

Ian Scott

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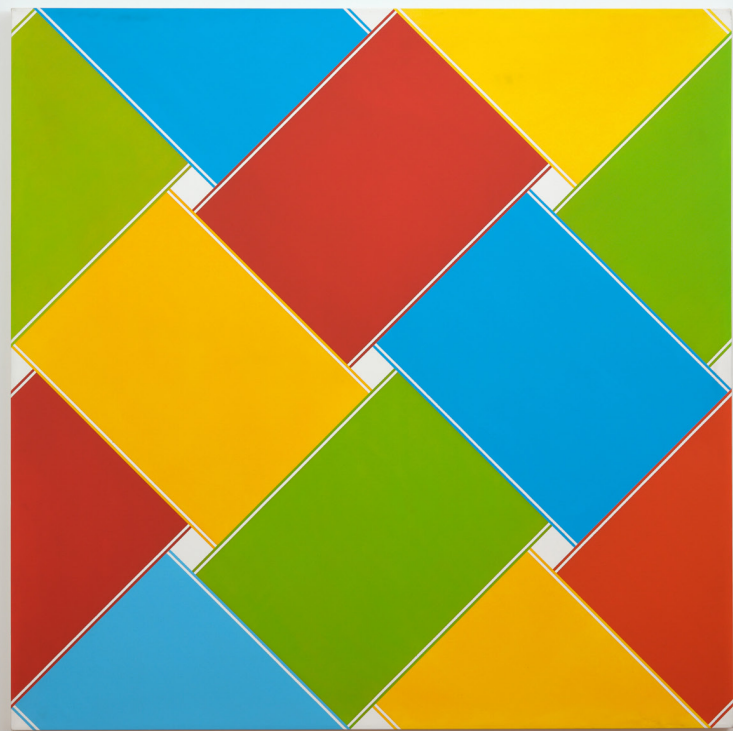
Ian Scott
Sprayed Stripes and New Lattices
2017
Installation view Michael Lett, Auckland



Ian Scott
Sprayed Stripes and New Lattices
2017
Installation view Michael Lett, Auckland



Ian Scott
Realist Paintings From The Late 1960s
2019
Installation view Michael Lett, Auckland



Ian Scott
Lattice No. 50
1978
acrylic on canvas
1727 x 1727mm



Ian Scott
Lattice No. 119
1986
acrylic on canvas
1830 x 1830mm

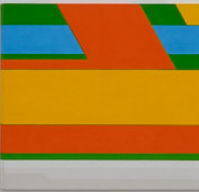
Ian Scott
Cass
1988
acrylic on canvas
1365 x 1770mm





Ian Scott
Asymmetrical Chevrons
2023

Installation view Michael Lett, Auckland



Ian Scott
Asymmetrical Chevrons
2023

Installation view Michael Lett, Auckland

Ian Scott
Untitled (Pale Green Light)
1984
acrylic on canvas
1220 x 910mm







Ian Scott

Ian Scott was born in Bradford, England in 1945 and died in Auckland, New Zealand in June 2013. He gained a Diploma in Fine Arts with Honours from Auckland University's Elam School of Fine Arts in 1967, and was awarded the Fowlds Memorial Prize.

EDUCATION

2014

Diploma in Fine Arts (Hons), Elam School of Fine Arts, University of Auckland

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2024

The Anticipation of Joy, Michael Lett, Auckland (group)
A Winter Review, Hamish McKay, Wellington (group)

2023

Asymmetrical Chevrons, Michael Lett, Auckland (solo)

2022

Three Paintings, Hamish McKay, Wellington (group)
Sprayed Strip Paintings, 1974-1976, Hamish McKay, Wellington (solo)

2021

Painting, Michael Lett, Auckland (solo)

2020

5 Paintings 1966-1970, Hamish McKay, Wellington (solo)

2019

Minimal Lattices 1978-1988, Hamish McKay, Wellington (solo)
Realist Paintings From The Late 1960s, Michael Lett, Auckland (solo)

2017

Sprayed Stripes and New Lattices, Michael Lett, Auckland (solo)

2016

Suburban Dreams, The Dowse Art Museum, Lower Hutt (group)
Exploded Worlds: Works from the Dunedin Public Art Gallery Collection, Dunedin Public Art Gallery (group)

2015

Seen From Elsewhere, Auckland Art Gallery, Toi o Tamaki, Auckland (group)
Extra Ordinary Everyday, Auckland Art Gallery, Toi o Tamaki, Auckland (group)

2014

Ian Scott: Works from the Wallace Arts Trust Collection 1966-1998, Wallace Art Centre, Auckland; Tauranga Art Gallery (solo)
Short Traditions: Abstraction from The Dowse Collection, The Dowse Art Museum, Lower Hutt (group)
Gifted: Works Donated to the University of Auckland Art Collection, Gus Fisher Gallery, University of Auckland (group)

2013

Lattices, Milford Galleries, Dunedin (solo)
Architecture of the Heart, Hawk's Bay Museum and Art Gallery* (group)

2012

Late Models, Gow Langsford Gallery, Auckland (solo)

2011

Local Revolutionaries: Art & Change 1965 – 1986, Auckland Art Gallery, Toi o Tamaki, Auckland (group)

2007

The Model Series, CoCA – Centre of Contemporary Art, Christchurch (solo)
Ian Scott: A Review, Ferner Galleries, Auckland* (solo)

2006

The Model Series, Ferner Galleries, Auckland* (solo)

2005

Walls of White, Ferner Galleries, Wellington (solo)
Lattice Retrospective, Ferner Galleries, Auckland* (solo)
High Chair: New Zealand Artists on Childhood (curated by Robert Leonard & Janita Craw), ST Paul St Gallery, Aut, Auckland (group)

2004

Toi Te Papa: Art of the Nation, The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington* (group)
Everyday Minimal, New Gallery, Auckland Art Gallery (group)
Telecom Prospect, City Gallery Wellington (group)

2003

Vuletic and His Circle, Gus Fisher Gallery, University of Auckland; Sarjeant Gallery, Whanganui* (group)

2002

Sensuality & Suburbia: The Paintings of Ian Scott 1966 – 2002, Ferner Galleries, Auckland (solo)

Representation and Reaction: Modernism and the New Zealand landscape Tradition, Sarjeant Gallery, Whanganui; Auckland Art Gallery; Hocken Library, University of Otago, Dunedin (group)

2001

New Visions: Beginning the Contemporary in New Zealand Art, Auckland Art Gallery (group)

1998

There & Back: Ian Scott 1960-1996, Waikato Museum of Art and History Te Whare Taonga o Waikato, Hamilton* (solo)

Ian Scott: Recent Acquisitions (and book launch), Wallace Trust Gallery, Auckland* (solo)

1997

Primary Structures, Robert McDougall Contemporary Art Annex, Christchurch (group)

1996

NZ Real: Varied uses of Realism in Contemporary NZ Art, Milford Galleries, Dunedin* (group)

1995

Six Paintings from 1966, Warwick Brown Gallery, Auckland (solo)

1994

Wallace Art Awards (jury prize), Wallace Trust Gallery, Auckland (group)

1993

Ian Scott, Homage and Appropriation: Paintings 1986-1989, Centre for Contemporary Art, Hamilton; Wallace Trust Gallery, Auckland (solo)

6 Lattice paintings, Peter (solo) McLeavey Gallery, Wellington (solo)

1992

Ian Scott, CSA, Christchurch (solo)

Ian Scott, Centre for Contemporary Art, Hamilton (solo)

13 recent paintings, and a painting of 1966, Peter McLeavey Gallery, Wellington (solo)

1991

Ian Scott Paintings 1968-1982, Lopdell Gallery (Te Uru), Auckland; Hawkes Bay Museum and Art Gallery* (solo)

Ian Scott, CSA, Christchurch (solo)

Signatures of Place: Paintings & Place-names (curated by Francis Pound), Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth* (group)

1990

6 recent paintings, Peter McLeavey Gallery, Wellington (solo)

Ian Scott, CSA, Christchurch (solo)

Ian Scott, Fox Street Gallery, Auckland (solo)

Situation & Style: Vestiges of Regionalism in Recent New Zealand Art (curated by William McAloon), Jonathan Jensen Gallery, Auckland* (group)

1989

Ian Scott, CSA, Christchurch (solo)

Laurence Aberhart: Recent photographs taken in the American south, October 1988 and Ian Scott: 3 paintings, 1969, Peter McLeavey Gallery, Wellington (group)

New Works by Billy Apple, W Hammond, Peter Ransom, John Reynolds, Helm Ruifork, Ian Scott, Warren Viscoe and Robin White, Peter McLeavey Gallery, Wellington (group)

Paul Hartigan, Ian Scott, Graham Snowden, Gallery 5/Fox Street, Auckland (group)

1988

Recent Paintings, Peter McLeavey Gallery, Wellington (solo)

Goodman Suter Biennale 1988, Suter Art Gallery, Nelson* (group)

1987

Ian Scott, CSA, Christchurch (solo)

1986

Ian Scott, Artis Gallery, Auckland (solo)

Goodman Suter Biennale 1986, Suter Art Gallery, Nelson* (group)

1985

6 Paintings of 1968-1970, Peter McLeavey Gallery, Wellington (solo)

Recent Paintings, Peter McLeavey Gallery, Wellington (solo)
New Paintings, Artis Gallery, Auckland (solo)
Ian Scott, CSA, Christchurch (solo)

1983

Recent Paintings, Peter McLeavey Gallery, Wellington (solo)
Ian Scott, CSA, Christchurch (solo)
The Grid, Lattice and Network (Aspects of Recent New Zealand Art), Auckland Art Gallery* (group)
University of Auckland Art Collection, Auckland Society of Arts, Auckland* (group)

1982

Ian Scott: Colour Chords and White Lattices, Auckland Art Gallery (solo)
Seven Painters / The Eighties, Sarjeant Gallery, Whanganui; Robert McDougall Art Gallery, Christchurch; Dunedin Public Art Gallery; National Art Gallery, Wellington; Auckland Art Gallery* (group)
New Zealand Drawing 1982, Dunedin Public Art Gallery* (group)
The Prospect Collection of Contemporary New Zealand Paintings, Hamilton Arts Centre, Hamilton* (group)

1981

Recent Paintings, Peter McLeavey Gallery, Wellington (solo)
Works on canvas and paper, Peter Webb Galleries, Auckland (solo)
Print Sampler, Auckland Art Gallery (group)
Works on paper, photographs and sculpture, Peter McLeavey Gallery, Wellington (group)

1980

5 paintings, Peter McLeavey Gallery, Wellington (solo)

1979

12 recent paintings on paper and canvas, Peter McLeavey Gallery, Wellington (solo)
Prints, photographs and works on paper, Peter McLeavey Gallery, Wellington (group)
Kelliher Winners' Exhibition, The Downtown-Hilton Gallery, Auckland (group)

1978

Recent Paintings, Petar/James Gallery, Auckland (solo)
Lattice Paintings, 1977 – 1978, Petar/James Gallery, Auckland (solo)
Auckland Artists, Auckland Art Gallery* (group)
Benson & Hedges Art Award 1978 (winner), The Dowse Art Gallery, Lower Hutt; Southland Museum and Art Gallery, Invercargill; Dunedin Public Art Gallery;

Canterbury Society of Arts Gallery, Christchurch; Sarjeant Gallery, Whanganui; Govett-Brewster Gallery; Waikato Art Museum, Hamilton; Rotorua City Art Gallery; Hawke's Bay Art Gallery and Museum; Auckland Art Gallery; Gisborne Art Gallery and Museum* (group)

Prints, works on paper and photographs, Peter McLeavey Gallery, Wellington (group)

1977

6 Paintings, Peter McLeavey Gallery, Wellington (solo)
Recent Paintings, Petar/James Gallery, Auckland (solo)
Recent Paintings, Bosshard Galleries, Dunedin (solo)
New Zealand Drawing, Auckland Art Gallery* (group)
New Zealand Young Contemporaries, Auckland Art Gallery (group)
Pakuranga Art Award 1977 (winner), Pakuranga Art Gallery* (group)

1976

Abstract Attitudes, Auckland Art Gallery (group)
Works on paper, Peter McLeavey Gallery, Wellington (group)
Benson & Hedges Art Award 1976, Barrington Gallery, Auckland; Govett-Brewster Gallery; Tudor Towers, Government Gardens, Rotorua; Gisborne Art Gallery and Museum; Hawke's Bay Art Gallery and Museum; Sarjeant Gallery; Manawatu Art Gallery; NZ Academy of Fine Arts, Wellington; Southland Museum and Art Gallery, Invercargill; Dunedin Public Art Gallery; Canterbury Society of Arts Gallery, Christchurch* (group)

1975

Recent Paintings, Petar/James Gallery, Auckland (solo)
Ian Scott: 12 recent oils on paper, and MT Woollaston: 12 watercolours and drawings from life, 1936-71, Peter McLeavey Gallery, Wellington (group)
Watercolours, drawings and prints, Peter McLeavey Gallery, Wellington (group)

1974

Paintings, Peter McLeavey Gallery, Wellington (solo)
Watercolours, drawings and prints [and ceramics], Peter McLeavey Gallery, Wellington (group)
Art New Zealand 1974, C.S.A Gallery, Christchurch (group)

1973

Recent Paintings 71-72, Petar/James Gallery, Auckland (solo)
Recent Paintings, Petar/James Gallery, Auckland (solo)
drawings invitational, Manawatu Art Gallery, Palmerston North* (group)



When did you start the Series?

The first idea occurred in mid-1975. I did some drawings in June '76; and the first painting in July

Are you still using the lattice motif?

Yes. There are endless possibilities in it.

What about the 'serial' method of working?

The serial method occurs naturally when you are trying to press forward to you-don't-know-what painting leads to the next. Usually you have to work through quite a few to discover what you want



Do you always work in series?

My work seems to fall mostly into series - the girl paintings, roller-strokes, sprayed stripes - though also working on completely different ideas and separate works at the same time.

Has there been a development in the series?

The basic over-and-under pattern has remained constant throughout the series: but the look and feel of the paintings has changed through several stages.

The first ones were vertical rectangles: with vertical, horizontal and diagonal white bands defined by black crayon edging. The white overlaps were both positive and negative shapes. The colour formed segmented grid between and behind the white bands. They tended to look like trellis fences. I shifted the system to a square format to make it more logical and balanced, and to give a greater sense of scale. Later on, the horizontal and vertical grid was eliminated and the colours and white bands were arranged diagonally. Gradually the number of bands was reduced and thin one-quarter-inch taped edging substituted for the crayon edging.



IAN SCOTT Untitled, February 1978
acrylic on canvas, 762 x 762 mm.

More recently I've replaced the white ground with black, and reversed the role of the coloured bands. At the moment the width of the bands has become varied, and the colour combinations have increased in number. The alterations are all intuitive.

Do you think there has been an improvement?

With all the changes, hopefully they work better now. I think the newer ones have more over-all strength and impact.

Has it been the most successful series for you so far?

I've enjoyed doing them. Running diagonals from corner to corner immediately felt right and also solved a number of formal and expressive problems for me.

What artistic problems do you look at in the series?

I think the essential artistic problem painters have here is finding a personal identity and context in relation to the immediate living and working situation; and more importantly to advanced contemporary art overseas.

Interrelated with this are painting problems: how to use the shape and edge; what kind of colour and space to have; what to do with the surface; and how all these elements contribute to the whole.



IAN SCOTT Lattice Number 56 March 1979
acrylic on canvas, 1732 x 1732 mm.

What is the role of the various elements. (a) colour; (b) edges; (c) overlaps?

All the pictorial elements should be as integrated as possible: the colour, edge, surface, form and space - the problem-solving and the discovery of the content, idea and feeling are all one thing.

COLOUR: In the first Lattices I was trying to relate the colours to the white ground; more recently to each other in a more pure colour abstract way. The colours are there to generate feeling.

EDGES: I attempt to get the edge of the painting at the exact coalescing point of the forms on the surface. The edge should force the forms of the painting inwards; yet also stretch the tension of the bands of colour outwards (pulling the whole surface flat and tense just as it physically stretches the canvas).

OVERLAPS: The overlaps give a sense of layered space back into depth - also a buckled over-and-under weaving effect: but keep the surface of the canvas flat and whole. The illusion of interwoven space redoubles the colour-space making both more abstract. The weaving also provides a way of avoiding transparent overlap. Somehow the visual space of the painting has to be at ease and accommodated to the edge of the painting. The problem is how to keep the surface literal at every point - yet visual and pictorial at the same moment.

I try to have the feeling that I'm making a total-picture, coloured object, rather than just treating the surface as something upon which one puts arbitrary colours and paint shapes.



IAN SCOTT Small Lattice Number 18 July 1978
acrylic on canvas 814 x 814 mm.

Are they all on canvas: and is there any special reason for that?

Yes: on white-primed cotton duck - some on raw duck. I like canvas. It has a good feel. There is something exciting about a tautly-stretched canvas surface.

What about scale? Are you satisfied with the sizes?

I would have liked to increase the scale of them - to say ten feet or twelve feet square. This is of course impractical, considering the problems of storage, or of obtaining wide canvas. But I do feel they would look better if bigger.

How do you see these works in relation to the contemporary New Zealand art situation?

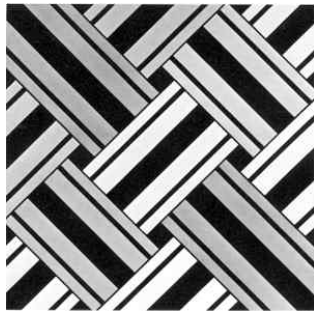
One of the things I'm trying to do is to make the whole canvas the subject, rather than have the subject inside the painting as in much New Zealand work to come up-to-date with the latest methods.

Are there any influences?

I'm influenced by the things I see and experience around me every day. I admire the paintings of Gordon Walters very much; and also contemporary American painting and its ideas. I think some of the Lattice patterns are my own.

Do you mind the references to figuration - fences, suburban landscape?

The first ones happened to look like white trellis (fences); more recent ones like the plastic backs of folding chairs. References are inevitable with the overlapping system, although it's not what the paintings are about. I happen to like the suburban landscape, with its neatness, bright colours, clean edges - an area of white weatherboards, a touch of bright red curtain to one side, green hedge in front and blue sky above: it's what I see from my studio window - a very arbitrary, scattered, yet very even sort of colour-order that is suburbia. I don't mind the reference to these things: but I'm trying to do something else. I've tried to make the work more abstract as I've gone along.



IAN SCOTT Lattice Number 60 August 1978
acrylic on canvas 1143 x 1143 mm.

How are the paintings made?

The canvases are painted horizontally on saw-horses. I work on them from all sides, so as to treat them like objects. (lay down the bands with masking tape, shifting the width intuitively until it feels right. I then paint in the colours directly. I never overpaint the colours or alter them. If something's wrong with the paint thickness or colour or proportion I destroy it and start again. The first Lattices were made by taping from corner to corner, then putting crayon each side of the tape until the system covered the entire canvas.

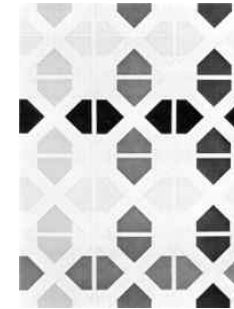
How many Lattices are there?

I started numbering them early in January 1977 for identification purposes. Since then I've done twenty-seven small Lattices (up to 32 by 32 inches), and fifty-six larger ones (up to 68 by 68 inches). Before that there are probably about another fifty works of different shapes and sizes, including the first experimental ones - in all, probably over 150 paintings. I've also destroyed quite a few.

What importance do you give to preliminary studies?

The first ones were done without preliminary studies. Later on, I made rough sketches and worked out proportion and measurements beforehand to see what it would look like. Gradually, as the series has developed, so has the complexity of the studies. Now, I do drawings to scale, and colour studies - in the last few months full-sized mock-ups on canvas, to consider more systematically all the possibilities and variations. But, with all the preliminary studies, none of the paintings ever turns out as planned. I usually end up playing around with the taping on the canvas to change the scale.

IAN SCOTT Lattice Number 17 March 1977
acrylic on canvas 1738 x 1299 mm.



Speaking of pictorial movement: do you see the Lattices as expansive?

I've attempted to get a feeling of balanced tension between the sense of movement and expansion of the diagonals and the self-contained nature of the image. I like the idea of the bands running right across and out of the painting in a free uncontained way, and yet meeting at the edge of a logical cropping-point - although the different Lattice formats do different things in these respects.

Where-to after the Lattices?

That's a good question. It's a bit of a problem. I've worked on other ideas concurrently with the Lattices to open up other possibilities. I think the lattice image is capable of further extension. There's always somewhere one can go. You just have to keep working at it.

IAN SCOTT was born in England in 1945 and came to New Zealand in 1952. He began painting (landscapes) at fifteen. His first exhibition was in 1963; and in 1965 he won the junior section of the Kelliher Prize. He was educated at Kelston Boys' High School and later at Elam (1964-67), graduating with honours. After this, his work moved from portraiture, to realism (1968-70), to abstract expressionism (1971-72). In 1972 he started painting full-time. He began the Lattice series of paintings in 1976. He won the Pakuranga Art Award in 1977 and 1978, and the Benson and Hedges Art Award in 1978. He is presently living in Auckland.

As well as being widely represented in group shows Ian Scott has had one-man shows in Auckland and Wellington. The latter include exhibitions at the Barry Lett Gallery (1970), the Peter McLeary Gallery (1970,1974), the Bosshard Galleries (1977) and the Petar/James Gallery (1978).

The answers in this article were written by Ian Scott, in response to written questions put to the artist by Michael Dunn.

Originally published in Art New Zealand 13 Spring 1979

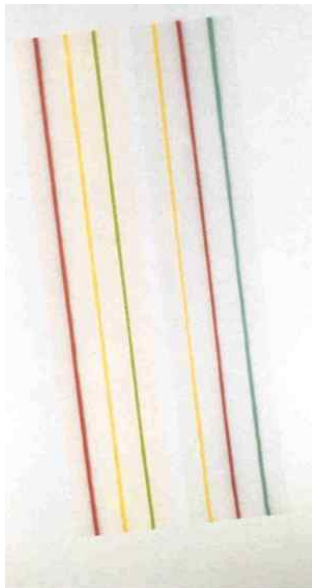


All in a Quiver Ian Scott's Sexy Sprayed Stripes

EDWARD HANFLING

Quiver was painted by Ian Scott in May 1974. It's part of a series of around 50 works called the Sprayed Stripe paintings. Quiver has six stripes (applied using commercial spray cans) set on two pale-coloured rectangles, floating on a white ground, bounded by a narrow aluminium frame.

You might say: 'Well, it's just a few stripes on a slab of white—a child could do just as well'. That's one response; a reaction to the reductiveness of the painting, its apparent banality. There have been other responses. Apparently, a number of women have declared to the artist: 'That's a sexy painting!' (1) I want to reconcile these antithetical attitudes or attributes. The Sprayed Stripes are about both these things—about banality and sex. And more: light, growth, sensuality and suburbia, fecundity and formalism.



IAN SCOTT Quiver 1974
PVA on canvas, 2185 x 1143 mm.
(Collection of the Auckland Art Gallery Te Toi o Yamati)

'Quiver' is a good title. While many abstract artists give their paintings, frankly, swankacious titles, this title is simple and direct, and rich with interpretive possibilities. 'Quiver' is my starting point.

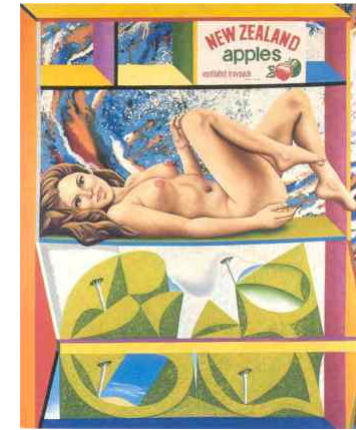
Primary meanings: 'A case for holding arrows (sometimes also the bow).'(2) On a simple level, the encased stripes could be seen to approximate, schematically, a quiver of arrows. Further: 'To shake, tremble, or vibrate, with a slight but rapid agitation. (Said of persons, especially under the influence of some emotion, of things, lights, etc.).'(3) Those fuzzy bars of intense colour might evoke vibrations of light.

Some background information on Scott himself might be useful here. He grew up in the Sunnyvale/Henderson area after arriving in New Zealand in 1952 at the age of eight. In 1971 he moved to Nelson to take up a teaching position, but in 1973 returned to West Auckland and in October of that year began the Sprayed Stripe series. In 1974 when he painted Quiver he was relatively young (29 years old) and he responded to, and celebrated, his immediate environment. It's an abstract painting, but it conjures up a scene in the mind: early 1970s - West Auckland - the fringes of the city - weatherboard houses - vineyards - orchards - the glare of the sun - the heat of summer.

The germination of Scott's Sprayed Stripes can be found in works from 1970 (the year before he shifted from Henderson to Nelson). Consider the work entitled Teller - a confluence of banality and sensuality. A West Auckland context is indicated not just by the apples, but also by the apple-shaped landscape with its (perhaps rather suggestive) Kauri tree. Along with the nude this is an element that derives from earlier works from the Girlie series, such as Leapaway Girl (1969). Rubbery young ladies cavort and frolic, and launch themselves in improbable feats of athleticism over equally improbable landscapes. These

landscapes, despite their schematic rendering (which makes them look rather like golf courses), emblematised the West Auckland environment—bush and cleared land, Kauri trees and waterfalls, sand and surf. The nudes are reminiscent of those that appear in American Pop Art; they're not just an indication of the conduct of 'Westie' sheilas. Display and consumption. Sex commodified - made banal.

In Teller the girl seems to advance towards the viewer, out of a brightly coloured rectangular frame within the painting (and seemingly out of the picture frame itself). The frames or boxes within Teller and other paintings from 1970 such as Agronomist, might be seen as a form of packaging - like the boxes in which apples are sold. They could also be seen as the seeds of future abstract paintings. In the Sprayed Stripes all visible traces of that fructiferous West Auckland environment have dissipated. Yet the atmosphere lingers, and the colours are equally evocative, heightened to a pitch that is almost over-ripe.



IAN SCOTT Agronomist 1970
Oil on canvas, 2134 x 1730 mm.

The titles of paintings in the Sprayed Stripe series indicate the extent to which Scott invites this kind of reading: Pale Light; West of Auckland; Blooming White; Auckland Morning. Quiver is even more suggestive, connoting that heightened state of emotion or excitement associated with love-making. There are numerous literary uses of the word 'quiver' in this sense. Cupid's quiver of arrows is an obvious reference point.(4) Quivering virgins also crop up frequently. Ovid's Metamorphoses refers to: 'Diana, with a sprightly train of quiver'd virgins.'(5) In Thomas Middleton's play, A Chaste Maid in Cheapside (1630), Maudline declares to the appropriately named Sir Walter Whorehound:

... you have a presence, sweet Sir Walter,
Able to daunt a maid brought up in the city:
A brave court-spirit makes our virgins quiver
And kiss with trembling thighs ... (6)

We can also take a masculine perspective of Scott's Quiver. It can be observed that the stripes are tensed by the edges of the pale rectangles within which they are contained. They have a certain tautness and virility. It is apparently possible for one to have one's quiver full. In Anthony Trollope's Barchester Towers the rector of Puddingdale is Mr Quiverful. It should come as no surprise that he has 14 children.

In the late 1960s Scott's paintings were, almost palpably, about sex. Consider Lawn Lovers of 1969, for instance. Quiver is less explicit but it retains something of the same feeling. It has a salubrious atmosphere (light, fruit, sex) but it has too its banal component (commodification and suburbia). Quiver might not seem obviously suburban. But consider the origins of the Sprayed Stripes: Scott recalls that the idea came to him when he saw his brother using cans of spray paint to repaint his car (which, of course, is a very 'Westie' thing in itself).(7) He pinched some of these cans and began experimenting, to see what effects could be achieved with them. Eventually he arrived at a method, which determined the composition of the Sprayed Stripes: The canvas was tacked onto a sloping piece of board—white acrylic paint rolled on to form the ground. The floating rectangular shape was sprayed on lightly using a stencil, the rest of the canvas being masked off. Pieces of wood were then used to form channels down which the stripes were to be created. To make each stripe Scott would take up a can of appropriate hue and spray in a downwards movement—walking purposefully backwards—the can held out steady, yet active, in front of him—the paint thus ejaculated into that narrow aperture.

Those stripes (which look so simple to the idle spectator) required a considerable degree of precision. The width of the stripe depended on the height at which the spray can was held—that had to be assessed initially, and then maintained consistently for each stripe. It required of the artist a quiverly act, meaning one that is active, nimble, rapid, smart. That physical process must be seen as part of the meaning of the work. It is not expressive and existential in the manner of Jackson Pollock's 'action painting'—in fact Scott's method involved the partially mechanical operation, and impersonal touch, of the spray can. However, the Sprayed Stripes are imbued with a certain kind of feeling—a quiver of emotion, of sensuality and fecundity—which, oddly, derives from the banal suburban environment in which the works were

produced. It is more than a reference - it is implicated in the very making of the paintings. In using commercial spray paint Scott has said that he wanted to capture the feeling of a sophisticated house-painter.⁽⁸⁾ He had the idea of making art out of commonplace materials that could be purchased at a hardware store, using a method that was direct (not traditional 'arty' materials or techniques).⁽⁹⁾



IAN SCOTT Lattice no 152 1987
Acrylic on Canvas, 1780 x 1780 mm.

Scott had previously tried to capture something similar in *Colour Card Family* (1966). This was essentially a direct copy of a commercial paint advertisement. It drew attention to the banal painted surface of the suburban house. The advertisement was, in itself, a banal painted image. Scott converted it into a painting (an art image) to be hung on a banal painted surface (the wall of an art gallery).

More recently *Paint and Water* (1992) is, Scott says, 'about what can be bought at a home decorating centre on a Saturday morning: wallpaper, paint, brushes, instruction manuals, tacky frames and banal paintings'.⁽¹⁰⁾

Perhaps the most bald assertion of the connection between painting a house and painting a canvas is to be found in the work simply called *House Painter*, again from 1992. It seems to articulate the creation of something out of nothing - 'nothing', in this sense, being that which is considered worthless, which is overlooked or looked down upon, such as the prosaic items of suburbia. 'High' art and 'non-art' mingle. In the *Sprayed Stripes* the spray can effects the shift from suburbia to sexiness. As one radio reviewer observed:

With this most ordinary implement and a limited colour range . . . red, green, blue, black . . . you know . . . the ones you use to revamp the old kitchen chairs or the kids' bikes. . . Scott has used these to produce works of art of startling beauty and sensitivity.⁽¹¹⁾

It must be remembered that when Scott was growing up in West Auckland the weatherboard houses were relatively new, the paint still fresh and tacky (in more than one sense). He sought to capture the intense colours and orderly appearance of the suburban environment.



IAN SCOTT House Painter 1992
Acrylic on canvas, 1280 x 1830 mm.

Perhaps the viewer may perceive that Scott's *Sprayed Stripes* have more in common with American Post-painterly abstraction than with his own earlier figure paintings. Certainly he was influenced by artists such as Kenneth Noland, Morris Louis and Jules Olitski. Their paintings have generally been regarded as primarily visual objects-pure abstraction as endorsed by the formalist critic Clement Greenberg. John Elderfield has made the following observation of Morris Louis's *Stripe* paintings: 'Far from harmonising

the individual stripes by colour, Louis usually vibrates them, creating an illusion of painterliness in their optical flicker.'⁽¹²⁾ A similar effect is evident in Scott's *Sprayed Stripes*. However, Scott is interested in more than 'painterliness'. He juxtaposes narrow threads of colour to evoke the vibrations of natural light. Common coloured pigments become quivering sunlight.

Consider also the composition of *Quiver*. The stripes are not aligned with the edges or corners of the surface; they have a free, floating appearance. Other paintings in the series such as *Auckland Morning* (June, 1974) demonstrate this to a greater extent than *Quiver*. Compare this with a painting by the American Morris Louis, such as *Burning Stain* (1961). The American abstractionists tended to determine the edges of the work after painting it. They cut the canvas to size so as to maximise the tension between surface and edge, and minimise any sense of figure on ground (or figuration). Scott also adopted this procedure (known as 'cropping') but, in the *Sprayed Stripes*, he did so less 'actively'. He did not, as Greenberg would say, 'galvanise' the composition. His stripes are not obviously locked or pinned to the white ground.

It seems clear that Scott was exploring something beyond the intricate and insular formal problems that concerned the Greenbergian American painters. Scott's own account of the *Sprayed Stripes* gives a clear indication of this: 'There is a necessity in this country', he states, 'for the development of a free, new abstract painting, independent of past European styles and ideas, and unhindered by recent American formal concerns.'⁽¹³⁾

Scott almost seems to be playing about with those formal concerns, undermining their purity and severity, just as he had done (albeit more directly) in his *Homage to Morris Louis* five years before. The stripes are re-presented in *Quiver*. They become a more subtle metaphor for sexiness and suburbia. If the stripes stand for sex, then they also connote growth or generation. They take on an embryonic appearance. The composition is spacious, not 'closed'. There is a sense of expansion, of opening out. *Quiver* can be seen as a painting about fecundity. I have talked of light (light stimulating growth) and of sex (a celebration of sensuality) and of orchards and fruit. The *Sprayed Stripes* were certainly fruitful. They produced 'quiverfuls of offspring'⁽¹⁴⁾ -the extensive *Lattice* family.



IAN SCOTT Model Series no 12 (Girl with Malevich)
2001
Acrylic on canvas, 1730 x 1243 mm.

The *Lattices* can also be seen to retain the suburban connotations of the *Sprayed Stripes*. They have been seen to evoke such everyday objects as trellis fences and deckchairs. In Scott's most recent paintings (*Girl with Malevich*, February 2001, for example) they become grates in the brick walls of houses. *Girl with Malevich* draws together many of the ideas and dualities I have discussed: sensuality and banality, reductive 'high' modernist aesthetics and blank suburban walls. A scantily-clad woman, who appears to have stepped out of a *Playboy*-type magazine, poses before Malevich's Suprematist Composition: *Airplane Flying* of 1915, hung on a sunlit, white-painted brick wall. With its angled geometric forms floating on a white ground, the Malevich throws further light on the *Sprayed Stripes*. For Malevich, that expanse of whiteness signified infinity or 'nothingness' - beyond sight, beyond representation. The forms that he launched into that void were, according to Malevich, 'pure feeling'⁽¹⁵⁾ - again, beyond conventional representation. Scott's *Sprayed Stripes* could also be seen to represent 'feeling'-they're emblems of emotion- and for him that feeling is associated with light, love, sex and suburbia.

1. Ian Scott, conversation with the author, 22 March 2001.
2. The Oxford English Dictionary, second edition, Vol. XIII, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1989.
3. *ibid.*
4. See, for example, William Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*, I, i, 274 ('if Cupid have not spent all his quiver in Venice, thou wilt quake for this shortly').

5. Quoted in *The Oxford English Dictionary*, second edition, Vol. XIII, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1989.
6. Thomas Middleton, *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*, I, i, 118.
7. Ian Scott, op. cit.
8. Ian Scott, op. cit.
9. The artist has described this as an 'almost shop-fabricated method'. (Scott in 'Nineteen Painters: Their Favourite Works', *Islands* 10, Summer 1974, p. 376.)
10. Ian Scott, quoted in Warwick Brown, Ian Scott, Marsden Press, Auckland 1998, p. 134.
11. Photocopied text of radio review of an exhibition at the Peter Mcleavey Gallery broadcast on 2YC's *The Arts in Wellington*.
12. John Elderfield, Morris Louis, *The Museum of Modern Art*, New York 1986, p. 74.
13. Ian Scott, in 'Nineteen Painters: Their Favourite Works', op. cit., p. 378.
14. The expression is that of the writer Bumstead quoted in *The Oxford English Dictionary*, op. cit.
15. See Kasimir Malevich, 'The Non-Objective World', in Herschel B. Chipp (ed), *Theories of Modern Art*, University of California Press, Berkeley 1968, pp. 341-346.

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