

# NINO MIER GALLERY

LOS ANGELES | BRUSSELS | NEW YORK | MARFA



IAN DAVIS

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WWW.MIERGALLERY.COM

# NINO MIER GALLERY

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Ian Davis constructs acrylic paintings that explore labor, ritual, power, and natural and artificial landscapes. Davis focuses on the formalism of the built environment—grids of prison cells, rows of empty seats around a proscenium, stacked windows on a building's facade. Repetition and geometry may be soothing, but Davis captures how it orders and restrains our lives. The artist's clean, graphic layers establish the settings of each work, while finer brushwork depicts groups of individuals, featureless aside from standardized work uniforms such as white lab coats or hard hats, engaged in tasks en masse. Figures seem to study phenomena outside the picture plane, to travel towards unknown destinations, and to gather resources not visible to the viewer. A disquieting atmosphere of disconnection pervades the works: the disconnection between viewers and painted subjects; between subjects and each other; and between subjects and the principle which organizes them within the composition.

*Ian Davis (b. 1972, Indianapolis, IN; lives and works in Los Angeles, CA) holds a BFA from Arizona State University. He has had solo exhibition at Night Gallery, Los Angeles; Josh Lilley Gallery, London, UK; Leslie Tonkonow Artworks and Projects, New York, NY; and Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City, MO; among many others. His work is represented in public collections such as the Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, Overland Park, KS; The Saatchi Gallery, London, UK; Harvard Business School, Cambridge, MA, US; and the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City, MO, US, among others.*

# **NINO MIER GALLERY**

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## **SELECTED WORKS**

# NINO MIER GALLERY

LOS ANGELES | BRUSSELS | NEW YORK | MARFA



Ian Davis  
Violet Hour, 2022  
Acrylic on panel  
30 x 34 in  
76.2 x 86.4 cm  
(IDA22.001)

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Ian Davis  
*Violet Hour*, 2022 (detail)  
(IDA22.001)

# NINO MIER GALLERY

LOS ANGELES | BRUSSELS | NEW YORK | MARFA



Ian Davis  
*Container Ship*, 2022  
Acrylic on linen  
45 x 50 in  
114.3 x 127 cm  
(IDA22.002)

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Ian Davis  
*Container Ship, 2022* (detail)  
(IDA22.002)

# NINO MIER GALLERY

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Ian Davis  
*Cellphone Tower*, 2022  
Acrylic on panel  
16 x 12 in  
40.6 x 30.5 cm  
(IDA22.003)



# NINO MIER GALLERY

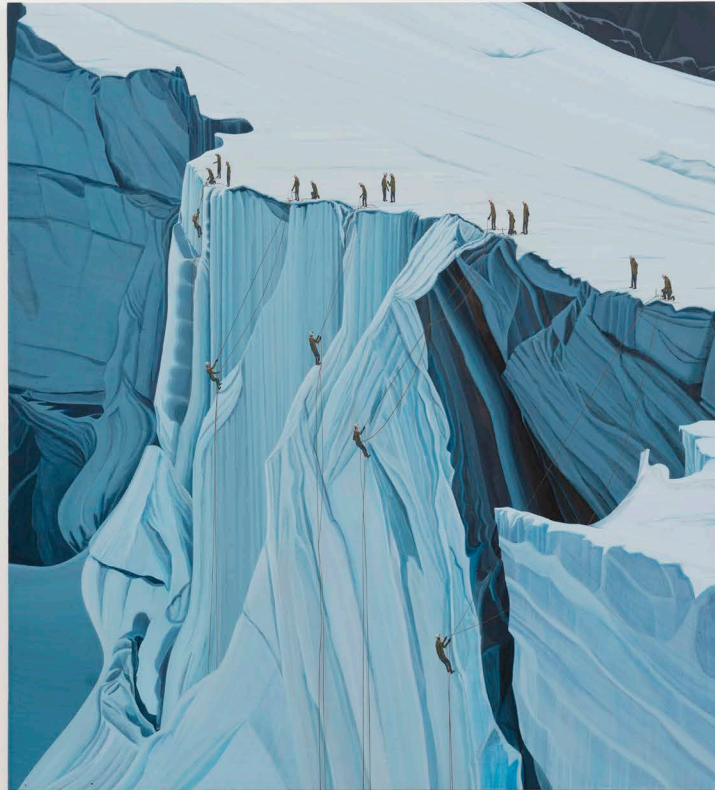
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Ian Davis  
*Cellphone Tower*, 2022 (detail)  
(IDA22.003)

# NINO MIER GALLERY

LOS ANGELES | BRUSSELS | NEW YORK | MARFA



Ian Davis  
*Ice climbers*, 2022  
Acrylic on panel  
40 x 36 in  
101.6 x 91.4 cm  
(IDA22.004)

# NINO MIER GALLERY

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Ian Davis  
*Ice climbers*, 2022 (detail)  
(IDA22.004)

# NINO MIER GALLERY

LOS ANGELES | BRUSSELS | NEW YORK | MARFA



Ian Davis  
*Counter Clockwise*, 2020  
Acrylic on panel  
55 x 50 in  
139.7 x 127 cm  
(IDA22.006)

# NINO MIER GALLERY

LOS ANGELES | BRUSSELS | NEW YORK | MARFA



Ian Davis  
*Counter Clockwise, 2020 (detail)*  
(IDA22.006)

# NINO MIER GALLERY

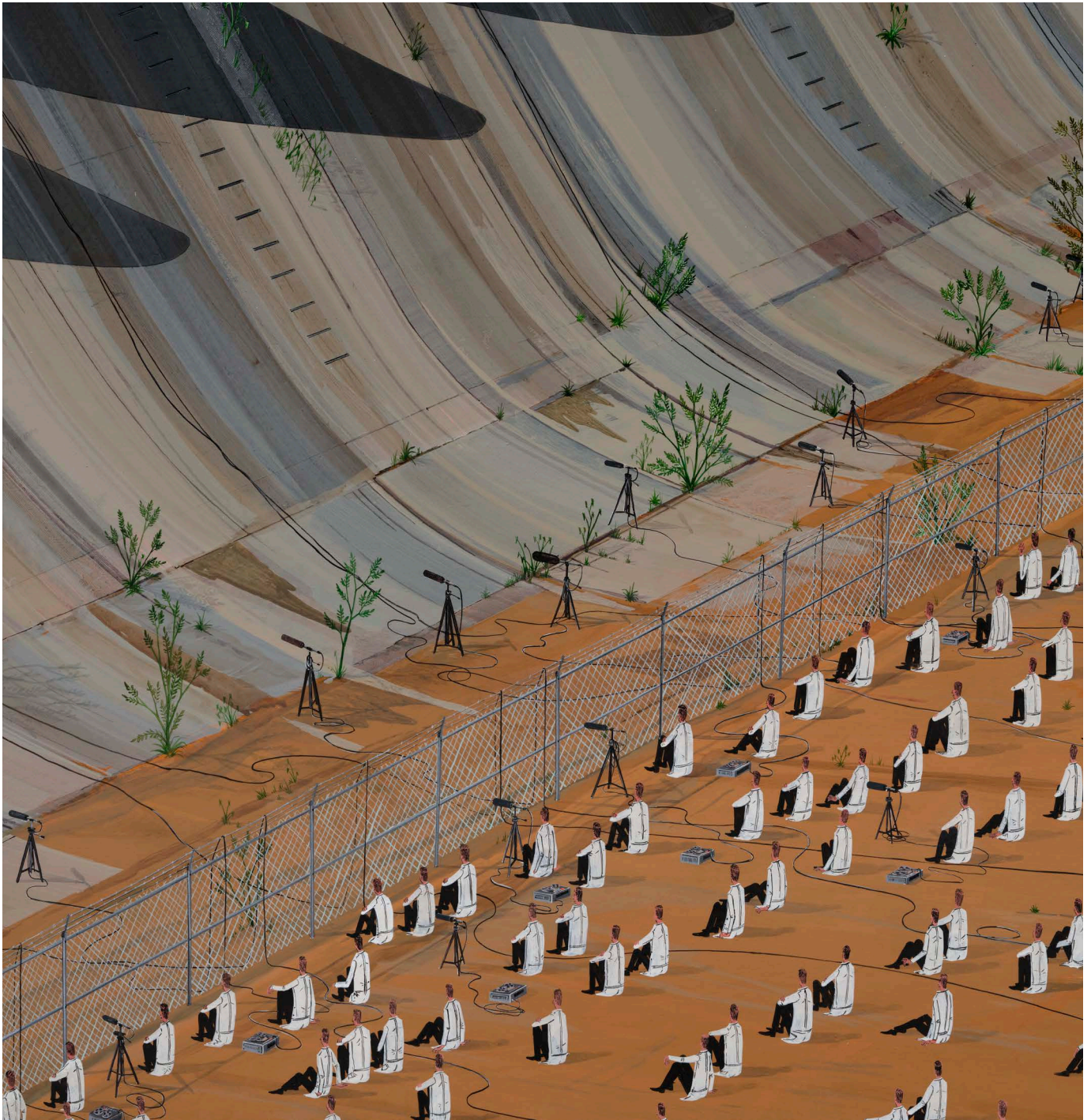
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Ian Davis  
*Babylon*, 2022  
Acrylic on linen  
80 x 75 in  
203.2 x 190.5 cm  
(IDA22.007)

# NINO MIER GALLERY

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Ian Davis  
*Babylon, 2022 (detail)*  
(IDA22.007)

# **NINO MIER GALLERY**

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## **INSTALLATION VIEWS**



# NINO MIER GALLERY

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Installation view of Ian Davis's  
*The Mass Ornament*  
(July 2 - August 20 2022)  
Galerie Judin, Berlin, DE.

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Installation view of Ian Davis's  
*The Mass Ornament*  
(July 2 - August 20 2022)  
Galerie Judin, Berlin, DE.

# NINO MIER GALLERY

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Installation view of Ian Davis's  
*2<sup>nd</sup> Dark Age*  
(October 13 - November 17 2018)  
Night Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, US.

# NINO MIER GALLERY

LOS ANGELES | BRUSSELS | NEW YORK | MARFA



Installation view of Ian Davis's  
*2<sup>nd</sup> Dark Age*  
(October 13 - November 17 2018)  
Night Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, US.

# NINO MIER GALLERY

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Installation view of Ian Davis's  
*Expert Advice*  
(July 15 - August 13 2016)  
Josh Lilley Gallery, London, UK.

# NINO MIER GALLERY

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Installation view of Ian Davis's  
*Expert Advice*  
(July 15 - August 13 2016)  
Josh Lilley Gallery, London, UK.

# NINO MIER GALLERY

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Installation view of Ian Davis's  
*Projection*, 2014 & *Fountain*, 2022  
at *Liminal Spaces*  
(September 9 - November 15 2022)  
Galerie Isa, Mumbai, IN.

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Installation view of Ian Davis's  
*Apotheosis*, 2020  
at *Time Takes a Cigarette*  
(February 11 - March 24 2021)  
Josh Lilley Gallery, London, UK.



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**PRESS**

# NINO MIER GALLERY

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artnet® news

July 2016

## artnet Asks: Ian Davis and the Art of Politics

By Artnet Galleries Team



Ian Davis, *History of Nature*. Courtesy of the Josh Lilley Gallery.

When Ian Davis puts a brush to his canvas, his inspiration can range from the tumultuous world around him to the hypnotic, rhythmic blues of Jimmy Reed. Based in Los Angeles, the 43-year-old painter sees his oeuvre as a continuum rather than a specific body of work, though he notes that his projects often feel very “of the moment” and reflect the issues he has with authority. And indeed, looking at his works one can feel underlying anxiety and political tensions, such as the eerily uniformed stance of the masses in *Climate* (2008) or the palpable anger of the protesters in *Something’s Burning* (2013). Despite these dark themes, however, Davis also constantly strives to weave optimism into his paintings, noting that the world too easily “looks for what’s wrong.”

We recently sat down with the artist to discuss his creative process, the benefits of relocation, and his upcoming “Expert Advice” exhibition at Josh Lilley Gallery.

### **What are some things that inspire and drive your practice?**

These things fluctuate. It depends on what I’m interested in at the moment, which could range from something strange I saw on the street, to a book I’m reading, to personal anxiety. Sometimes ideas come from a healthy place of interest, other times they come from a personal desire to enact some form of revenge. A few of the recent works come from real-life political activities and gestures of resistance. The painting *Projection* (2014) is based on an event in Maine where the Governor had murals removed in a municipal building. The murals depicted workers and were deemed inappropriate. Apparently depicting workers is Socialist. As a response, people began projecting the image of the mural onto the outside of the building.

# NINO MIER GALLERY

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Ian Davis, *Broadcast* (2014). Courtesy of the Josh Lilley Gallery.

## **What is your source material for the paintings?**

It's usually a synthesis of a few sources. It could be a newspaper clipping, an image from an old reference book, a still image from a Jacopetti and Prospero documentary, an Arthur Lee lyric. The landscape and light here in California is becoming important. It can be anything. I've become an expert at sniffing out the sort of visual information that looks like it could become one of my paintings, but I've always believed that by relocating yourself you are, in effect, shuffling the deck. I figure out on a surface level what is happening in the painting pretty quickly. I describe a setting, then place an activity within that. The underlying motivation usually reveals itself much later.

## **Who are the characters in your paintings? Are they characters?**

They aren't characters so much as actors. And sometimes they aren't "acting" at all. They represent the motivation of the mass. They aren't individuals. You know how you hear about a person getting mugged in broad daylight and nobody does anything about it? Sometimes I think I'm painting all those people who didn't do anything. In other cases, the people are motivated to act but have no clue how to. Many of the figures are so-called experts. It increasingly seems to me that my subject matter is an extended conversation about my issues with authority. The individual might not exist in my work. I'm not sure. I'm fine with not being sure!

## **What are you working on at the moment?**

I always have work in progress. I like to have 10 or 12 paintings around me, some of which will never make it. They happen pretty slowly, sometimes hundreds of hours on a big painting, and I need a bunch of things going so I can bounce around from one to the other. My conceptual goal at the moment is to find an alternate head space from which I can conceive my work. I'm figuring out how to project and work toward optimism in my paintings, rather than starting from a 'finger-pointing' position. Maybe that comes with the painter's territory, being the god of my own little world. It's so easy to look around and see what's wrong. It would be nice to also do the opposite every now and then.

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**CV**

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## IAN DAVIS

Born 1972, Indianapolis, IN, US.  
Lives and works in Los Angeles, CA, US.

## EDUCATION

- 2005 Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture, Residency & Fellowship, Skowhegan, ME, US.  
1994 B.F.A., Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ, US.

## SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2022 *The Mass Ornament*, Galerie Judin, Berlin, DE.  
2018 *2<sup>nd</sup> Dark Age*, Night Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, US.  
2016 *Expert Advice*, Josh Lilley Gallery, London, UK.  
2014 *Rituals*, Leslie Tonkonow Artworks + Projects, New York, NY, US.  
2012 *Jewel Sermons*, Leslie Tonkonow Artworks + Projects, New York, NY, US.  
2010 *Faith in the Future*, Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City, MO, US.  
2009 *Strange Geometry*, Leslie Tonkonow Artworks + Projects, New York, NY, US.  
2007 Leslie Tonkonow Artworks + Projects, New York, NY, US.  
2006 *The Great Divide*, Acuna-Hansen Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, US.  
2000 Art One Gallery, Scottsdale, AZ, US.  
1998 *Eight Million Stories*, New School for the Arts, Scottsdale, AZ, US.  
Art One Gallery, Scottsdale, AZ.

## GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2022 *Liminal Spaces*, Galerie Isa, Mumbai, IN.  
2021 *Time Takes a Cigarette*, Josh Lilley Gallery, London, UK.

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- 2020 *Gifts from the Flat Files*, Tamarind Institute, Albuquerque, NM, US  
*Majeure Force*, Night Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, US.
- 2019 *Go Ahead: Stories of Location and Belonging*, Tamarind Institute, Albuquerque, NM, US.  
*Ten Years at Josh Lilley*, Josh Lilley Gallery, London, UK.  
*We Contain Multitudes*, curated by Ali Banisadr, Galerie Isa, Mumbai, IMB.
- 2017 *Apocalypse Summer*, ltd los angeles, Los Angeles, CA, US.  
*True Lies*, Night Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, US.
- 2013 *50 Gifts for 50 Years*, Sheldon Museum of Art, Lincoln, NE, US.  
*Peekskill Project V*, Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art, Hudson, NY, US.
- 2012 *Collapse*, RH Gallery, New York, NY, US.  
*Oppenheimer @20*, Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, Overland Park, KS, US.  
*Corporations Are People Too*, Winkleman Gallery, New York, NY, US.
- 2011 *Streams of Consciousness: The Histories, Mythologies, and Ecologies of Water*, Salina Art Center, Salina, KS, US.
- 2009 *I Thought Our Worlds Were The Same*, Zeitgeist Gallery, Nashville, TN, US.
- 2008 *The Freedom Centre*, Hales Gallery, London, UK.  
*Maritime: Ships, Pirates, and Disasters*, The Contemporary Art Galleries, University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT, US.  
*Utopia/Dystopia*, Leslie Tonkonow Artworks + Projects, New York, NY, US.  
*The Colonial Show*, The Second Street Gallery, Charlottesville, VA, US.
- 2007 *Works from the Permanent Collection*, Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, Overland Park, KS, US.  
*Sheldon Survey: An Invitational*, Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, Lincoln, NE, US.  
*Block Party II*, Daniel Weinberg Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, US.
- 2006 *25 BOLD MOVES*, House of Campari, Los Angeles, CA, US.  
*Reality Effect*, Santa Ana College, Santa Ana, CA, US.
- 2005 Acuna-Hansen Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, US.
- 2004 *Miscegenation*, The Chocolate Factory, Phoenix, AZ, US.  
*Merry/Peace*, Sideshow, Brooklyn, NY, US.  
*Born in the U.S.A.*, Galerie Art One, Zurich, CH.
- 2003 GRA Gallery, New York, NY, US.  
Fugitive Art Space, Nashville, TN, US.

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- 2002 GRA Gallery, New York, NY, US.
- 2001 *Above Ground*, Dam, Stuhltrager, Brooklyn, NY, US.
- 1999 *Horror*, 381g, San Francisco, CA, US.  
Art One Gallery, San Francisco, CA, US.  
*Three Painters*, 381g, San Francisco, CA, US.
- 1998 Whole Gallery, San Francisco, CA, US.
- 1997 *Four*, 111 Minna Gallery, San Francisco, CA, US.
- 1996 Artworks Gallery, San Francisco, CA, US.
- 1995 *Transitions*, Arizona State University West Gallery, Phoenix, AZ, US.
- 1994 *Painting and Sculpture*, Step Gallery 9999, Tempe, AZ, US.  
*Joe Robbins, Ian Davis, Matthew Kruse*, Step Gallery 709, Tempe, AZ, US.

## SELECTED PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, Overland Park, KS, US.  
The Saatchi Gallery, London, UK.  
Progressive Corporation, Mayfield Village, OH, US.  
Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City, MO, US.  
Wellington Management Company, Boston, MA, US.  
Fidelity Investments, Boston, MA, US.  
Harvard Business School, Cambridge, MA, US.  
Sheldon Museum of Art, Lincoln, NE, US.

## PUBLICATIONS

- 2022 *The Mass Ornament*, Verlag der Buchhandlung, Cologne, DE.
- 2007 *Ian Davis: Paintings*, Leslie Tonkonow Artworks + Projects, New York City, NY, US.