas, 101.5 x 101.5 cm, collection of the artist.

My Batchelor Series II – Colour Chart & Monochrome (fig. 3) is work composed of small paintings. I applied one of Batchelor's colours for each painting. I then laid all the paintings on the floor. This is to create a funny

¹ The subtitle "Dirty & Shiny" is also inspired by "Shiny and Dirty," the exhibition title of David Batchelor's important solo exhibition held at Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, UK in 2004.

pose like Batchelor's monochromes with wheels. This spread of monochromes on the floor also hints the independence of each colour from the colour chart, an idea which Batchelor discussed about the modern use of colour as a readymade (*Chromophobia* 105). As Batchelor mentioned in an interview with Clarrie Wallis, curator of Contemporary British Art, Tate Britain, that he ended up with fifteen works of trolleys, the monochromes with wheels (*Dirty Shiny* 42), I planned to have fifty of my monochromes in order to beat him.



Fig. 3. Shiao-Peng Chen, *My Batchelor Series II – Colour Chart & Monochrome*, 2009, acrylic on canvas, 50 paintings: 10 x 30.5 cm each, collection of the artist.

I painted a frame for every painting in the two works of *My Batchelor Series* to show that each piece is as valuable as an isolated work. The idea of frame is informed by Batchelor's discussion about his works of frames:

In the mid-to-late eighties I started making works that were based on simple frames. The starting point was the notion that if Duchamp was right and if Conceptualism was right then it's not the work itself that has value, it's more how it's framed that determines its worth – a very obvious and familiar argument now. (*Dirty Shiny* 40)

I "humorously" used this idea to determine my paintings' worth through making painted frames. It is a way of saying that I can decide the value of my own works.

Works Cited

- Batchelor, David. *Chromophobia*. London: Reaktion, 2000.
---. *Dirty Shiny*. Birmingham: Ikon, 2004.