

Janaina Tschape is best known for her photographs, videos and performances that enter a dreamy universe of lush landscapes, fantastic mythological narratives, and nostalgic innocence. After a decade hiatus, she continues this journey in a series of large abstract paintings on view at Sikkema Jenkins. Expressive, geometric, ethereal, obsessive and organic, these works are an extension of the artist's expression made open to the public.

In an oil painting titled *Nessun Dorma*, rich shades of olive green and mustard yellow explore the grounds of the canvas, forming paths of abstract shapes along the way. These circular webs of color are a result of the artist's gestural strokes that remind us of the works of the AbEx painters, expressing thoughts and feelings without preconceived intentions. There is no agenda or concept on how one painting will be created. She takes it one stroke at a time, and the end result is a world of fantastic imagination and a longing for utopia.

The titles for each of the paintings merge the world of fiction with reality. *Nessun Dorma*, which translates to "let no one sleep", is an aria from Giacomo Puccini's opera *Turandot*, and is a proclamation that no one shall sleep until the princess finds the name of the unknown prince who has created this challenge. Tschape appropriated this romanticism and drama of the story into the painting, and allowed for the dwelling of this dreamy state into the abstracted landscape. The flow of shapes and colors of the painting represents the feelings and imagination of the artist and makes it available to the viewer to share the reverie.

"I think I'm trying to find a landscape that is in my memory," the artist states during an interview at her studio in Brooklyn. "Sometimes just thinking of stuff that makes you draw this funny world where you're looking for something, but you don't exactly know what it is? And I think its to look for it on canvas, searching for this memory of a landscape, of an idea. Its just like a memory search somehow." This intuitive process of painting, of adding dense layers, colors, and shapes as they happen, results in a refreshing look at nature and reality and allows for an appreciation of a transformative timelessness of our world.

The emphasis on the spontaneous layering of the forms is also seen in *Poppy*, a watercolor and pastel painting that creates a more ethereal environment than the works on oil. Large gestural strokes of shaded

watercolors create the base for constellations of small geometric shapes, scattered throughout the canvas in the midst of tulip-shaped forms with long stems. Uniformity is revealed not through formal precision but expressive freedom. The intensity of these spontaneous repetition and obsessive detailing gives testimony to the artist's belief in imagination and the simple pleasures of painting.

In his book *The Sight of Death* T.J. Clark says: "When I am in front of a picture the thing I most want is to enter the *Picture's* world: it is the possibility of doing so that makes pictures worth looking at for me." Similarly, Tschape asks us to share the space she has created, to enter and explore the heavenly world in these beautiful abstract landscapes.

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