

"Iran do Espírito Santo: Ingleby Gallery," *Herald Scotland*, August 2, 2010.

heraldscotland

Iran do Espírito Santo: Ingleby Gallery

The Brazilian artist presents some crystal clear concepts at his first UK solo show.

While the mainstream blockbuster exhibition of this year's Edinburgh Art Festival is likely to be Impressionist Gardens at the National Gallery Complex on the Mound, Iran do Espírito Santo's Minimalist monochromism at the opposite end of the Waverley Valley should provide a pared-down counter.

Dealing in "seductive Minimalism", as various reviewers and commentators have coined it, in a manner that increasingly subverts the genre, Espírito Santo is one of Brazil's key contemporary artists, best known for his industrial and everyday sculptural forms distilled down to their very essence, realised in "incongruous" materials. There are brushed steel "lightbulbs" and strangely squat or extended cans. The effect is like looking at a form's quintessence, where, if you reduced it any further, it would no longer be what it appears to be.

And then there are the wall drawings, from earlier Minimal representations of construct – the graphite bricked walls that culminated in his 2007 Venice Biennale exhibit echoing the exterior brick wall construction of the pavilion on its interior surface in Espírito Santo's characteristic monochromatic palette, fading from dark to white – to his current series of repetitive, painted, light-regimenting surfaces. Espírito Santo has called it "sort(ing) out the chaos of everyday existence". One reviewer described it as "transforming objects into icons of pure contemplation".

Certainly, handling one of Espírito Santo's brushed steel, solid lightbulbs with cotton gloves at Ingleby as the show, almost fully installed, was photographed, I could feel the physical satisfaction of the form and the almost exasperating impotence of its being.

This is Espírito Santo's first solo UK exhibition, although his work has been seen at Ingleby as part of last year's Sometimes Making Something Leads To Nothing. Now based in Sao Paolo, he was born in Mococa in 1963, studying at Sao Paolo's Fundação Armando Alvares Penteado for his BA (Hons) in fine arts. His work is now held in collections worldwide, with a preponderance in the Americas, including the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco.

The Ingleby Gallery exhibition is a forcefully quiet affair, or perhaps quietly forceful. Downstairs, photograms evanesce on the walls, whilst in an ante-room, a mirror folds down the wall to the floor, as if a jarringly solid representation of its molten qualities. Elsewhere, what appears (and yet does not) to be a glass of water on first glance is in fact a solid construct made entirely of Swarovski crystal. Occupying a lonely plinth, its seductive weight and luminescence give it the kind of allure one might feel for a tumbler of water in the desert.

Upstairs, Espírito Santo has conceived a vast vision in shades of grey, painting four walls in horizontal or vertical graduations from the darkest grey to the lightest. It took four assistants – three brought from Brazil, and one from Ingleby – to paint the work over two weeks. This major new work is the fifth in his *En Passant* series. Stop a moment, and watch as the light, soaking through veiled windows, transforms the painting.

Iran do Espírito Santo, Ingleby Gallery, 15 Calton Road, Edinburgh, 0131 556 4441,
www.inglebygallery.com, Until September 25.