

FIELDS OF CONTEMPLATION

Diego Jacobson began his journey with abstraction as he searched for a meditative vehicle to explore the essence of spirituality. A lifelong concern, spirituality in art drives his artistic endeavors. The spontaneous application of paint seemed to provide a refuge from the materialism of today's world, and the space of the canvas, far from being a vacuum, became a vital source of physical energy. He soon discovered that abstract gesture could convey a sense of profound content, and color was the force for enhancement and spiritual refinement. The complexity of painting itself, based on the choice and application of pigment, surface textures, the natural markings of the artist, and expressive motivation, appealed to his awareness of the process, and how it serves his personal need to create his works as fields of contemplation.

More given to reflection than realism, Jacobson shares a romantic attitude with many artists, past and present, who are preoccupied with myth and ritual and determined to create a passionate abstract art replete with transcendental meaning. It is their search for forms and color that could translate such meaning that may be seen as the basis for work that transcends the merely physical. He has often said that he finds "something magical involved in the process of creation." The artist performs as an alchemist, transforming basic strokes of color into a richness of spiritual content - like lead into gold. Nothing is arbitrary or accidental; every stroke is inspired by sublime feelings. He is seeking a metaphor for the sacred, at a most secular period of time, and only the act of painting itself satisfies his needs.

The basis of Jacobson's painting is a fluid style of abstraction that has reduced color and form to essential strokes. The messages of Hans Hofmann and the Color Field painters are clearly reinvigorated for the present in his work, as their tenets of subjective expressionist abstraction take on personal meaning. With a focus on the idea that, as Hofmann describes, "the quality of work originates in the transposition of reality into the purely spiritual," artists must take into account their own inner life. The dynamic plasticity of painting, with an awareness of color and space, could then reveal the pulsating sensations of life itself.

In the latest works by Diego Jacobson, some of the bold strokes of color that are representative of his painterly style give way to an illusive linearity dominating the abstract nature of the canvas, and an occasional trace of figuration also emerges. The lack of completeness in these figurations and linear notations is an interesting counterpoint to the abstract fields of color, although his titles hint at the narrative and symbolic meaning of the imagery and enhance the viewer's appreciation of its sources of reference and inspiration. His is not a totally objective approach to abstraction, but one predicated on the subjective and emotional. His fluid, almost autonomous, brushwork celebrates the symbolic meaning of color as much as it intensifies its aesthetic value within the realm of his subjects. This intensification of the potentialities and properties of the specialized medium of painting for a means of expression is what links Jacobson's painting with his own mystical philosophy - perceiving a deeper meaning in life's experiences than the strictly rational. Through abstraction, he explores humanity's contemporary approach to spiritual apprehension and contemplation.

It is his belief that the conception of expressionist art can reveal the world of the spirit and bring a profound understanding of a realm of harmonious existence that touches the soul of the viewer. The artist is dedicated to affording the viewer (and, perhaps, himself as well) this experience of the unexplained by means of the abstract elements of painting. Just as each individual may make himself the instrument of creation in the measure of his awareness of the spiritual; the artist has the innate ability to continually manifest this gift. He respects the process of painting as integral to its creation, as well as the emotional impact of the final result, in order to achieve the association with the quest for the spiritual he believes is essential to his art. It is just such a belief in the resonance and emotional power of abstract images that informs the art of Diego Jacobson.

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