

AD

Jennifer Guidi Combines Movement and Meditation With her Latest Series of Paintings

With systematic markings and a palette of California colors, the Los Angeles-based artist creates sand-and-acrylic creations that radiate a profound sense of calm



Jennifer Guidi in her Los Angeles studio. Photo: Ye Rin Mok

Playing in the sand is one of those childhood experiences that resonate throughout one's life, viscerally evoking youthful innocence. Jennifer Guidi knows all about it: The Los Angeles-based artist was born in Redondo Beach and grew up moving between Southern California coastal communities and the desert oases of the Coachella Valley. And while Guidi has incorporated sand into her practice for years, her engagement with the material has evolved. In her latest series of paintings, she explores not only its physical properties (tactility, malleability, luminosity) but also its strange power to induce spiritual reverie.

Ranging from medium to large format, the works themselves are multilayered fields of sand, pigment, and acrylic polymers that she applies in varying combinations and depths before gouging the compositions with wood dowels of her own design. Her systematic mark-making, repeated hundreds of times across a single surface, produces mandala-like patterns that radiate from a central point. In some of the paintings, Guidi obsessively fills in the indentations with contrasting hues before gluing crescent-shaped appliques of colored sand at the edges of the gouge marks. If her assiduous process suggests a kind of minimalist precision, the resulting surface variations lend the works a decidedly more expressive, at times even trippy, vibe.

“In my earlier abstract sand paintings, I made more random marks using sticks of different sizes. But I didn’t feel satisfied with the organic patterns that emerged,” says Guidi, who studied at Boston University and the Art Institute of Chicago. “Everything changed when I fixed a center point and worked out and around it. The repetition and the movement began to take on a meditative aspect that, I think, reads in the finished pieces.”

The dimensionality of Guidi’s paintings, buoyed by the play of light, shadow, and color across their textured surfaces, is a discreet seduction. From a distance, viewers can discern oblique references to natural phenomena—sunrises and sunsets, swirling wind and rippling water. Upon closer inspection, the pictures begin to breathe and pulse, drawing viewers into a realm of intensified sensory perception.

“This is a new way of creating work about color—quite minimal, but not in a canonical East Coast way,” says art dealer Almine Rech, whose namesake Manhattan gallery just unveiled a solo show of Guidi’s latest works. (The exhibition runs through April 15.) “Jennifer’s vision is very much tied to California, like the Light and Space artists of an earlier generation. It’s intensely personal.”

Kurt Mueller, a director at L.A.’s David Kordansky Gallery, which represents Guidi in her hometown, seconds Rech’s assertion. “You look at these paintings and you start thinking about the rigor of an Agnes Martin and the atmospheric, open-ended landscapes of Georgia O’Keeffe,” he says. “They represent both literal space and the spaces of the mind.”

For Guidi, whose work can be found in the permanent collections of L.A.’s Hammer Museum and Miami’s Rubell Family Collection, the new series represents a natural progression from the meticulous dot paintings she began making after abandoning representational painting. “When I was painting objects, it was about recording a particular moment or thing outside of myself. But I’m trying to get to a place in my work that feels connected to my life,” the artist says. “I feel like I’ve finally arrived at something that is truly mine.”

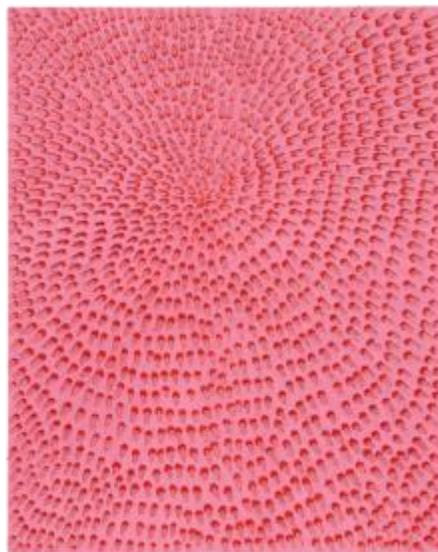


Photo: Courtesy of Jennifer Guidi
A 2017 sand-and-acrylic painting on linen; it measures 60" H. X 48" W.

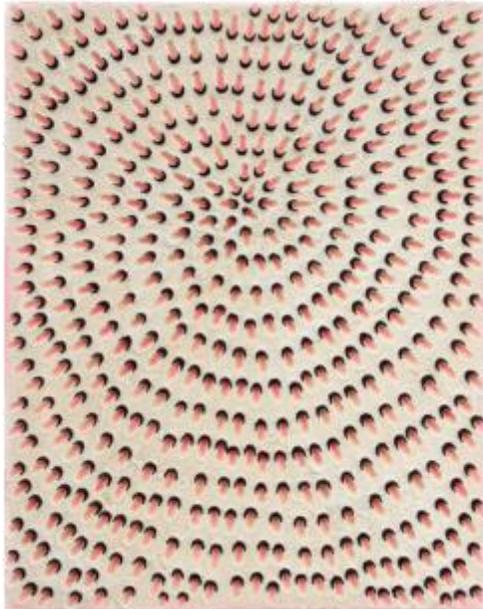


Photo: Courtesy of Jennifer Guidi
Black accents enliven a recent sand painting.



Photo: Ye Rin Mok
Tools for dot-making.



Photo: Ye Rin Mok
Guidi's studio.

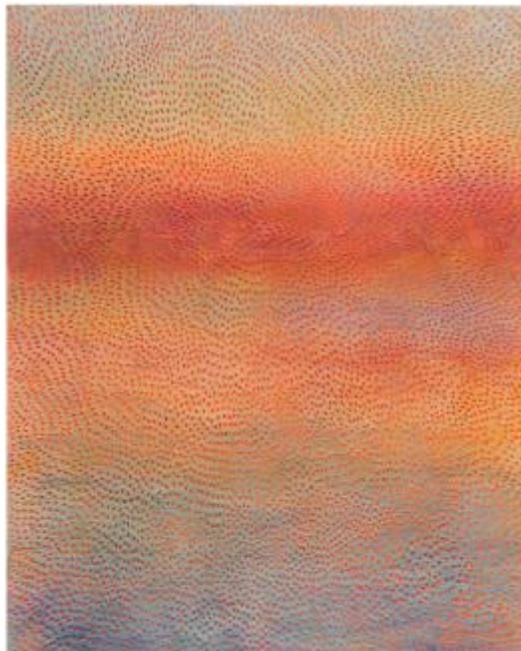


Photo: Courtesy of Jennifer Guidi
A 92" H. X 74" W. work with sunset allusions