

DIAZ CONTEMPORARY

Francine Savard

13 January to 12 February 2011

Opening Thursday 13 January from 6 to 8

Diaz Contemporary is pleased to present Francine Savard's third show with the gallery. In this new body of work, Savard translates the first sentences of novels into paintings, assigning a colour to each word. Words that are similar or can be grouped together, grammatically or conceptually, receive the same colour. Sections representing each word, sized according to their lengths, are strung together to create a new form, in which colour replaces linguistic symbols.

The original sentences tend to be relatively brief and ambiguous, and have the flavour of an archetypal "once upon a time..." full of imaginative potential and anticipation of what is next. Through Savard's process they become part of a new story.

Savard goes a step further by engaging with each incipit in both French and English, choosing from among many translations and working out the delicate relationship between the two languages. The resulting paintings are in some cases very similar, and in others surprisingly different, highlighting the volatility and complexity of the tools we use for communication. As in much of her work, by engaging with the process of translation in such a multifaceted way, Savard brings out the beautiful and overwhelming possibilities of linguistic and visual codes, and helps us to revel in the enigma of subjective understanding.

This new work reflects Savard's ongoing interest in the relations between language, form, and colour. As always, the resulting objects are highly refined and beautifully pristine, demonstrating her formal concerns and her technical skill. They are amazingly sculptural paintings, precious and jewel-like. In addition to the aesthetic appeal, we are swept up in her process, held by the complexity of her conceptual exercise and her attention to detail.

Francine Savard is a Montreal-based artist. After studying graphic design at the Royal College of Art in London, she earned her Master's in visual arts from Université du Québec à Montréal in 1994. Her work can be found in the collections of the National Gallery of Canada, the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec and the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal (where she was featured in a solo exhibition in 2009-2010), as well as many private and corporate collections in Canada.