

YISHAI JUSIDMAN

investigaciones pictóricas / pictoric investigations

jardín borda, cuernavaca, morelos, méxico

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[RENATO GONZÁLEZ MELLO]



de izquierda a derecha / from left to right:
A.B., L.Y., J.A., 1991-92
óleo sobre tela / oil on canvas
1.7 x 1.7 m c/u / each



instalación de payasos-esferas
clown-spheres installation, 1990-91

Yishai Jusidman's exhibition at the Jardín Borda of Cuernavaca included works made over several years and can be divided into three parts. The first one consists of landscapes painted in encaustic on wooden spheres, reproducing famous landscapes by Monet, Turner and Constable but here translated into three-dimensional surfaces. The second part consists of large, realistic portraits of famous clowns. The paintings are close-ups of their faces, often presented at an angle, which heightens their similarity to photographs. The same portraits are also reproduced on spheres hung from the ceiling. Since the images cover the whole 360° of the sphere, they are at times difficult to decipher. Finally, the third part consists of the latest works, the *Geishas*. These include large paintings and smaller lithographs that appear completely white. Little by little, the viewer becomes aware of the presence of barely

perceptible female figures also painted in white. Over time, as the pupil contracts because of the light, the viewer is able to distinguish the volume of the figures.

Yishai Jusidman is a painter of ideas. With a degree in philosophy and a thesis on Wittgenstein, Jusidman does not hide his objective of calling into question the concept of "expressing" something, of making an art which does not "express" anything, without that something that can not be grasped immediately and which therefore requires a "deep" interpretation. The expression, the "real message of the artist," does not exist in the intellectual universe of this painter. He boasts that his clowns are painted with the famous "golden light of Rembrandt," meaning perhaps to discredit any "interpretation" that might attribute that light to the mysticism of the painter or something of that

sort. He also wants to restore the light to the painting, to let the painting be the painting, an object we can see and not a hidden meaning we have to "interpret." In order to achieve this, Jusidman tests the limits of the possibilities of perception. The viewer must walk around the spheres to understand what they represent. He or she must walk away from the clowns to avoid being overwhelmed by the close-up. Faced with the *Geishas* the viewer must approach the painting and then walk away, sideways, like a museum-goer trying to pass himself off as a connoisseur. Without undergoing this ritual, the viewer would be unable to perceive the work's space and volume. Jusidman's painting is a painting about space, whether that of landscapes, portraits or figural composition, to use the academic term. His space is illusionistic but not easy. It does not attempt to hide the paint-

ing but rather to give it presence. If we were to speak about different styles in the work, we would have to mention the Baroque and Mannerism. The clowns recall Rembrandt, Zurbarán and Ribera, as do the *Geishas*. Jusidman has invented a luminous version of shadow painting. He has demonstrated that light, far from facilitating sight, can hide things. This shows the violence of his own way of painting. Jusidman is definitely a good craftsman, and his proposals have philosophical rigor, his compositions are impeccable and intelligent but, nonetheless, one can imagine that he painted all his works with a mischievous smile on his face. Irony is the only rhetorical figure in his paintings, as can be seen in the impossible titles such as "Dark Lamp," "Somber Clarity," or "Framed Orb." Irony illuminates reason's vigil. ■

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