

# HUFFPOST ARTS & CULTURE



## Is Tim Bavington the Ed Ruscha of Las Vegas? (VIDEO)

Posted: 08/22/2012 4:02 pm

... so said one of my art comrades and confidante Mat Gleason in a text exchange while I was chillin' with an unlit post-prandial cigar in a Las Vegas pool.

The tale starts like this...

Who is **Tim Bavington**? Those were my thoughts when art friends of mine got in a heated argument about Bavington when I was in Las Vegas in March shooting a film on Mat Gleason. I was on film patrol in a car of people (the accused shall remain nameless) when I first became aware of Bavington. First, we drove by Frank Gehry's Cleveland Clinic Lou Ruvo architectural whimsical-wonder when the sun-drenched 120-degree-no-AC critiques began. On deck was Bavington's Pipe Dream; a major installation a few hundred yards or so from the Gehry building. But hold on... and freeze frame on Pipe Dream...

This is the moment that ultimately led me to Bavington's studio months later.

Back to the moment in the car...The badinage on Pipe Dream got so heated that one of the locals said to me, "You're not recording this are you?" When one of the locals fears that he may be in one of those "holes in the desert" spoken of in Martin Scorsese's Casino,, perhaps, I felt at the moment that Bavington was the don of Las Vegas contemporary art and if I were to expand my audience from Los Angeles I had to film Tim Bavington. Cut to:

Many films and moons later I took a road trip to Colorado to see my father. It was in the middle of Arizona when I Facebooked Matthew Couper, a local Vegas artist connected with the Contemporary Art Council, whom I had met in March at its 23rd annual juried show, curated by Mat Gleason. I told Couper I was going to be in town for two night and that I was itching to film/photograph some local artists. Couper made some suggestions and Bavington was not on the list. This was unacceptable to me because I wanted to meet Bavington. I felt like Oliver Stone in Mexico wanting to interview El Chapo. Not that Bavington belongs on the FBI's Most Wanted, but he was on my 10 most wanted. Still green in the art world, I didn't have the spine or inner dexterity to put the fear of God into Couper, because he's a nice guy with a New Zealand accent. so I simply Facebooked him this:

"Can you get Bavington? lol"

CUT TO: POOL SIDE, LAS VEGAS

Days later I'm sitting in an undisclosed Las Vegas Strip pool when I get a unanticipated email from Joan Adams, Tim Bavington's studio assistant. She was excited to have me visit their studio. Uh... dumbfounded... was it the rum... was it the half-naked blue haired women from Arizona next to me...or was it the hopped up kids splashing water on my iPhone? I was no longer the burn card at the bottom of the deck. So what can I say, Couper made it happen. I got lucky 7's on a simple FB request.

After shaking off the sun drenched post-coital after glow, I quickly texted Gleason:

"Tim Bavington is to Las Vagas, as (fill in blank) is to Los Angeles?"

Gleason responds: "Ed Ruscha."

So here we have it. Here are three comped films by my company that led me to a pipe dream where fear and loathing in the desert is only a state of mind and getting lucky in Vegas was about as cool and exciting as meeting Tim Bavington and his better-half, Joan Adams.

(Film note: Tim Bavington's "Tennis Ball Yellow" opens with my first attempt to use a Go Pro camera in my films)

Source: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/eric-minh-swenson/tim-bavington-ed-ruscha\\_b\\_1807444.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/eric-minh-swenson/tim-bavington-ed-ruscha_b_1807444.html)