

NewArtCentre.

Tess Jaray

From Piero and other paintings

Suddenly, I realised that's what I wanted; I wanted to make space, to make something that you could disappear into.

- Tess Jaray interviewed for the Art Newspaper by Ben Luke, January 2021

What is remarkable about Jaray's response is that even after she has stripped the Italian's image down to no more than light, colour and line, its air of numinous enchantment remains. The painting is a triumphant expression of an artist who says her aim is to show "what's left when everything else is taken away".

- Rachel Spence, Financial Times, February 2021



Installation view, the Gallery, New Art Centre. Benches by Edmund de Waal, *tacet I, II, VI & IX*.

Tess Jaray: *From Piero and other paintings*

Tess Jaray, RA (b. 1937, Vienna, Austria) is one of Britain's most distinguished and influential painters. Jaray works in the abstract tradition; for over 50 years she has used painting, drawing and printmaking to explore and expand her personal interactions with architectural space, mass, surface and light. While her work may present as nonrepresentational, it is invariably informed by lived experiences of the visual world – what Jaray terms '[the] geometry of human relationships'.

Jaray often takes her own interactions with architectural sites as a starting point, although specificity is invariably abstracted. Using block colours and geometric forms, her intellectual and emotional experiences are distilled, translated and transposed into evocative compositions. The resulting works represent studies into the potential of repetition and reduction aiming to communicate ideas far greater than themselves. Throughout this process, Jaray constantly asks: 'How to present complex space with the simplest possible means?'¹ The subsequent canvases are examples of 'what's left when everything else is taken away.'²

A series of new works, small-format paintings which Jaray has made in response to the frescoes by 15th century painter Piero della Francesca, will be hung in the Stable Gallery. Drawing from Piero's distinct painterly vocabulary – his handling of colour, his geometric compositions and the manner in which he assembled unified scenes – Jaray has generated her own pared-down visual language in order to focus on the possibilities of space. In these paintings, her human approach to abstraction is brought to the fore, as her handling of seemingly familiar imagery invites viewers to enter into the picture plane and participate in the responsive process.

Jaray's longstanding interest in Piero's depictions of three-dimensional space - in which biblical scenes are enacted in such a manner that the viewer is invited to actively participate in their narratives - arose following a transformative period spent in Italy as a young artist. During this time she immersed herself in the art and architecture of the Renaissance, and was inspired by the academic Roberto Longhi's seminal work on Piero of 1927.

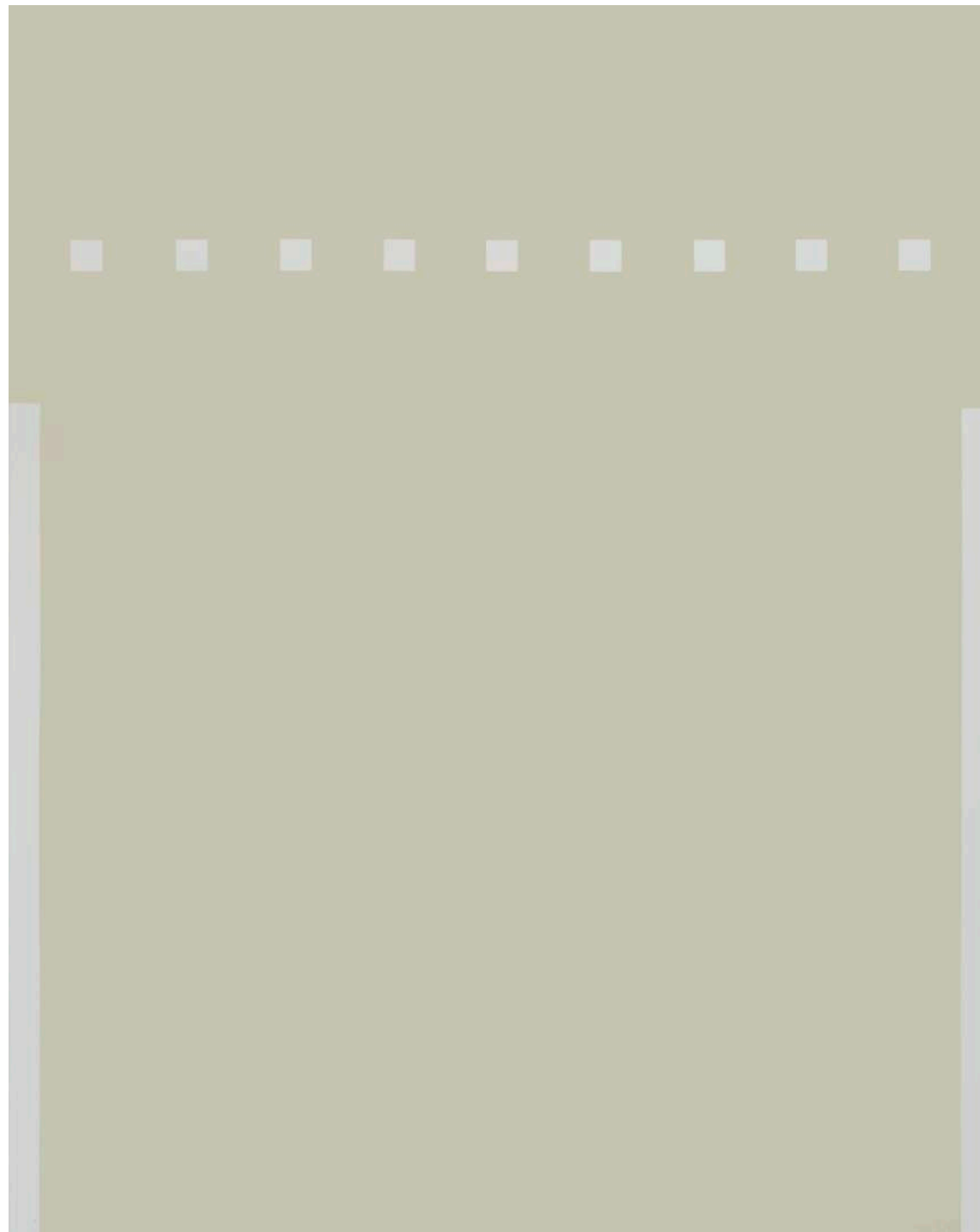
The Gallery at the New Art Centre will include large format paintings that explore the relationship between facade, internal space and the decorative motif. Rendered in Jaray's distinctive palette of teal, burgundy and stone-washed grey, the works intimate architectural features and ornaments while denying the viewer access to their actual points of reference. In *Glimpse* (2017), a clean mauve block suggests a door or a looming window; the sharp zig-zags of *Return* and *Echo* (both 2017) recall Art Deco tile patterns while their titles prompt further considerations of recall and personal reminiscence. In this sense, Jaray's works sit at the threshold between the recognisable and the wholly abstract, each canvas posing fresh questions of the manner in which we interact with the aesthetics of the world around us.

A book of Jaray's Piero paintings, published by Ridinghouse, will be launched at the New Art Centre during the exhibition's run.

Tess Jaray is represented by Karsten Schubert London.

¹In conversation with Viktoria Espelund, 2017, 'Merging Inside and Outside: the Paintings of Tess Jaray', Barber Institute of Fine Art, University of Birmingham, 2019.

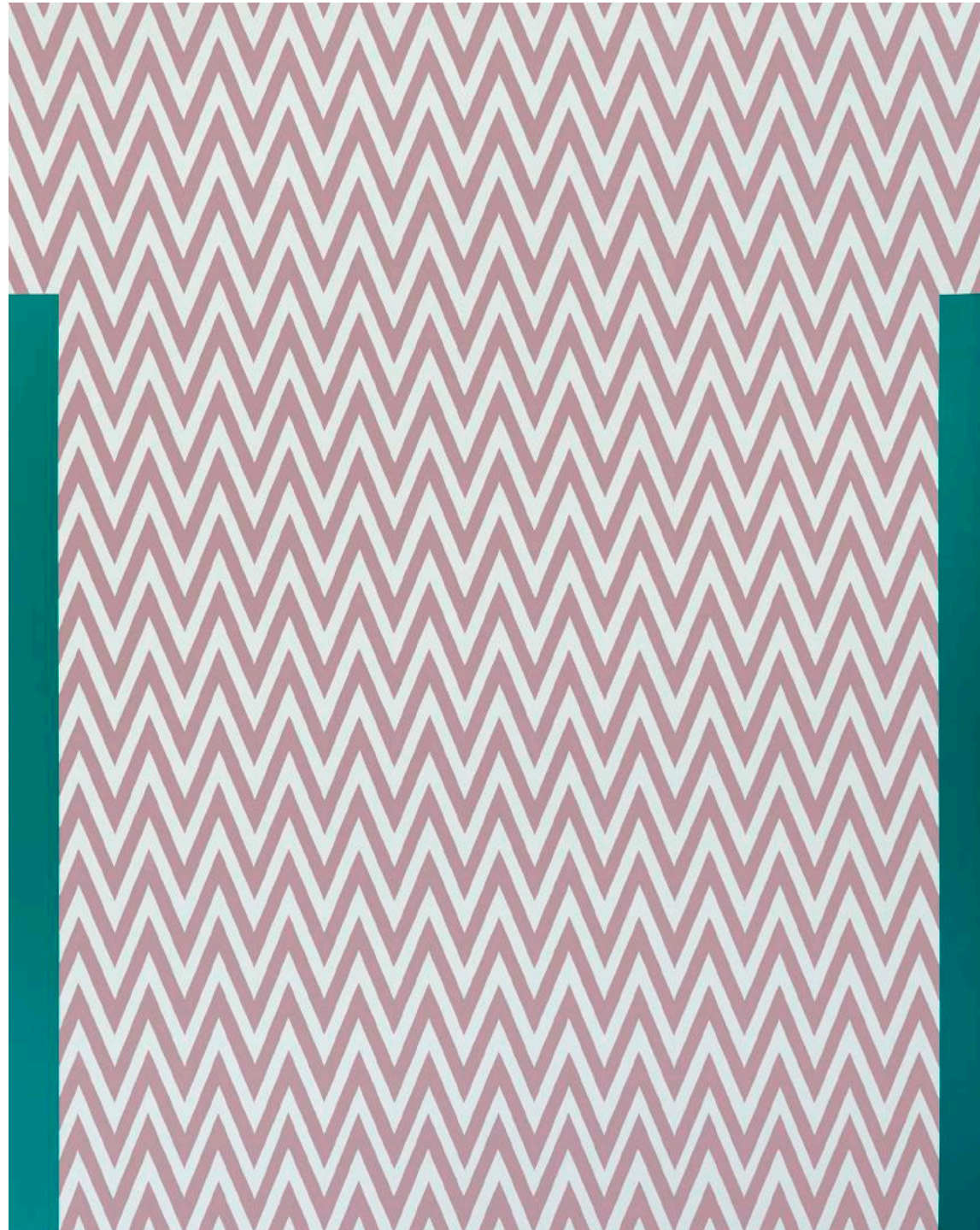
²In conversation with Lily Le Brun, 2013, 'Interview with Tess Jaray', in *The White Review*.



Tess Jaray
Crossing
2017
acrylic on canvas
178 x 142 cm
70 1/8 x 55 7/8 in



Tess Jaray
Echo
2017
acrylic on canvas
178 x 142 cm
70 1/8 x 55 7/8 in



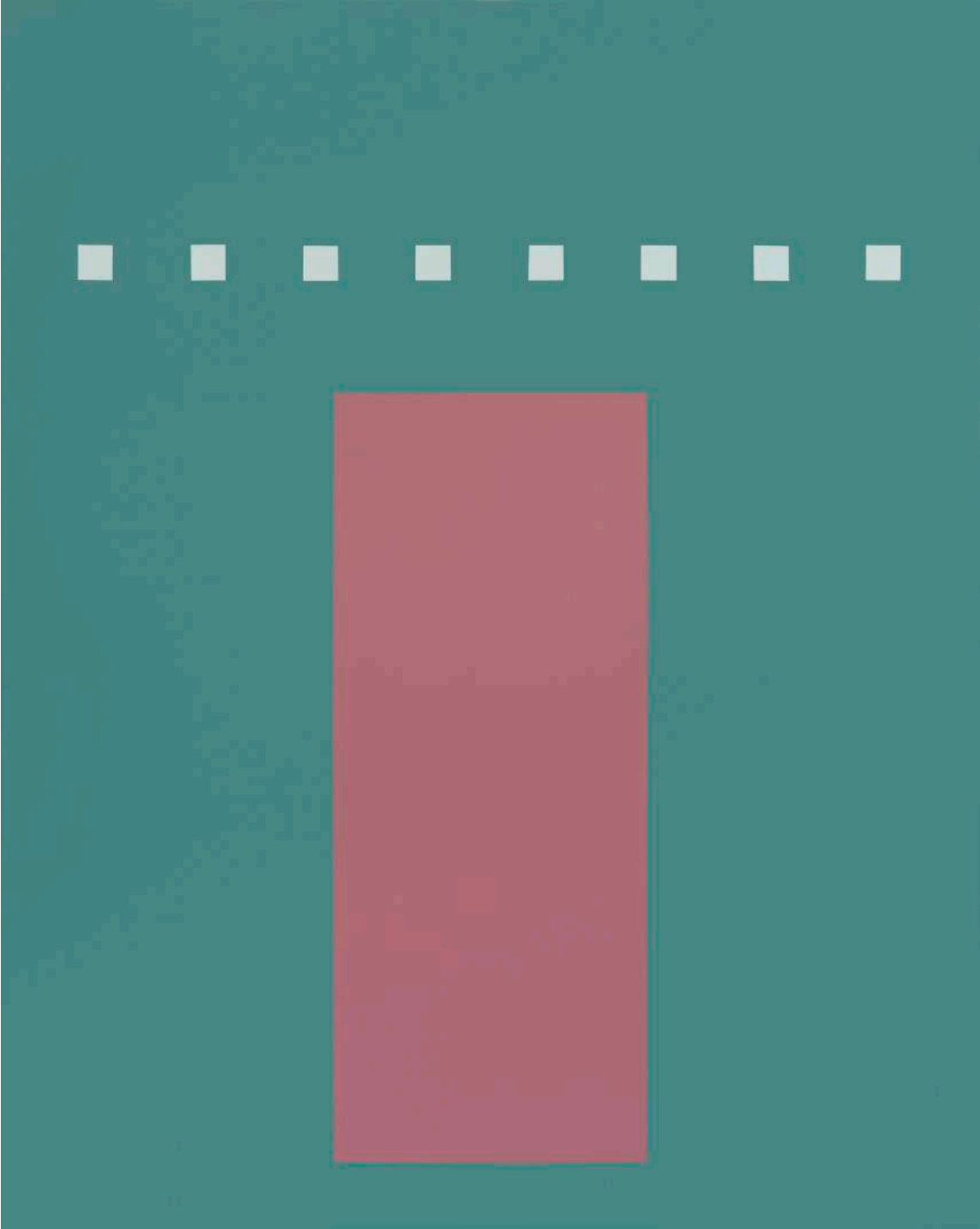
Tess Jaray
Return
2017
acrylic on canvas
178 x 142 cm
70 1/8 x 55 7/8 in



Tess Jaray
Glimpse
2017
acrylic on canvas
178 x 142 cm
70 1/8 x 55 7/8 in



Installation view, the Gallery, New Art Centre. Benches by Edmund de Waal, *tacet II, IV, VI & IX*.



Tess Jaray
Fez Green
2017
acrylic on canvas
178 x 142 cm
70 1/8 x 55 7/8 in



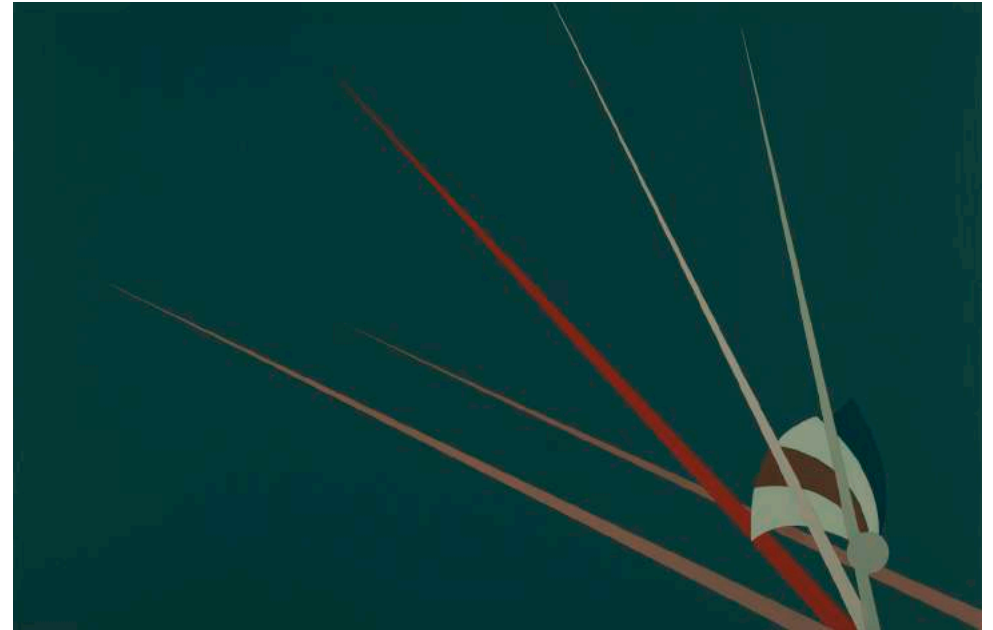
Tess Jaray
*Virgin and child with
Saints and Angels I*
2019
acrylic on panel
30 x 46 cm
11 3/4 x 18 1/8 in



Installation view, the Gallery, New Art Centre. Benches by Edmund de Waal, *tacet II & IV*.

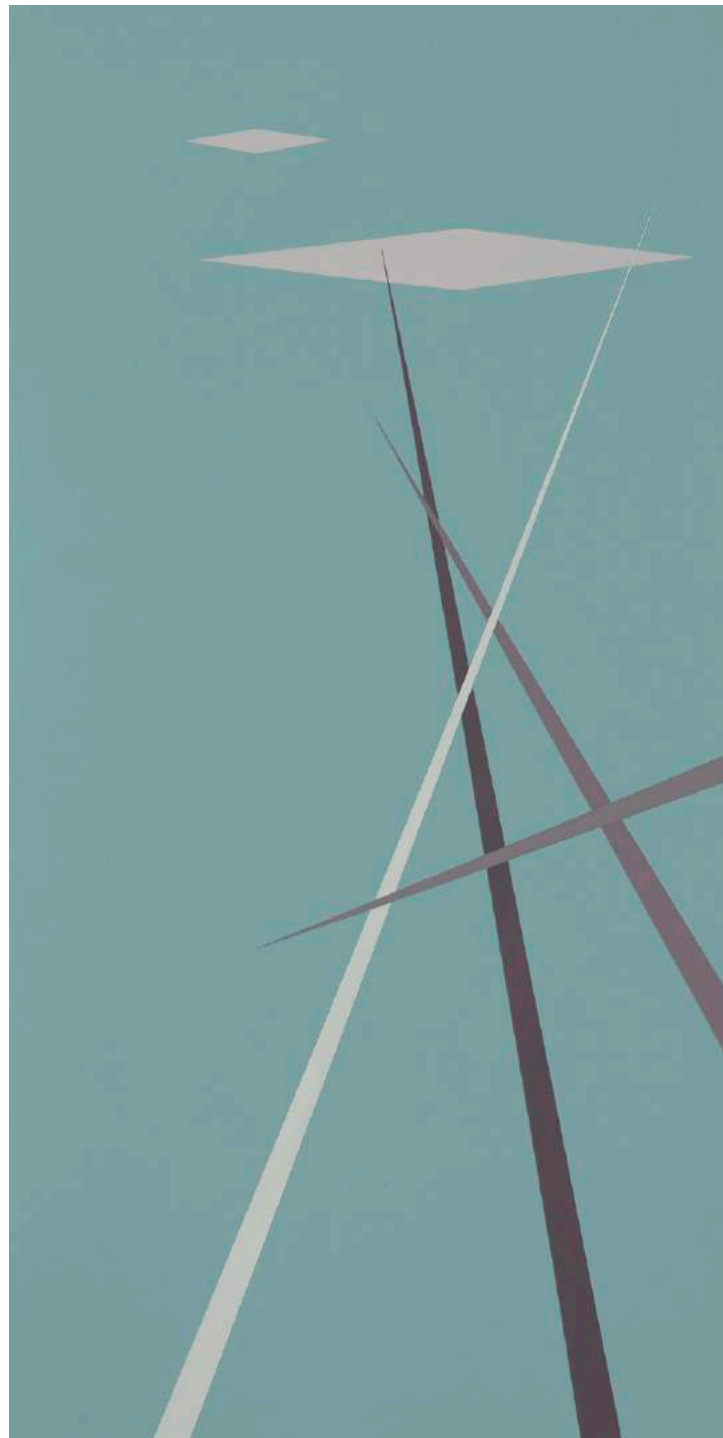


Tess Jaray
Victory of Constantine
2019
acrylic on panel
40 x 40 cm
15 3/4 x 15 3/4 in



Tess Jaray
Victory of Eraclio 2
2019
acrylic on board
30 x 46 cm
11 3/4 x 18 1/8 in

Tess Jaray
Discovery of Gorr
2019
acrylic on board
60 x 30 cm
23 5/8 x 11 3/4 in





Tess Jaray
Battle of Constantine
2019
acrylic on board
60 x 60 cm
23 5/8 x 23 5/8 in



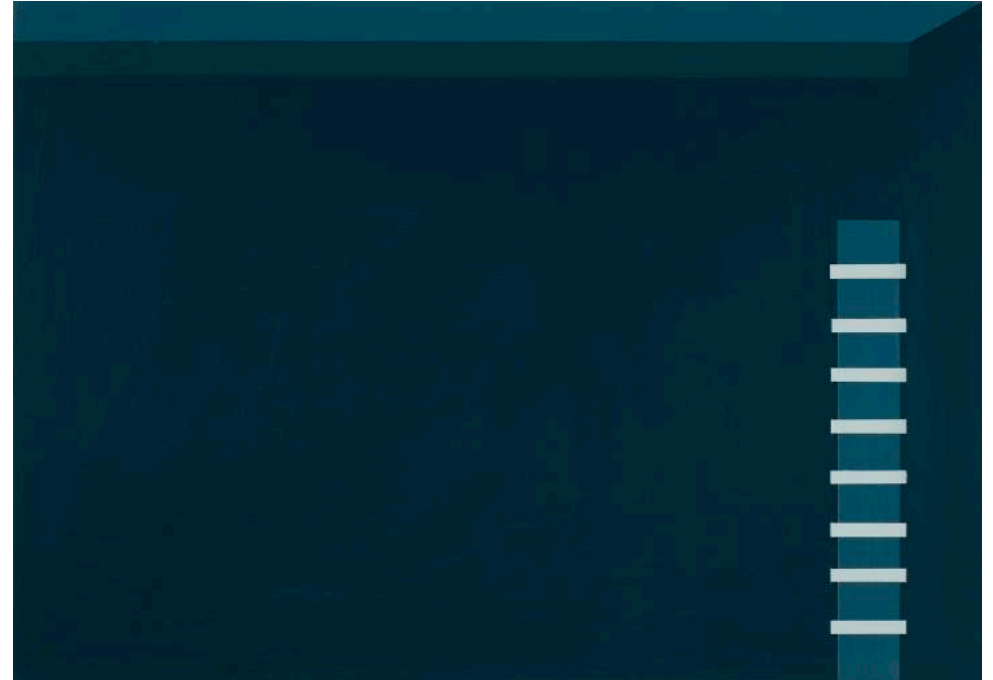
Tess Jaray
Victory of Eraclio
2019
acrylic on board
30 x 46 cm
11 3/4 x 18 1/8 in



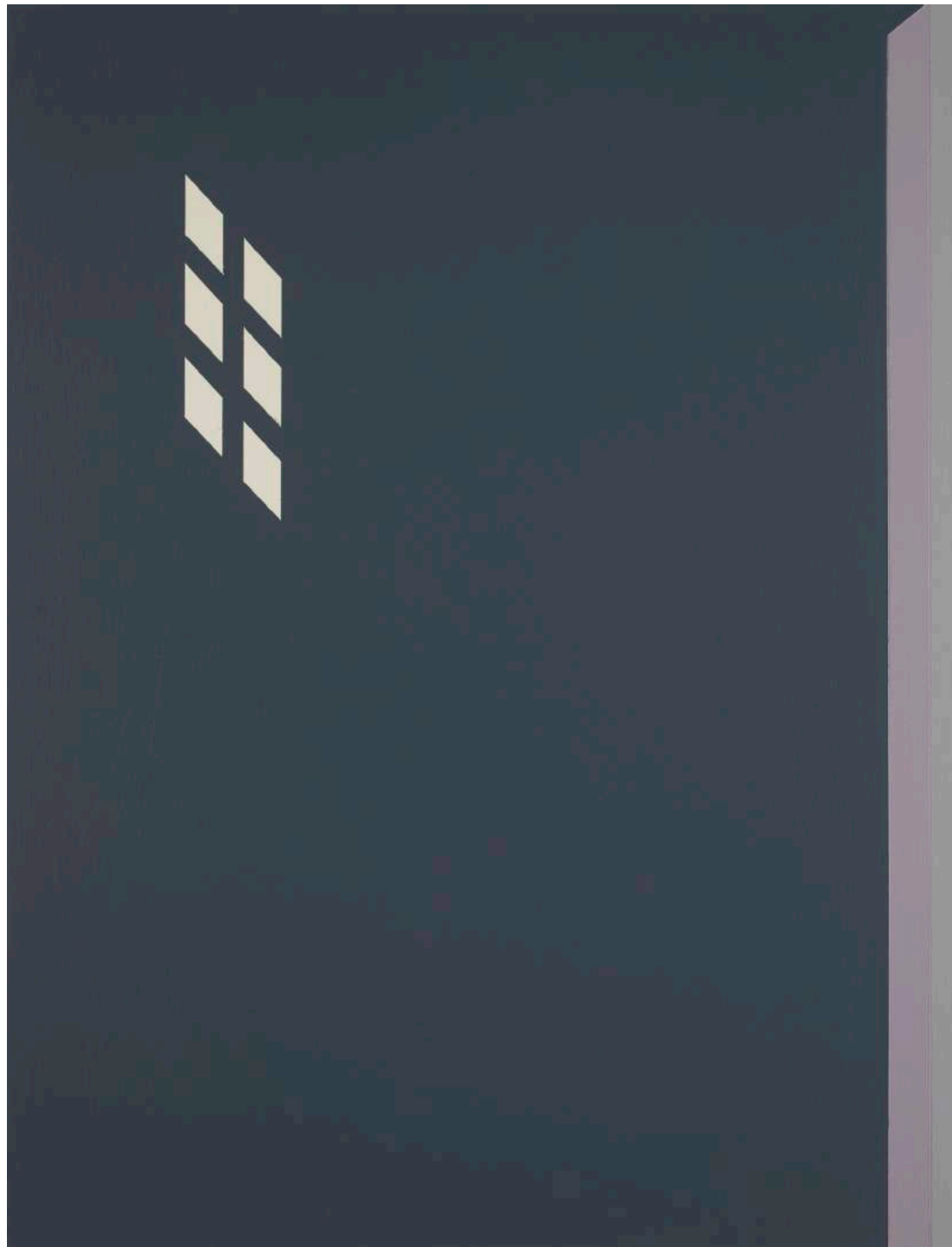
Installation View, the Stable Gallery, New Art Centre.



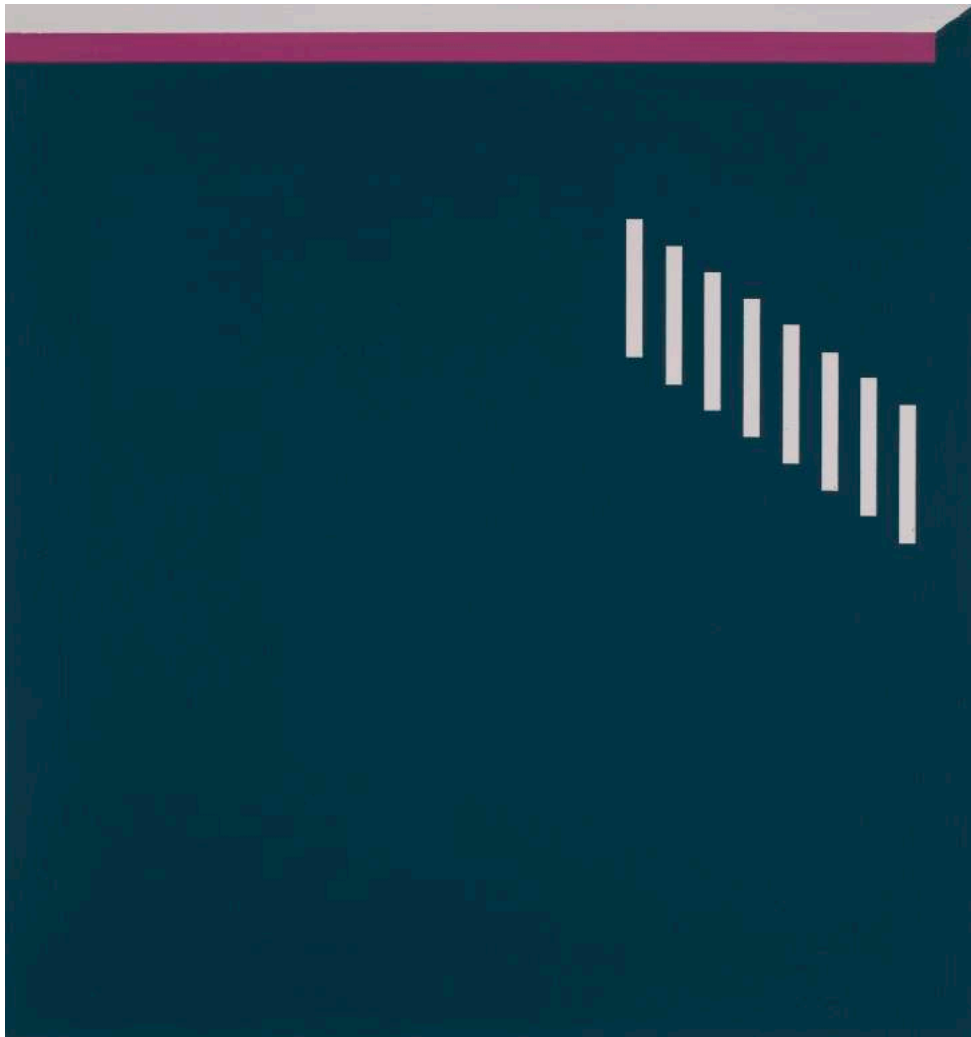
Tess Jaray
Annunciation
2019
acrylic on panel
30 x 43 cm
11 3/4 x 16 7/8 in



Tess Jaray
Pillar
2019
acrylic on panel
30 x 43 cm
11 3/4 x 16 7/8 in



Tess Jaray
*Virgin and Child
with two Angels*
2019
acrylic on panel
43 x 30 cm
16 7/8 x 11 3/4 in



Tess Jaray
Discovery and Proof I
2019
acrylic on panel
30 x 30 cm
11 3/4 x 11 3/4 in

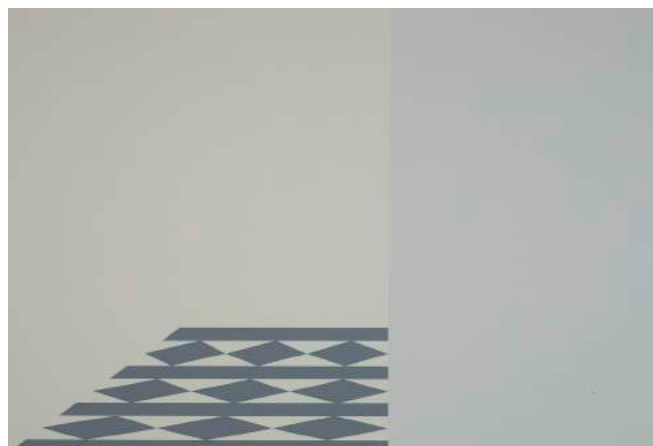


Tess Jaray
Discovery and Proof II
2019
acrylic on panel
30 x 30 cm
11 3/4 x 11 3/4 in

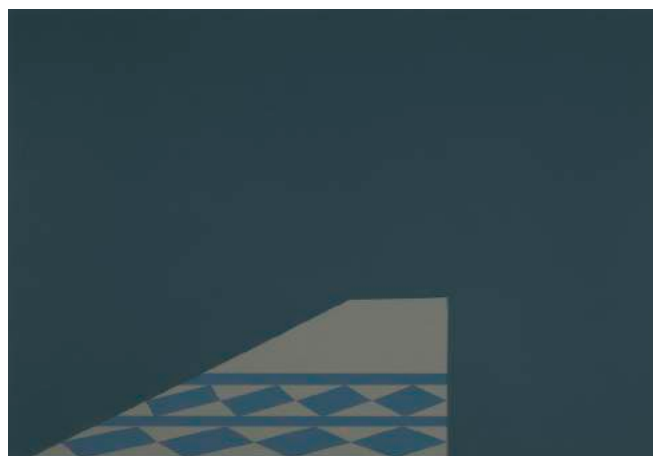
Tess Jaray
Flagellation III
2019
acrylic on panel
30 x 43 cm
11 3/4 x 16 7/8 in

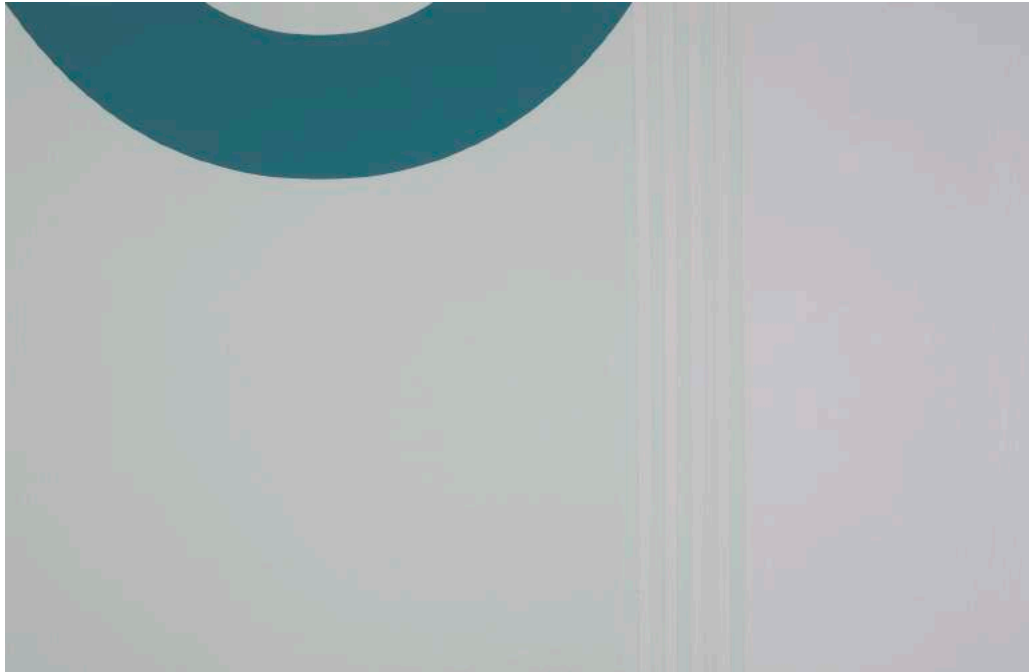


Tess Jaray
Flagellation I
2019
acrylic on panel
30 x 43 cm
11 3/4 x 16 7/8 in



Tess Jaray
Flagellation II
2019
acrylic on panel
30 x 43 cm
11 3/4 x 16 7/8 in

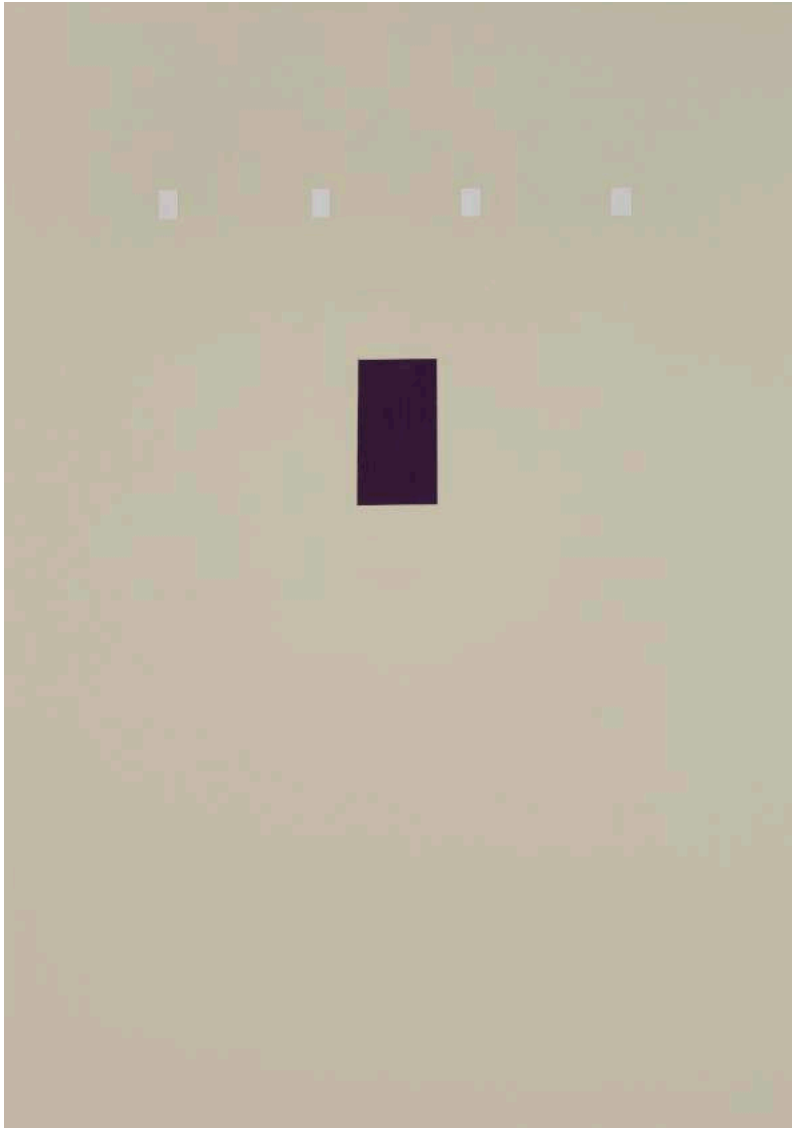




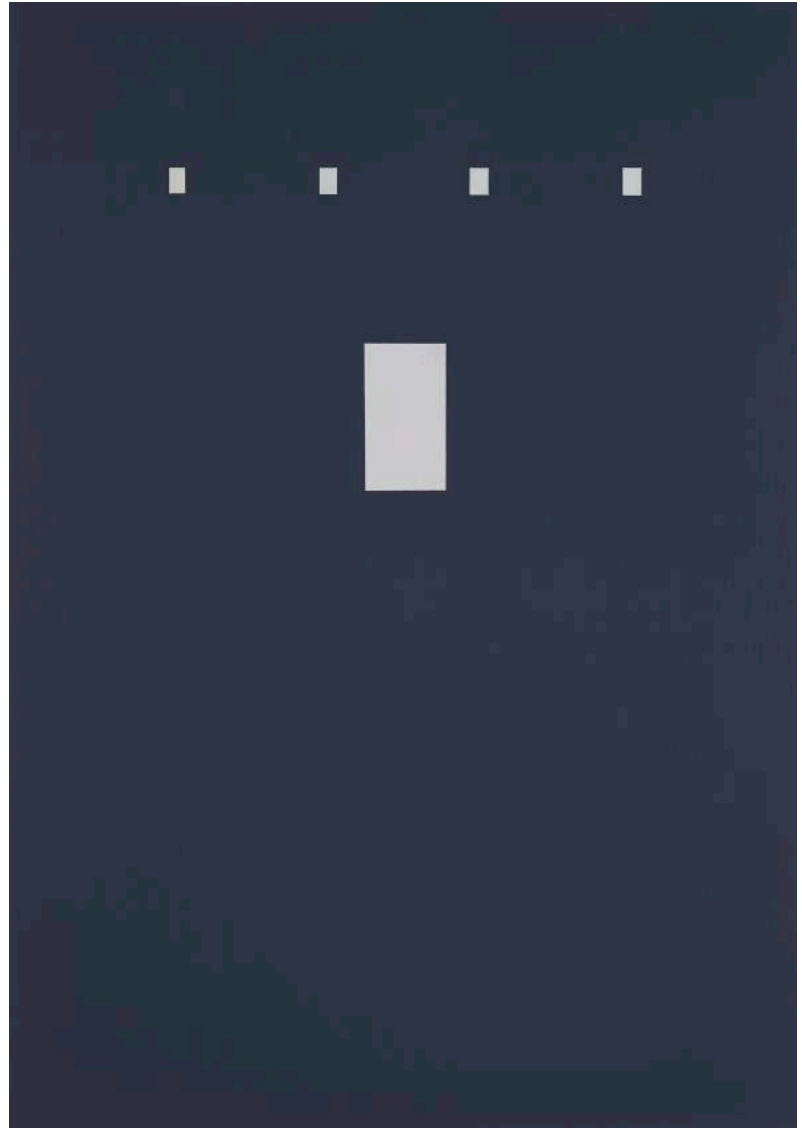
Tess Jaray
St Sigismund
worshipping Malatesta II
2019
acrylic on panel
30 x 46 cm
11 3/4 x 18 1/8 in



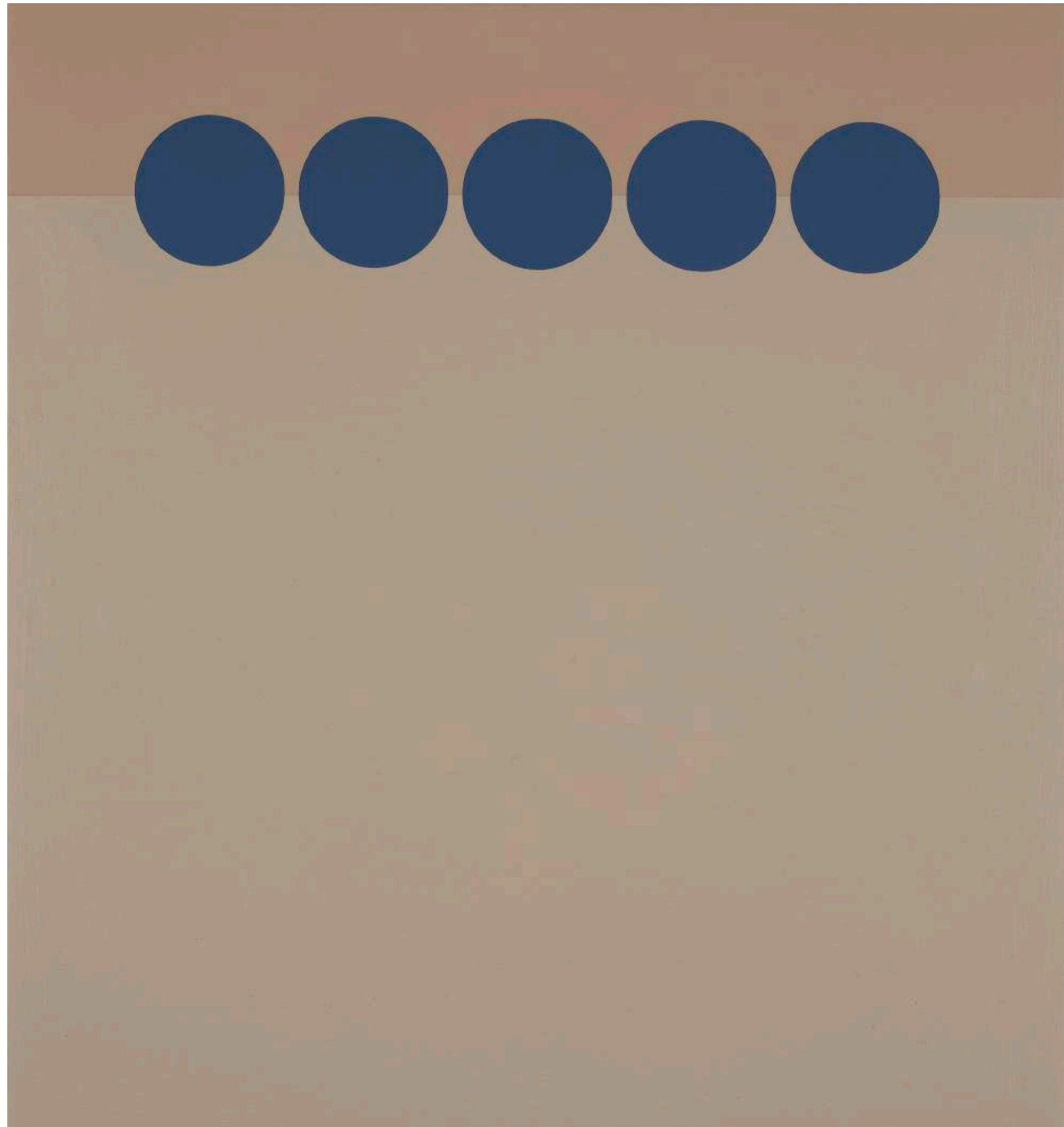
Tess Jaray
St Sigismund
worshipping Malatesta I
2019
acrylic on panel
30 x 43 cm
11 3/4 x 16 7/8 in



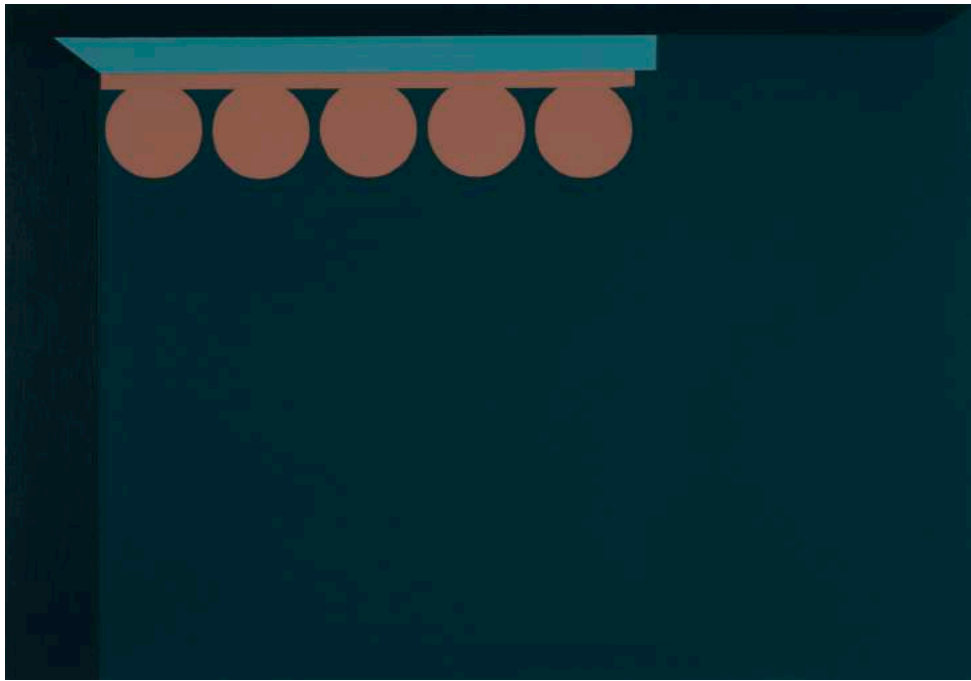
Tess Jaray
Story of the True Cross II
2019
acrylic on panel
43 x 30 cm
16 7/8 x 11 3/4 in



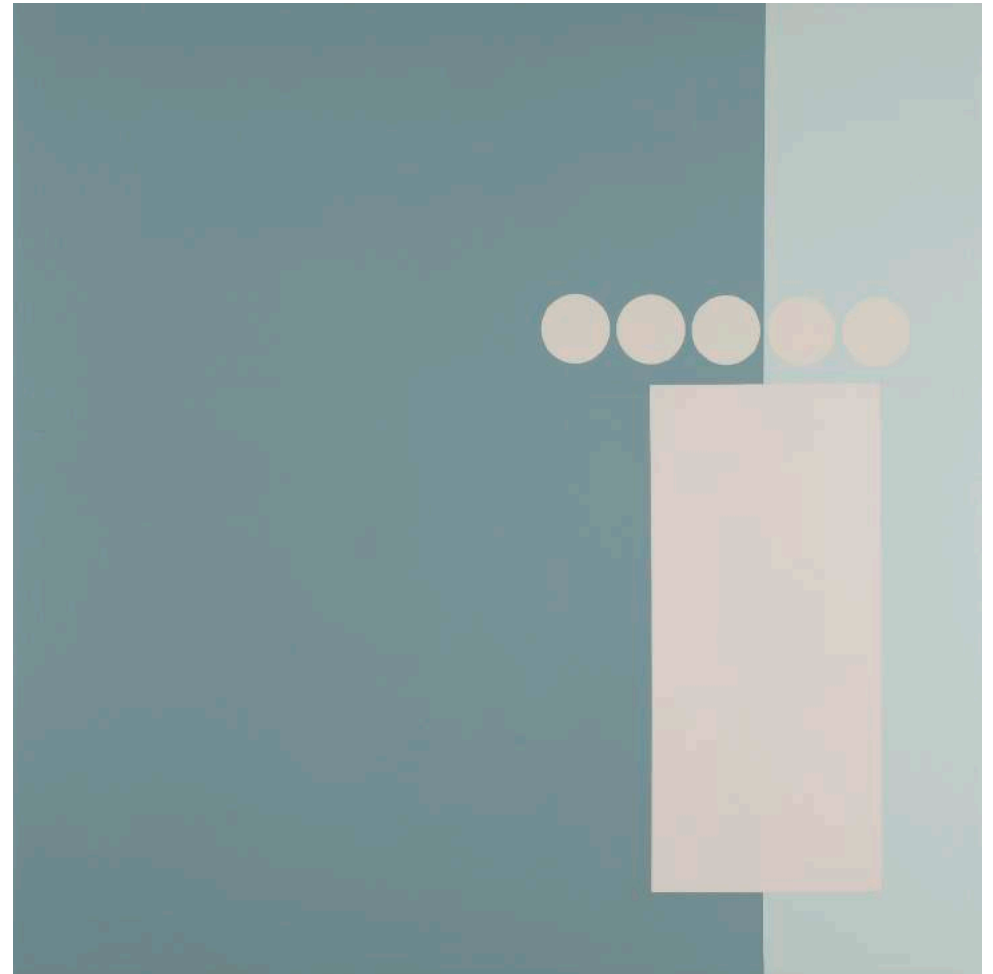
Tess Jaray
Story of the True Cross I
2019
acrylic on panel
43 x 30 cm
16 7/8 x 11 3/4 in



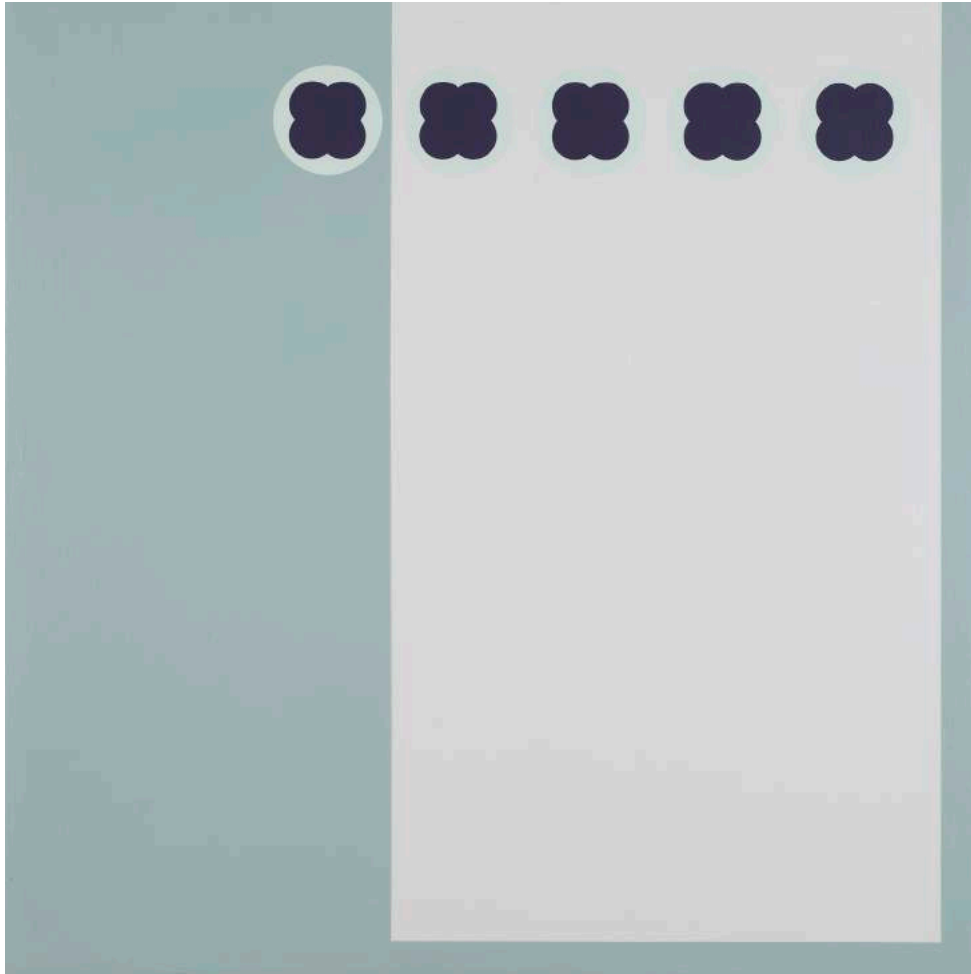
Tess Jaray
*Solomon and the
Queen of Sheba I*
2019
acrylic on panel
30 x 30 cm
11 3/4 x 11 3/4 in



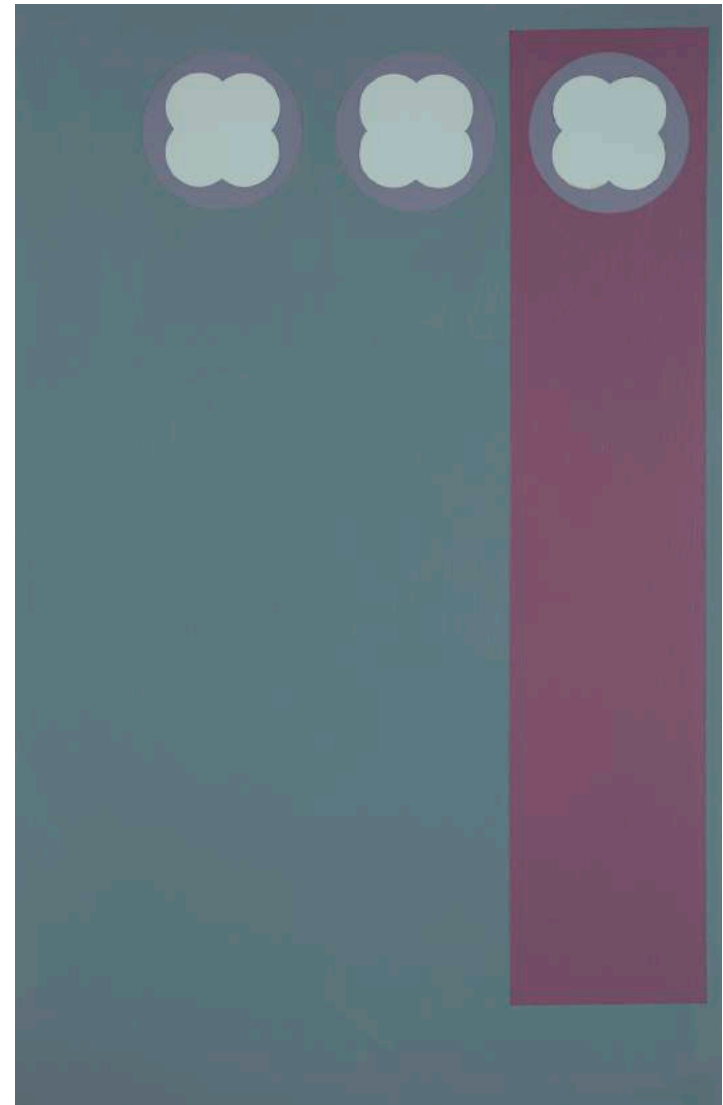
Tess Jaray
*Solomon and the
Queen of Sheba II*
2019
acrylic on canvas
30 x 43 cm
11 3/4 x 16 7/8 in



Tess Jaray
*Solomon and the
Queen of Sheba III*
2019
acrylic on canvas
60 x 60 cm
23 5/8 x 23 5/8 in



Tess Jaray
*Virgin and child with
Saints and Angels III*
2019
acrylic on panel
60 x 60 cm
23 5/8 x 23 5/8 in



Tess Jaray
*Virgin and child with
Saints and Angels II*
2019
acrylic on panel
30 x 46 cm
11 3/4 x 18 1/8 in

Jaray's paintings are testaments to the essential democracy of the human experience as we navigate the spaces, both internal and external, which contain us. They also whisper that the most enriching images may lie within ourselves.

- Rachel Spence, Financial Times, February 2021

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