

## BROOKLYN RAIL

### *Jorge Galindo and Julian Schnabel: Flower Paintings*

by Amanda Millet-Sorsa  
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Julian Schnabel, *Victory at S-chanf I*, 2021. Oil, plates and bondo on wood, 72 x 60 inches. © Julian Schnabel.

To paint a rose is a gesture, imbued with meanings of passion, friendship, admiration, love, elegance, luxury, royalty, beauty, possibility ... for whom are the lush roses found in Jorge Galindo and Julian Schnabel's recent works at the Vito Schnabel Gallery painted? In this two-person exhibition, their first together, they share this subject and express their mutual love for painting and roses, yet their interpretations are drastically different from one another.

Roses are normally known for being depicted in a variety of contexts, either in their natural habitat rooted in soil, or as forms of social offerings carrying meanings in human affairs and sitting decoratively in a vase. Schnabel paints directly from nature, while Galindo explores abstraction. In Schnabel's plein-air paintings of roses at human scale from his driveway in Montauk, we recognize his revisitation

of the "Plate Paintings" of the late 1970s and '80s, where such an idiosyncratic approach to this mosaic surface was resurrected in a series of works made between 2015-17, based after roses growing near van Gogh's grave in Auvers-sur-Oise, France during which time he directed the moving film on Vincent van Gogh, *At Eternity's Gate* (2018). It's indicative of Schnabel's personal response to fully immerse himself through his multifaceted work into the oeuvre of artists he reveres and become a secret admirer. The broken tableware is neatly and randomly collaged and pieced together so the plates and cups are recognizable, as if a garden tea party were interrupted by violent disagreement and the host assembled the pieces back together again with love and care. Schnabel's textured reliefs and shaped panels indeed recall van Gogh's feverishly trance-like, calming, and repetitive small brush strokes, which build up the all-over raised surfaces. They are simply hypnotic. The lushness is amplified in the use of color, where the taste buds are reminded of a sweet confectionary afternoon delight. The smashed remnants in plain view are camouflaged by the shadows of an overgrown rose bush.

By contrasting the color palette of pink and green, the roses become alive within the omnipresence of dark yet cool emeralds alternating with verdant sunlit accents, resulting in an expansive floating space where the hot pink bursts of color suggest small rose garlands moving across the surface like a stream of water. The rose bushes are painted from different perspectives from below such that, on occasion, cloudless bright-blue skies peek out from behind the bush, adding to the sense of moving color and creating a filmic sequence. Together, this reduction to three crisp hues, the physicality of the mosaic surface, the repetition of the color palette, and the identical shape of the panels transport the viewer into a painterly environment resonating with color and amplify the meditative experience of the artist. We can draw a parallel to Claude Monet's water lily paintings of Giverny, where he pondered, "They don't owe anything to anything else than the collaboration of loneliness and silence, to a fervent, exclusive attention that borders on hypnosis."

We could evoke the late Monet “*Nymphéas*” paintings at l’Orangerie, where the panoramic paintings are filmic and frontal as if a camera were panning from one end of the pond’s surface to the other, where the lily pads are of actual size and dense layers of paint oscillate into passages of changing color and light with time. Schnabel’s rose paintings share this filmic quality through the subtle and not-so-subtle changes in perspective while, due to the texture of the mosaic surface, the vibration of color is heightened. Despite the paintings’ unusual pictorial and material discord, each compels the viewer into the realm of intimacy and serenity.



Jorge Galindo, *The Flowers of Romance 2*, 2020. Oil on canvas, 118 1/8 x 157 1/2 inches. © Jorge Galindo. Courtesy the artist and Vito Schnabel Gallery.

In stark contrast to Schnabel’s painting process as a meditative act, the firework of spontaneity in color and spatial distribution of forms in Galindo’s paintings is in full display in *The Flowers of Romance 1* and *The Flowers of Romance 2* (both 2020) at the entrance of the gallery. We can imagine these immense oils on canvas, painted either on the floor or the wall, or perhaps both, where the oversized roses float freely in their painterly world, including variously executed speeds of brushwork, splashes, splatters, footprints, imprints of paint cans, among other accidental elements, all of which are harmoniously integrated. We can feel the pain of the dismemberment of gigantic roses exploding without their stems, and vice versa. The erotic and sensual brushstrokes in thick carnal colors of reds, pinks, ochres, and browns erotically elicit what de Kooning famously said, “Flesh was the reason oil painting was invented.” This fleshiness is exactly what Galindo’s roses seem to exude.



Jorge Galindo, *Souvenir (Good Year For The Roses) I*, 2021. Oil on printed canvas, 118 1/8 x 78 3/4 inches. © Jorge Galindo. Courtesy the artist and Vito Schnabel Gallery.

In many instances, Galindo embraces technical images found on vintage postcards or tattooed arms of roses, villages, texts, and so on, then digitally prints them on canvas, a paint-collage method Galindo has employed since the 1990s. In *Souvenir (Good Year for the Roses) I* (2021), for example, the reproduced images in grayscale with slight alterations of color evoke an aroma from a time passed and provide a skeleton for Galindo. This gives him the grounds to invent lushly painted roses that hover on top like a disheveled bouquet, thus revitalizing and creating a tension between the past and present.

When we move through the show we get a sense of the constant dialogue between the intimate, introspective and relaxed essence of Schnabel’s wild roses, and the animated, sanguine, probing, memory-infused roses of Galindo. It is no coincidence that a painter of flesh, through the rose, would stir the emotions of both director Pedro Almodóvar, who included Galindo’s paintings in his two films *The Skin I Live In* (2011) and *Pain and Glory* (2019) and separately, Schnabel, whom he first met in the 1990s in Madrid.



## JORGE GALINDO & JULIAN SCHNABEL

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A larger selection of Jorge Galindo's "Flower Paintings" and a group of works made in collaboration with Pedro Almodóvar are to be shown at the Hall Art Foundation Schloss Derneburg Museum in Germany this summer in addition to this first major show of his work in the United States. In September 2021, Julian Schnabel will also exhibit a series of new works "Self Portraits of Others" at the Brant Foundation Art Study Center in the East Village, New York. Given their friendship and mutual interests in painting, photography, film, among other things, we can only anticipate fertile and burgeoning collaborations in the near future.