

José Díaz

THE GOMA

Calle del Fúcar 12

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Since its beginnings, the pictorial world of José Díaz's work has been deeply imbued with both historical references and a recognition of the digital age's ardent circulation of images. His subject is the city and, more specifically, the experience of his hometown, Madrid. It is a longtime point of reference in his abstract output and one that has evoked issues as varied as Spain's Baroque tradition and the smoke-stained tunnels of the city's ring road. The once dark and densely layered surfaces of older paintings give way now to an unprecedented clarity. His city is still his backdrop, but his current practice—rooted not so much in materials as in data—is closer to the flow of the spontaneous than to the weight of the inherited.

A half dozen new paintings on display convey a sense of immediacy, with abstract strokes relentlessly forming images that seem loosely attached to their canvas surfaces, as if eventfully performing against some neutral background. They derive from Díaz's airy touch. They form and deform as he systematically adds and subtracts, perhaps evoking parcours in a twenty-first-century city where nothing prevails, where everything can be eroded by the slightest breeze. If rootlessness defines contemporary life, it also underpins a pictorial practice that privileges action over results, gerunds over past participles, language over concept.

Pink stains flash across the canvas in many of the works. They refer to the frantic emergence of digital paraphernalia in daily life: neon streetlights, or perhaps the path one walks as recorded by a GPS-driven phone app. The works also touch upon Díaz's biography, as they portray frenetic estrangement in a city that ultimately remains his very own.



José Díaz, *Unisex*, 2016, oil on canvas, 63 1/4 x 51".

— Javier Hontoria