

PRESS RELEASE

Juan Uslé
Desplazado (Displaced)

Opens Thursday 31 March from 6 to 8 pm
Exhibition continues through 7 May 2011



MANTHIS DE ALTURA, 2010-11
vinyl, dispersion and dry pigment on canvas
108 x 80 in 274.3 x 203.2 cm

Cheim & Read is pleased to announce “Desplazado” - an exhibition of recent paintings by Spanish artist Juan Uslé. Uslé has been showing with Cheim & Read since 1997; his last exhibition with the gallery was in 2008.

Uslé’s abstractions are evocative of the colors, light and space of his Northern Spanish homeland and the density, energy and unpredictability of New York City. Born in Santander, Spain, in 1954, Uslé studied art in Valencia and moved to New York in the late 1980s; he had his first solo show in 1988. He now spends time between the city and Cantabria, Spain, near his boyhood home. Both places provide Uslé with a feeling of “displacement” - an important theme for his work. As he says: “I’ve always felt something strange, ‘displaced,’ in the various places I’ve lived. When we would go to my grandparents’ town, I would watch the other children of my age and wonder: why do we – my family and me – not live there too?” Later, in New York, Uslé felt a similar sensation, which was perpetuated as he “stumbled from place to place.” Despite many moves, and having studios in several locations, the feeling followed: “We are not of a specific place; rather we are/belong to them all.”

The transitory nature of New York City and its unique neurosis has been particularly adept at fostering Uslé’s feelings of dislocation and fragmentation; the visual contradictions found in his work echo his feelings about the city: “I like and disdain New York. I always thought it was a ‘threshold,’ open to many other places, situations and possibilities. And over the years I’m still here for much of the time, continuing to feel the same anxiety, ‘displacement’ and mismatch that I have had since my childhood. This feeling is fundamental for my work. It nourishes it and keeps it hungry. It encourages me to be curious, to investigate new possibilities and territories, both in life and in the pictorial.”

Known for paintings constructed with translucent layers of saturated color, Uslé’s work is defined by the dynamism inherent to opposites – they are at once organic and geometric, ethereal and solid. The emergence of the unexpected from organized compositional elements provides his paintings with a sense of surprise, while his working process (he uses several old master techniques) plants them firmly in tradition. Mixing intensely colored pigments, vinyl, and dispersion on canvas, Uslé exploits the duality inherent to paint – he is fascinated by the fleshy physicality of its pure form and its ability to transform, when applied, into transparent, illusory surfaces. For Uslé, the act of painting is an act of exploration of the unknown. His work, while citing the conceptual theories of painting itself, connects, through process, to a more universal experience.

Uslé’s paintings are sometimes referred to as inviting, even “warm” – they urge the viewer to look closely, to visually untangle the layers of line and color and experience the way in which the painting was made. In the current show at Cheim & Read, several works are apt examples: *Solitaires*, 2011, *Landropo*, 2010-11, and *Think Twice*, 2010-11, have wide brushstrokes which dominate the composition; *Unfolding Manthis*, 2010 and *Fagocimanthis*, 2010, present central motifs backed by dense, light-filled checkerboards of undulating color. Radiating lapis blue is interrupted with shards of turquoise in *Inclinado (Nikritin)*, 2010. Veils of muted hues are punctuated by bright color in *Desplazado*, 2010, a small painting which gives the show its name. All convey the sense of Uslé’s continuous searching: “I’ve had fun, worked hard and discovered the world, but I’ve never felt the whole sense of a place. Maybe that is what I look for.”

Uslé has been the subject of major retrospectives at the Es Baluard, Museu d’Art Modern i Contemporani de Palma, Palma de Mallorca, Palma de Mallorca, Spain in 2010, the Centro de Arte Contemporáneo Málaga in 2007, SMAK, Ghent, and the Irish Museum of Modern Art in 2004, the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia in 2003, and the Instituto Valenciano de Arte Moderno in 1996. He was also included in the 2005 Venice Biennale, Documenta IX, the 1992 Istanbul Biennial and the 1985 Bienal de Sao Paulo.

For more information please contact the gallery at 212-242-7727 or gallery@cheimread.com.

Cheim & Read 547 West 25 Street