

CRISTIN TIERNEY

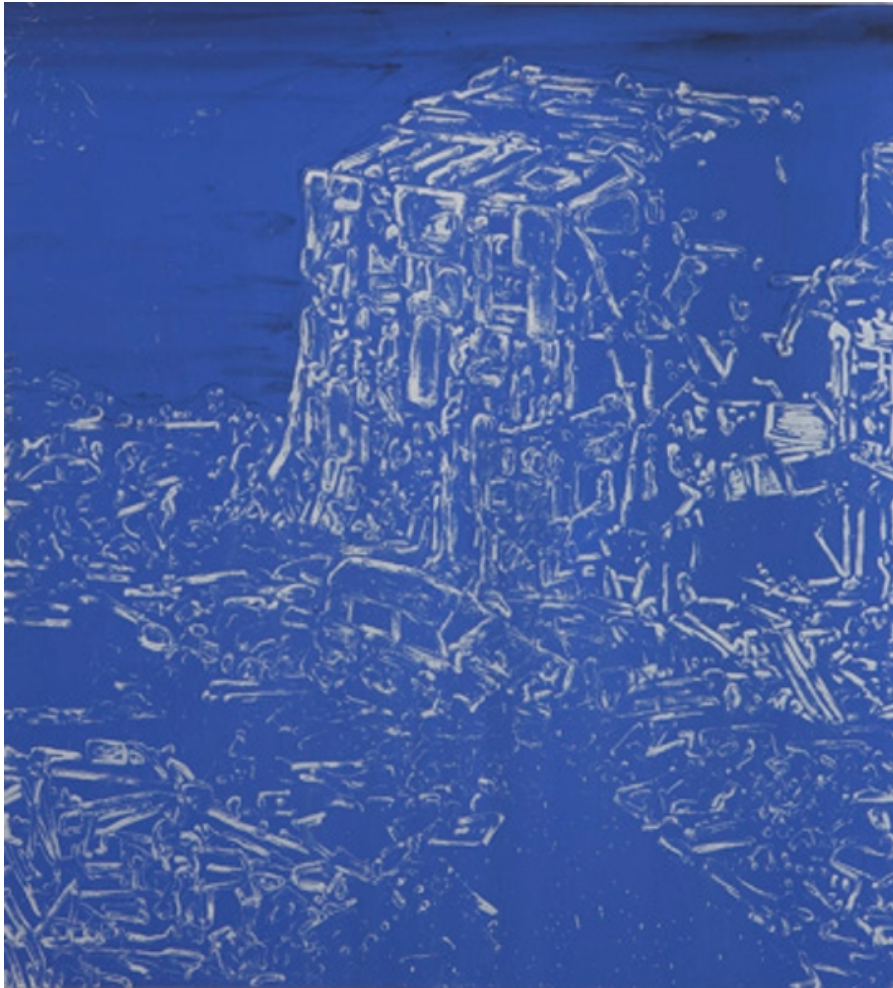
BOMBLOG

ART

Jorge Tacla: Altered Remains

by Rebecca Kaye Nov 23, 2011

Jorge Tacla's latest exhibition cuts the ground out from under the notion of—well—solid ground. The result? A realm where trauma is the only *terra firma*.



Jorge Tacla, *Altered Remains 4*, 2011. All images courtesy of Cristin Tierney Gallery, New York.

Jorge Tacla's *Altered Remains* challenges the most basic human assumptions about the cornerstones of civilization: namely, the notion that people, buildings, landmarks, and cities are safe, settled, and unshakable. Instead, the shuddering expanses of Tacla's canvases usher us into worlds littered with post-apocalyptic detritus—the "rubble" of once interior, private spaces mercilessly torn open and dispersed.

In this vision, things appear as just shadows of their figurative selves and yet Tacla manages to invest each organic shape with meaning. We can almost read burnt vehicles, ruined structures, mechanical waste, and human figures in the repeating arcs of his work. The paintings show landscapes that may have once

been ordered and familiar, now stripped to their bedrock—but not beyond all recognition. The disaster that caused the trauma has already occurred and we, as the viewer, can only bear witness to aftermath.



Jorge Tacla, *The Rubble Bed of b and b*, 2011.

With Tacla, even the artistic process is traumatic. At his exhibition buzzing with people, the artist took a moment to discuss his painting technique and the special meaning the process has within the context of his work. I was particularly curious as to how he created the water-stained appearance of his forms, reminiscent of the elusive “ghost print” in printmaking. I was surprised to learn that Tacla doesn’t use a print to create them—no, that would be too easy.

Instead, as Tacla explained, he paints each layer of thick lines by hand and then waits for them to dry before scraping off most of the paint, except for the outlines, which remain. And repeat. It is a process that requires much patience, discipline, and a certain pleasure in initiating a continuous cycle of creation and deconstruction. For Tacla this cycle mirrors his method for portraying the world. In conversation, he noted, “we walk every day on temporary rubble...Destruction and creation are part of the evolutionary process.”



Jorge Tacla, *Altered Remains 1*, 2011.

The paintings, then, are essentially destroyed layer by layer until they are completed. The perpetual removal of paint creates long, exposed scars upon the canvas, layered and repeated as each line is decentralized from its original location. In this way, *Altered Remains* affirms that no “ground” is safe in art, nor in life. Everything and anything can be displaced and replaced—endlessly.

For Tacla, the repetition is key: “If I put a little mark on my skin over and over again it becomes a trauma that stays forever,” the artist explained. The trauma in *Altered Remains*, therefore, results not from one wave of action but from a painful current: layer upon layer, wave upon wave, until you have a perfect storm.

When asked why trauma is always at the heart of his paintings, Tacla flashed a grin that concealed his secrets:

“It is traumatic because I like it to be like that.”

Jorge Tacla *Altered Remains* is showing at the Cristin Tierney Gallery from October 27, 2011 to December 10, 2011.

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