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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OLAV CHRISTOPHER JENSSEN

*Translation*

8 May - 19 June 2004



Tracy Williams, Ltd is pleased to present an exhibition of new paintings by Norwegian artist, Olav Christopher Jenssen. One of Norway's most celebrated artists, Jenssen has lived and worked in Berlin for many years. His extensive exhibition history throughout Europe includes Documenta IX, in 1992, as well as several major museum exhibitions, most recently in 2003 at the Kunstmuseum Bonn, in Germany. This is his first solo exhibition in New York.

Jenssen's work defies categorical restraints. His approach to picture-making is governed by an ongoing process of invention and discovery. Often this process is made directly evident through the dense layers of paint worked on the canvas, creating overlapping gestures and forms which one can read like strata in sedimentary rock. In other pictures, it seems the discovery comes quite quickly, and a relatively simple gesture is all that is needed to capture what was sought after. In every case, each canvas presents a new discovery, which, once made, Jenssen mentally stows away and moves on to the next. The common thread through all of the work is the artist's love of the process and of the materials he implements with each piece.

In light of Jenssen's continual striving for new pictorial forms, the show's title, *Translation*, takes on significant relevance. When immersed in a foreign language and culture, as Jenssen is in Berlin, one is exposed not only to a new system of words, but to different ways of viewing the world. Common experiences are often expressed in vastly different terms from one language to the next, giving a new freshness to aspects of life which are usually taken for granted. Jenssen's pictures carry within them the enthusiasm for new visual experience akin to the eager linguist learning a new vocabulary. In Jenssen's work, one picture can convey a visual language quite foreign to another, while still carrying the essence of Jenssen's vision, which is common to all. In effect, Jenssen's continuing body of work is a process of translating his love of art-making into ever-changing terms.





In the large canvas, *Translation*, 2004 (illustrated at left), from which the exhibition takes its title, deep purples and reds are applied in washes of varying thickness in a large area over most of the upper half of the picture. Repeated undulating shapes are visible through the layering of washes, revealed through subtle variations in the density and hues of the paint. Growing out of the densely painted area, towards the top and bottom of the canvas, painted forms branch off into organic webs of fine lines and paths of color meandering over the surface. One feels a distinct presence of the picture's progression and of Jenssen's work process--as if by tracing the flow of the composition with our eyes we can mentally re-create the stages of the painting's creation, from conception to realization, with each color, mark or form inspiring the next step towards the finished image. Without being narrative per se, Jenssen's images speak to the viewer in various tones about their creator and the intricate nature of their relationships to each other.

For more information, please contact the gallery. Tuesday - Saturday, 11 - 6, or by appointment.