

Jorge Tacla

RAMIS BARQUET

Jorge Tacla paints landscapes, patches of city and desert, that are spooked by the past. The terrain depicted in this gorgeous show was generally his native Chile, whose history of conquest and dictatorship supplies the ghosts. Like Anselm Kiefer, Tacla paints in a language that is half-public and half-hermetic: his pictorial lexicon includes traditional Catholic gore, rock heaps from the Atacama desert, and architectural details from Chile's neoclassical institutional buildings.

Tacla's major concerns come together in *Healing Ceremony*, a worm's-eye view of streakily rendered pillars and entablatures, all perspectively perfect. Superimposed on top of the picture plane are bright blue hieroglyphic squiggles: it's as if he has tattooed his painting with the scars of a lost or slaughtered tribe.

In *Pigeon House*, he paints the Passion's crown of thorns, not with the usual carmine gobbets but with light, watery hash marks, an understatement that comes off beautifully. Sometimes, however, such flourishes are a bit too luscious to shoulder the works' mythical-historical heft.

In a few canvases Tacla put aside the lamentations in favor of brilliantly hedonistic paint spreading. *Meat Carrier*, a view into an airplane cockpit encrusted with dials and consoles, has as its base layer a blue so supersaturated it would have made Sam Francisco blink. And in a large portrait of star soprano Verónica Villarroel, Tacla shows his easy mastery of portraiture: the singer's garment is a brushstroke, her reddish hair is caked on subtly, and the flesh of her face is so thinly painted that the tiny vertical lines left by the brush fibers are still visible. This faux-slapdash handling is more than enough to bring the formidable, glaring diva to life.

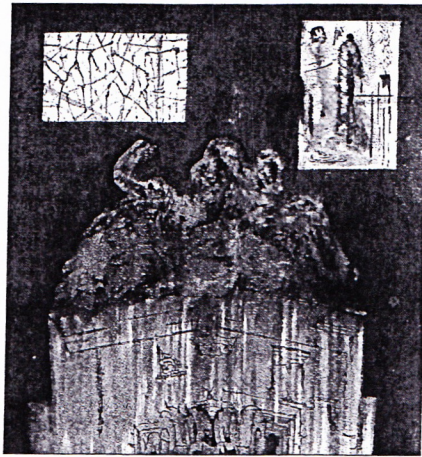
—Chase Madur

Jules Olitski

AMERINGER/HOWARD

Over the nearly five decades he has been exhibiting his work, Jules Olitski has tried countless methods of applying pigmented material to canvas. Whether the diaphanous airbrushed surfaces of his color atmospheres of the 1960s or the frostinglike slatherings of acrylic in the '80s and '90s, Olitski's paintings have made a point of asserting material and color as content. In his new paintings, the artist has reached yet again for innovative ways to make pigment and medium reveal image. And except for the occasional relapse into well-worn tropes, such as a tenuous line skirting the picture's edge, he has produced some of the most ravishing paintings of his career.

Like iridescent oil floating on the surface of water,



Jorge Tacla, *Pigeon House*, 2000, oil on canvas, 70" x 64".
Ramis Barquet.

complete with dappled light reflected off a turbulent sea. In fact, these new paintings celebrate the drama of natural phenomena as much as they do the versatility of pure paint.

—Kit White



Jules Olitski, *Celebrations: Orange*, 2000, water-based acrylic on canvas, 72" x 60".
Ameringer/Howard.

a realist, and it could be argued that his search for the real intensified over the years and motivated his later embrace of symbolism and surrealism.

Although he was raised a Catholic and spent most of the 1960s in Italy, Gillespie's realism has more in common formally with the meticulously rendered surfaces of the Northern Renaissance than with the idealized forms of southern Europe.

Self-Portrait (Bald) (1971–72), for instance, with its crisp delineation, subtle modeling, diffuse light, and flattened space, recalls the German artist Hans Holbein's portraits. In fact, almost all Gillespie's works exhibit a distinctly northern sensibility in their reverence for descriptive detail and insistence on a shallow, claustrophobic space.

Gillespie's grand project—mythologizing his life—was most evident in the portraits of his wife. In *Fertility* (1991), he casts her as a Venus/Madonna, portraying her face and body with a brutally unflattering realism and surrounding her with still-life objects that serve as attributes. Here, a shovel, a basin of water, and a container of kerosene refer not only to the natural elements but also to passion, sex, and birth. Gillespie crowns his goddess with a naked lightbulb set in a nimbus of yellow paint—a halo that celebrates and mocks his own ambition.

—Nancy Grimes



Gregory Gillespie, *Fertility*, 1991, mixed media, 110" x 84".
Forum.