ALMINE RECH

Jennifer Guidi
San Fernando

Mar 2 — Apr 15, 2017 | New York, Upper East Side

Almine Rech Gallery New York is pleased to announce its first solo exhibition of new work by Los Angeles-based artist Jennifer Guidi. Featuring a group of large - and medium-format paintings notable for their sculptural presence and luminosity, the show highlights the procedural rigor of the artist's practice, as well as her ability to register – and generate – gradual shifts in perceptual awareness. Guidi's characteristic use of sand as a medium, her swirling mandala-like compositions, and the richness of her palette increasingly link her mode of abstraction to sensory experience of the natural world.

Consisting of hundreds of small marks created with tools Guidi has designed especially for the purpose, the paintings conjure an array of moods and spaces, from dark, oceanic depths to radiant expanses bristling with light. Even in those works in which the marks spiral out from the middle of the canvas, the all-over quality of Guidi's compositional approach means that there is no single focal point; the paintings appear to breathe as the eye moves from center to periphery and back again. This is due in part to the way she applies pigment, medium, and sand in different combinations, varying their depth of relief, and altering how and when they interact with one another throughout the process of making the work.

In some cases, for instance, after pressing marks into a thick layer of sand that has been mixed with acrylic medium, Guidi paints into the negative spaces that result, bringing more light into their volumes and allowing the background surface of the canvas to assert itself. In others, she applies small amounts of colored sand to those marks' edges, building up their sculptural form and intensifying their optical rhythm. Every painting is methodically brought to a state of harmony by experimenting with and adjusting these techniques. This systematic, structural approach connects Guidi's practice to strains of minimalism that privilege attention to detail and meditative repetition. At the same time, however, her work exudes an intensive warmth that is often associated with more discernibly expressive brands of artmaking from both western and non-western contexts.

What both of these modes have in common is the degree to which they immerse artist and viewer alike in visual fields that correspond to basic natural phenomena like sunrises and sunsets, shimmering water, and distant desert - and mountainscapes. Such experiences of sight – which foreground archaic structural relationships between the mechanics of the human eye, emotional and psychological states, and the physical environment – are in many ways the primary subjects of Guidi's work. For this reason it can be said that she engages in an alternative kind of representation that reflects subtle changes in ephemeral ambient conditions. This requires her paintings to perform the paradoxical function of rendering barely perceptible instances of movement, and transitions from light to dark (and vice versa), in what is ultimately a static medium.

The presence of sand therefore plays both functional and symbolic roles in the works on view in the exhibition. On the one hand its particulate form is in keeping with the pointillist effects Guidi generates with her mark-making, in which discrete individual forms operate as parts of a larger whole. But of equal importance is the way sand behaves in the world as it absorbs and gives identifiable shape to invisible forces like wind and tides. Similarly, Guidi seeks to capture and represent something akin to the absorptive act of looking itself, composing fields of color, texture, and shape that serve as metaphors for the visceral connection between a landscape, for instance, and the impressions it generates in the nervous system, where it elicits fantasy, memory, and other subjective – and highly personal – responses. It is perhaps for this reason that her paintings bear the unmistakable imprint of the West Coast environs where she has lived and worked for most of her life. At the same time, however, they also situate her in a cultural lineage that transcends any particular place or moment in time – one made up of artists, writers, and others who employ precise, non-objective vocabularies to render the porous boundary between external reality and the landscapes of the mind.

In 2017, Jennifer Guidi (b. 1972, Redondo Beach, California) will be the subject of a forthcoming exhibition at Villa Croce, Genoa, Italy. She has also been the subject of solo exhibitions at Massimo De Carlo, London (2016); Harper's Apartment, New York (2016); Nathalie Karg, New York (2015); and LAXART, Los Angeles (2014). Recent group exhibitions include *No Man's Land: Women Artists from the Rubell Family Collection*, Rubell Family Collection, Miami (2015) and National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, D.C. (2016); *Marinade*, BBQLA, Los Angeles (2016); and *The Afghan Carpet Project*, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2015). Guidi's work is in the permanent collections of institutions that include the Hammer Museum and the Rubell Family Collection. She lives and works in Los Angeles.

Stuart Krimko