



Jorge Tacla, *Two Point Perspective*, 1993, oil on jute, left panel: 104 x 72"; right panel: 104 x 32".

JORGE TACLA

NOHRA HAIME GALLERY

Jorge Tacla harmoniously arranges apparently unrelated sensibilities on the canvas, traveling through time to select seemingly disparate pictorial elements. His more orderly scribbles possess the magisterial look of Egyptian hieroglyphics, his earthy jute canvases that of water-damaged papyrus scrolls or crumbling sandstone, and his palette—black, brown, and white—is that of the Old Masters. Yet the odd geometric forms and atmospheric ambience of Tacla's work suggest some cybertech underworld, an interplanetary wasteland where asteroids and space invaders battle to the death.

In contrast to his previous work, in these paintings Tacla relies much less on three-dimensional representation: landscapes, when they occur, look as if they were selected merely for the patterning they describe. Nor does his work continue to portray paintings within paintings, or switch perspectives. In fact, aside from a few passages that suggest the mountains and stones of an arid desert landscape (and one very beautiful fragmentary sketch of a baroque church facade viewed from below), he seems to have left off painting recognizable objects or scenes altogether, in favor of what might best be described as "doodles."

Row upon row of these markings make up the underpainting of each canvas. Reminiscent of the jottings and marginalia of Leonardo's notebooks, they obsessively describe one fantastical notion after another (architecture, landscape, physical gestures, circulatory systems) sometimes accompanied by a written word or two that suggest meanings for the "doodle" and/or the painting as a whole.

At the same time, the nature of the doodle is to be nothing more than an act of exploration, a trace of a moment's thought, and that is what is most challenging about this show—its lack of an overarching theme, however metaphorical. Most of Tacla's earlier shows have had a subtitle, such as "Memory of Place," or "Time and Space in Negative." Involvement in the desert landscapes and tortured politics of Chile informed Tacla's work at certain points in his career. This show, by comparison, seems to describe moments at the periphery of consciousness—a wordless domain composed of a variety of thoughts and memories, systems and plans—how fitting, then, that it should be untitled.

—Justin Spring

Artforum. March 1994.