

BAERTGALLERY

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"José Manuel Ciria at Baert Gallery," *Daily Collector*, 28 June 2017 (online).



José Manuel Ciria. *Procedures Series*, 2016/17; oil on tarpaulin; 79 x 79 in.

"The Pendulum Movement (The L.A. Paintings)," José Manuel Ciria's current exhibition at Baert Gallery in Los Angeles makes a statement of the virtuoso Spanish artist's most recent works that are derived from the artist's newfound mingling of aesthetics. Ciria's conflux of bravura develops out of various modes and rules of painting that he has developed and written about over the past three decades, but the works that Ciria includes in his "Procedures Series" feel fresh. Ciria's new paintings break from his historically tactical theoretical concerns and accompanying texts to illicit a radical sense of freedom.

Ciria's instinctual sense of painting seems to have brewed for decades, finally letting loose in a dynamic and free exhibition that highlights Ciria's formal brilliance. Aesthetically, these works are high powered with rich chromatic strokes of orange juxtaposed against dirty and muted backdrops. Moments of intense, impasto paint are blazoned across the surface, enveloping the viewer in a fiery tornado of motion and refined gesture. Geometric abstraction makes an appearance in a hard edged way in *Crazy Unicorns* while messy forms in *Blessed Onion* mark a shift from Ciria's recent series of box paintings, which relied on a heavily governed and strategical process.

However, Ciria manages to create intense variation from canvas to canvas with some works tight and dense even as others are splattering balls of action painting. In pieces like *Clockwork Cerulean*, gestural drawing commands the space while others such as *Trembling* are nearly solid blocks of paint. Referential influences vary broadly from piece to piece, making with parallels to Julian Schnabel's "Dedications" paintings of the early nineties, Joe Bradley's recent works, and even to abstract expressionists.

The result of Ciria's hodgepodge of styles and rejection of his previously systematic way of working is a set of paintings that seem intertwined with postmodernism in their decentralization. The works are romantic and democratic, open to interpretation. Even three decades in, it seems that Ciria has opened a new and expansive dialogue worthy of many more years of exploration.