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## Washington

### Jaq Chartier at Platform Gallery

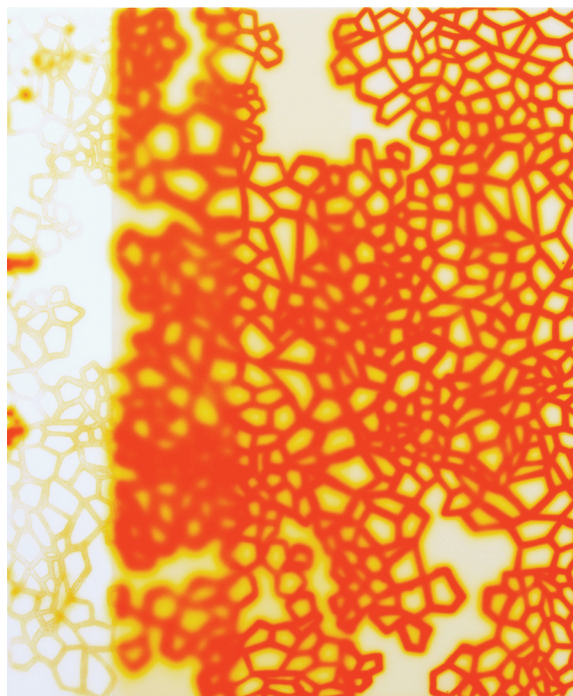
**P**urity and corruption are treated as propositions in the paintings of Jaq Chartier. Doubling codes of science and art, the paintings emphasize transformation.

Chartier places swaths or dots of acrylic paint, the shapes and saturated intensity of these colors modified by an array of binders that catalyze various processes in the paint, which continue to shift and make the works as contingent upon time as we are. Colors and mediums are arrayed in a grid, perpendicular to each other and labeled in penciled notes along the bottom, sides or surfaces of the panels. Jill Connor notes of Chartier's work that it should "not be understood as anything beyond what it materially represents: empirical tests that reflect various chemical reactions between stains of spray-paint and a coat of clear acrylic."

Importing visual codes from science and nature (as do artists such as Susan Robb, Laura Fritz and John Grade), the resulting flattened images are intensified by the repetition of elements, referencing research and industrial applications. In the mid 1990s, Chartier worked for Golden paints, testing the capacities of their paint products, and ultimately took it up and developed it as her own paint-

ing practice. Almost unintentionally, she has become a master colorist. The panels themselves are a fine, creamy white which projects the colors like a plinth holds a sculpture: It doesn't wash out the composition but features it. As a generative stance, paring down and defamiliarizing the terms of painting constitutes different definitions and conditions. The work's purity seems to resist or defy artifice, nearly obfuscating the ideas in the materials. It makes paint itself the main focus of the panels she produces, in effect equating the subject matter and the content, like in the works of Robert Ryman, whose pared-down approach showed how paint and painting intersect.

"Color is excess, but in art is also the containment of excess," notes the artist David Batchelor. Chartier's paint fogs, smears or disappears altogether. The painted shapes and forms obey material conditions rather than the conditions of illusion or abstraction. The fugitive character of the paint rather than an emphasis on paint handling articulates a sense of potential. Exposing the paint to comparative substances and sunlight produces visually appealing reactions and it also resists somewhat the role of the artist as mediator of the work. It attempts to create a void between the work and the discussion that surrounds the work, so that the viewer experiences it in a different



Jaq Chartier, *L. Burnt Orange (net)*, 2006, acrylic, stains, spray paint on wood panel, 24" x 20", at Platform Gallery, Seattle. (Photo: Richard Nicol.)

way. Chartier speaks of "finding" her paintings; she positions the materials and, through the processes, the colors and forms are self-determining, as revealed in her video, *Sun-Test: Time Lapse*, exposed 6/22/05 through 8/22/06. The time-lapse process was made from daily scans of a painting as it oxidized, accelerated by sunlight, showing a fugitive blue shape fading into violet, the initial form of paint expiring and finding its own form deep within: a brief, red armature.

As with Baudelaire's fascination with both the poetic and the critical, simultaneous realities of document and metaphor are present in works where Chartier varies the scale a bit. In the diptych, *Giant Color Chart*, the space is defined by the size and relationships of the colored forms with several planes layered in the visual field. Ambiguity is produced, and it seems to address space the way memory or temporality does. In other works the linkages may be more distant.

—Elizabeth Pence

Jaq Chartier: *Blindsight* closed October 7 at Platform Gallery, Seattle.

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