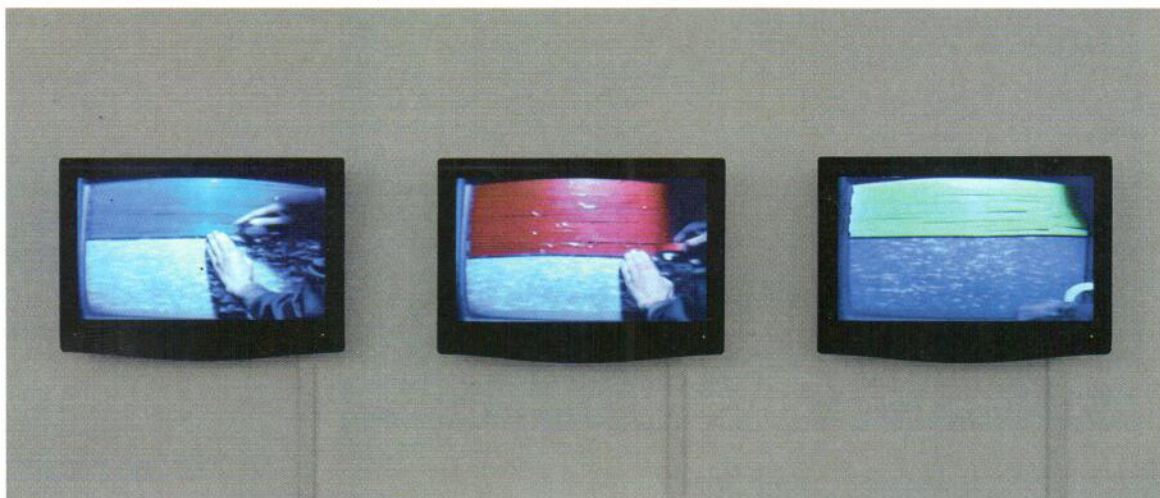


View of Jaime Davidovich's *Blue, Red and Yellow*, 1974, video installation, 12-minute loop; at Henrique Faria.



## JAIME DAVIDOVICH HENRIQUE FARIA AND MEDIANOCHE

The art of Jaime Davidovich (b. 1936) cuts two ways. Made in a Duchampian vein, it's at once amusing and confounding, both well reasoned and rough, with an improvisational air of whimsy. Verging on a retrospective of sorts, two concurrent exhibitions featured enough of the Argentine artist's output to raise an important question: when will his monograph be written?

"Taped Projects" at Faria surveyed Davidovich's work of the '60s and '70s (he moved from Buenos Aires to New York in 1963), tracking his transitions from painting to installation to video. The earliest piece, *White Landscape* (1962), is a monochrome canvas with neither stretcher nor frame, adhered with tape to the wall. Already, the artist was probing the physical dynamic between the

art object and its environment. Later, he eliminated canvas and worked entirely with tape, as can be seen in a series of schematic mixed-medium drawings that propose large wall installations—one of which is re-created in the gallery.

*Taped Project* (first executed in 1972) filled a whole wall with vertical strips of transparent tape. Each piece is crimped halfway down, causing the lower portion to wrinkle and fold while the upper section maintains the sheen and unbroken regularity of polished glass. It's a scintillating delight; the wall is no longer a place for the work, but implicit in the work itself.

That Davidovich remained possessed of a painter's obsession with surface and line as he began experimenting with video is evident in works such as *Road* (1972) and *Blue, Red and Yellow* (1974). The latter, presented on three monitors, is effectively the threshold piece connecting the Taped Projects to Davidovich's later work in television and video. We watch as the artist's hands line the static screens of small TV sets with horizontal bars of red, blue and yellow tape. The piece has a gentle, hypnotic rhythm that enhances the quiet absurdity of watching the obstruction of a television screen on a television screen.

In "Re:Play" at MediaNoche (a non-profit exhibition space and residency program in Spanish Harlem), more than a dozen pieces of video art dating from 1972 to 2011 made a strong claim for Davidovich as a pioneer of the medium and demonstrate the continuity of his esthetic interests. Prior to producing

"The Live! Show" (1979-84), a wacky program for public-access television that he hosted in the guise of Dr. Videovich, he thoroughly explored the long take. Pieces such as *3 Mercer Street* (1975), *New York Project* (1975) and *Two Windows* (1976) are essentially uninterrupted shots of the urban landscape, either still or slowly panning.

Davidovich's most recent video, titled *Urban Landscape* (2011), distills the various phases of his long career. Projected onto a canvas bearing a thick impasto of silver and gold is a nearly indecipherable video. Three seats are placed so near the screen that viewers must crane their necks to see the image, which turns out to be an endlessly oscillating shot looking down on a pile of trash. As with all his best work, simple means prove capable of conveying complex thoughts.

—Charles Marshall Schultz