

Jaime Gili

that the internal life of a picture is just not enough. All too often a group of works is made to be installed within a gallery, the space transformed into even more of a latter day chapel than it already is. The atmosphere of the place in which people view a work is becoming more and more controlled. This is, perhaps, in the belief that the physical independence of the viewer is not as important as a collective understanding of artistic intention. Although in competition with the cinema, the painting will not move, the place in which it is shown can still be moving. Gili installs his work with thoroughly different intentions. Each picture, photograph, painting on a plank has its own fact about it. The use of wall painting, behind this, builds layers and reinforces, instead, the role of the viewer as empiricist rather than dreamer.

Sacha Craddock

Centre image
Alma VIII, Jarama and Ain-Diab,
detail of installation, 2002

Agnosia, installation view, 2002



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The colour photographs of the backs of cars, long plank paintings which slope to lean against the wall, and stars or explosions in the far gallery, are all multi-layered lures, carefully placed by the artist. Every part of the exhibition informs on the other. The experience of encountering such immediate physicality merges with the practical associations of a parallel universe outside. Gili, who sets up a deliberately complex situation, is determined that this careful installation of painting, photography, and all the space in between, should marry the very sense of moment with the re-occurring sensation of an after-effect.

The photographs of the backs of cars with badges bring the signage of the world into view, a whole other reference. Fiat, in Turin, may have been sold to General Motors, but cars always carry a strange mixture of local identity and scornful uniformity. After time, anyway, we hardly

recognise the difference between cars and don't even see them. Colour too may be of initial importance to the owner of a car, perhaps one of the most direct decisions about colour ever made, but soon this also loses currency and function drowns form. Metal upon metal, sign upon sign, the colour is sprayed onto metal and held there in another relation with the skin. Gili is ambitious about his own artistic language, about extending it way beyond the formal and is certainly not interested in challenging form for the sake of it. So this installation is crowded with reference. States within states; Scotland, Jamaica, are suggested by a subconscious, almost invisible, sign language. Gili approaches the colour in his paintings in a similar way. At a certain level there need be none at all, at another, there is almost a graphic compulsion to use it. Gili wishes to bring out what is already there, not only what we see but also what we know, not just a visual manifestation,

Multinational Anthem JMWV,
R-type print on aluminium, 2002



Multinational Anthem BBBMW,
R-type print on aluminium, 2002



but a complex reading of signs that merge with the invisible.

But the whole philosophical stance of these paintings is one of revealing that which is already there, a reconfiguration of the essence of moment with a blast. The fact that the explosions are suspended within the edge, that they are that description of moment, marks not so much a process of discovery, as that blast of recognition. Painting can do that. It can also, now, follow that old premise of making something out of nothing; in this case bringing forward, with economical means, a collage of already known moves and images. The clues to thought, the range of reference, the touch, already sets the precedence for a painter who needs to create an instant scene. These are flash points, literally, points of light. For the vast majority of people explosions tend to arrive in the form of black and white newspaper print, diagram, or sometimes

with the dubious authority of a faded colour photograph.

While still a student at the Royal College, Gili painted extremely long thin panels which bore a strong resemblance to the side panels of fast cars. The sense of the object with the high long paintings picks up on the go-faster image of stripes, a tawdry reference to time. The sections of cars, only just there in recognition show the desire of a young artist to intercept a moment, whilst at the same time embodying the transience of contemporary life. Gili talks of the sort of urban graffiti drawn by the perpetrator holding a can and spraying an accompanying line as he or she walks along. Casual and vague, apparently aimless; this is merely a matter of laying a line, a trail, making a marker for time, however meaningless. Gili's work further characterises the cross roads between the transience of life and painting itself with its historical insistence

on the value of the lasting moment, or the lasting value of the moment. The painting that holds all, brimming full, with time on its side, versus the kind of empty gesture that adheres to the surface of everyday life.

In a way the pictures are somewhat perfunctory – they need to be. The paint is not applied in a labour intensive or self-conscious manner, it looks almost easy. The long standard builders yard planks with the light, slightly awkward, drawing in spray paint work as punctuating props or markers. They carry still, the same unconscious relation to photography and printed matter. The Modernist sense of ease, of light touch, as opposed to a pre or post modernist gravitas, applies to the use of paint here. Gili talks of Joaquin Vidal, a famous but contentious writer on the bullfight, [Gili left Venezuela when twenty years old to live in Barcelona so this is not an obvious or necessary

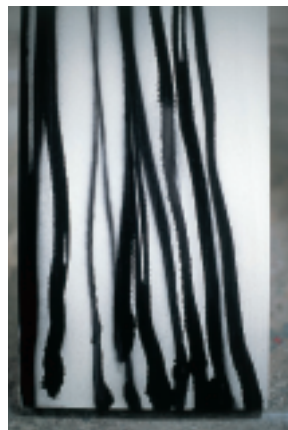
reference], who insists that the best fighter is never seen to work hard, or sweat, but makes passes effortlessly with ease and economy. Although repeated, over and over, the collective paintings of stars or explosions do not necessarily make up an installation of many stars, an exploding night sky for instance, but is more an installation of many individual exploding moments. The space between the front of the picture and the wall against which it so emphatically leans, is also important. Gili says this arrangement is in part to stop the viewer adjusting to illusion. He sometimes paints on the wall, too. The very fact of something coming forward into the space extends the experience of the work as fact. This relationship denies, perhaps, the sense of discovery for the two dimensional image is actually there at the viewer's feet.

Installation with painting has become quite common. Maybe some artists feel

Josh's Garage, detail of 1 of 4 paintings, enamel on board, 2000



Jarama, detail, acrylic and spray paint on board, 2002



Alma XVIII, acrylic on canvas, 2002



Alma XVII, acrylic on canvas, 2002

