

JAVIER TAPIA***Walking the Subject***

November 4 – December 23, 2016

Opening Reception
Friday, November 4
7 – 9 pm

The Gap, 2016, watercolor on Arches paper, 45 x 61 inches

Reynolds Gallery is pleased to announce the opening of *Walking the Subject*, an exhibition by internationally recognized artist Javier Tapia. The exhibition opens with a reception on Friday, November 4 from 7 – 9 pm and continues through December 23, 2016. Featuring new large-scale watercolors, *Walking the Subject* will be the artist's fourth solo show at Reynolds Gallery.

Born in 1957 in Lima, Peru, Tapia grew up in a tumultuous period as guerrilla warfare dominated political and social movements throughout the country. He remained in Peru until the early 1980s, when he moved to the United States, spurring a dramatic shift in his quality of life and art practice. His work underwent a physical and theoretical transition; originally producing still-lives rooted in violent concepts, he now creates abstract paintings which deconstruct broad ideas of human nature. Intrigued by intersecting philosophies of humanity, he dissects the binaries within life, such as good and evil, intellectual and primal, control and detachment. The new work explores how these opposites manifest in life; abstract shapes and broad strokes become metaphors for chaos and control, or structure and disorder.

Much like traditional Peruvian weaving, Tapia overlaps, subtracts, and reworks layers of watercolor, creating dynamic compositions which emanate physicality. With the new work, he explains "I am interested in finding ways to suggest a sense of looking down onto a ground, as if one is about six feet from it, walking through a cluster of mental and physical spaces." His patterns transform the paper as bold colors emerge like carved-out shapes. In *The Gap*, orange strips flutter beneath bands of blue and green, simultaneously fluid and constrained. Each brushstroke measures equal in size and width, yet differs in opacity and hue, uniting and contrasting the medium. The push-pull quality resonating in each piece parallels Tapia's ideas of opposing forces. We recognize the work as energetic, on the brink of chaos, yet ordered within the constraints of the paper.

Although his compositions evolve from piece to piece, their overall format has remained the same, displayed as several rectangular panels arranged into one large piece. In *Walking the Subject*, Tapia strays from his typical structure, painting on a multitude of small squares of paper and then organizing them into one, resulting in a tapestry of color. The paper size establishes structure, yet Tapia's instinctual organization of chaotic lines allows for constant change during the creation process. The result is a series of segments that consciously avoid the literal and the narrative, arriving at an abstraction which is intense, living, and continually surprising.

Tapia studied painting at Santa Monica College in Los Angeles, CA, and received his BFA and MFA from the University of Texas at Austin (1984, 1987). He currently teaches in VCU's Department of Painting and Printmaking, where he has been an associate professor since 1988. Exhibiting nationally and internationally, he has mounted shows at the Embassy of Peru Art Gallery, Washington, DC; Museo de

Osma, Barranco, Peru; Bloom Gallery, Milan, Italy; Hunt Gallery at Mary Baldwin College, Staunton, VA; 1708 Gallery, and the Anderson Gallery, both, Richmond, VA. He is a recipient of the Theresa Pollak Prize for Excellence in the Arts (2010). His work is held in private and public collections, including The National Museum of Peru; University of Texas at Austin; Ogden Museum, New Orleans, LA; Markel Corporation, VCU School of Medicine, Altria Group, and Capital One, all Richmond, Virginia.

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