



Self-portrait - Rorschach Heads III Series, 2010, Oil and aluminum on canvas, 79 x 79 inches (200 x 200 cm)

CIRIA

The Execution of the Soul

February 24 – April 2, 2011

Stux Gallery is pleased to present the recent work of the prominent Spanish painter **José Manuel Ciria** in a profoundly stirring and provocative exhibition entitled “The Execution of the Soul”. Following a tradition in contemporary Spanish painting that includes Tàpies and Saura, the young **Ciria** came to attention in the early 1990s with a series of fiercely lyrical abstract paintings that surprised artists and critics alike. Over the past two decades, **Ciria’s** inventiveness has propelled him into the echelons as a leading painter of his generation. One might say that he is responsible for revising the terms of the medium beyond Modernist categories of expressionism and formalism in Spanish painting into a renewed interest in selfhood. This is **Ciria’s** first exhibition of work in the United States in which the artist has vigorously turned this attention toward imaginary forms of figuration.

Art critic Robert C. Morgan has written at length on the work of **Ciria**, comparing **Ciria’s** “semi-abstract”, amorphous paintings of heads and faces to the ritual of the mask in Spanish culture, a device which disguises as much as it reveals, obscures as much as it expresses. With **Ciria’s** heads one gets a sense that there is as much behind the face as there is displayed overtly; each head contains a unique narrative, concealed beneath its gaze as it looks out at the viewer.

The underlying psychological connection between **Ciria’s** paintings and the viewer comes to the forefront in his “Rorschach Head Series”, explicitly invoking the inkblots the Swiss psychologist used to measure the inherent human tendency to project emotions, interpretations and meaning onto seemingly ambiguous stimuli. **Ciria’s** paintings are a confrontation between the radical immediacy of faciality and the viewer’s inner compulsion to relate spontaneously to abstraction.

Born in Manchester in 1960, Spanish painter **José Manuel Ciria** has exhibited extensively throughout Europe, Latin America and North America. His highly expressive body of work, often characterized as “figurative abstraction”, has been the subject of numerous solo exhibitions during the past three decades, with recent appearances at the Círculo de Bellas Artes (Madrid), Christopher Cutts Gallery (Toronto), Herzliya Museum of Contemporary Art (Tel Aviv), National Museum of Fine Arts (Buenos Aires), Cordeiros Gallery (Porto), Museum of Contemporary Art (Santiago de Chile), Coueron Gallery (Paris), Kursaal-Cube Gallery (San Sebastian), Museum of Modern Art (Santo Domingo) and the Pasquart Art Center (Biel, Switzerland). He is the recipient of numerous international prizes and scholarships such as the Extraordinary Prize Queen Sofia (Madrid, 1999), grants from the Ministry of Culture and Science of Israel (Tel Aviv, 2001), and the Gonzalo Parrado Foundation Scholarship (Madrid, 2008 and 2009).

For further information please contact the gallery at Andrea@stuxgallery.com.