

GAGOSIAN GALLERY



★ FTWeekend

Critics' choice

Life&Arts



John Chamberlain's 'It Ain't Cheap' (1965)
Bill Jacobson

top loans in Chamberlain's first UK public exhibition, a highlight of this year's Edinburgh Festival. Looking on to Edinburgh's Botanical Gardens, Inverleith's stunning white classical interiors have hosted fine recent painting shows (especially of Chamberlain's contemporary Joan Mitchell), and are an effective backdrop for Chamberlain's painterly qualities, from the shiny golds and greens of the aluminium "Socket" series (1978) to the multicoloured tower "Illustrious Confusion" (2010), completed just before his death. Chamberlain acknowledged debts to painters — "Kline gave me the structure, de Kooning gave me the colour" — but he is also an artist of the American industrial vernacular: Donald Judd noted "the hard, sweet, pastel enamels, frequently roses and ceruleans, of Detroit's imitation elegance for the poor". That contrasts with Inverleith's restraint — until you reach the gardens, formal yet verging on wild, where late, looping monumental works in green, pink and bronze-coloured aluminium find a setting matching their own exuberance.
rbge.org.uk, 0131 248 2971, to October 4

John Chamberlain
Inverleith House, Edinburgh
Forget form and space, solid and void. John Chamberlain's definition that "a sculpture is something that if it falls on your foot, it will break it", threw off formal constraint and proclaimed that sculpture could be as rough, raw and macho as

American mid-century painting. Chamberlain found his sculptural language in the 1950s by running over automobile parts with a truck to bend them into the shapes he wanted, curving, flattening, twisting, before reassembling them as welded, painted collages. For decades, in bright steel sculptures

such as the glowing purple crushed squat form "It Ain't Cheap" (1965) and the lyrical horizontal red "Gondola Walt Whitman" (1981-82), he combined the expressiveness of American abstraction with the deadpan of pop and minimalism's truth-to-materials. These works are among