

## Nancy Genn

### *Hand made papers 1981-1988*

From October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022, to January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Opening on Saturday, October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022, at 18.00

**Marignana Arte Project Room**

**Dorsoduro, 140 A, Rio Terà dei Catecumeni, Venezia**

Marignana Arte hosts the exhibition *Hand made papers 1981-1988* by Nancy Genn, a new chapter of the collaborative journey that began with the exhibition *Living Painting* in 2018. This new exhibition is thus not a starting point, but a specific development within a more articulated discourse, aimed at analysing a peculiar moment in the research of Nancy Genn, one of the most important exponents of post-war informal art.

In *Il sogno americano di Nancy Genn (The American Dream of Nancy Genn)*, Giuseppe Billi wrote "She comes from California, a land of oriental arrivals and departures." And it is precisely from the Eastern countries that the artist brings back the technique of paper, a 'practice' that is not just a choice of artistic support, but which, on the contrary, becomes a powerful means of expression. As Genn herself underlines in her autobiographical text *Bronze, paper and painting*, this is a very ancient tool that if used in an innovative way can give rise to "works of art capable of creating a bridge between East and West" and reconcile her dual experience as a painter and sculptor.

Antiquity and innovation, East and West, painting and sculpture, so many are the poles around which Nancy Genn has built her art, so many are the juxtapositions that nourish her multifaceted and multiform artistic journey. Curator Francesca Valente emphasised the artist's "cultural nomadism", describing it as the true source of the research of a tireless traveller, who treads different paths, not only geographical, but intriguing labyrinths of cultures that can only be expressed through her multifaceted ability to master different artistic languages. In this regard, Francesca Valente underlines how "she has always continued to experiment, without ever ceasing to surprise, using a wide range of techniques and materials: *gouache*, casein, monotype, *collage*, vitreography, handmade paper, as well as ceramics and lost-wax cast bronze."

Within this fascinating journey, the exhibition *Hand made papers 1981-1988* defines a specific time frame. The 1980s are in fact particularly significant years for the artist, who right at the end of the previous decade had obtained the prestigious United States/Japan Creative Arts Fellowship, a

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scholarship that would offer her the opportunity to reside in Japan for at least six months. The papers on display in this exhibition thus represent the outcome of a fundamental encounter for the artist, the one with the East, which from then on would influence all her work in various ways. "My experience in Japan," wrote Nancy Genn, "was fantastic. I used to make sketches inspired by architecture in which I portrayed the contours, interiors, and spirit of places. The visual impact of that period is still reflected in my work today through the fineness of colour and the incisiveness of the line."

**Nancy Genn (San Francisco, 1930)** is a Californian artist of international stature, who lives and works in Berkeley. She studied at the California School of Fine Arts (now The San Francisco Art Institute) and at the University of California at Berkeley from 1947 to 1949. As early as 1960, Michel Tapié, the first theorist of informal art, cites Nancy Genn in his crucial text *Morphologie Autre*, a series of contemporary works by distinguished European, American, Canadian and Japanese artists, placing her alongside Carla Accardi, Alberto Burri, Giuseppe Capogrossi, Lucio Fontana, Emilio Vedova, as well as Sam Francis, Robert Motherwell, Louise Nevelson, Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, Antoni Tàpies, Jean-Paul Riopelle and Atsuko Tanaka. She gained international recognition in the 1970s for her experiments with paper, exhibiting with Robert Rauschenberg and Sam Francis in various museums from Tokyo to Hong Kong. Subsequently, she was invited several times as a *visiting artist* to the American Academy in Rome, the ICAR (International Center of Aesthetic Research) in Turin and the Cini Foundation (2019), on the occasion of the exhibition at Ca' Pesaro and in Todi (2020) during the first edition of the Festival delle Arti, dedicated to Beverly Pepper.

Among her most Memorable retrospectives are *Planes of Light* at the Fresno Art Museum, California (2003) and *Architecture from Within* at Palazzo Ferri Fini, Venice (2018). Her works are included in the permanent collections of museum institutions such as MoMA and the Brooklyn Museum, New York; the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo; the Los Angeles County Museum; the University Art Museum, Berkeley; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; the Library of Congress and the Smithsonian Museum, Washington DC; Ca' Pesaro, Palazzo Fortuny, Palazzo Ferro Fini and the Fondazione Cini, Venice. The bilingual monograph *Nancy Genn Architecture from Within*, edited by Francesca Valente and published by Skira, Milan 2018, documents her long, eclectic career, bringing together essays and testimonies by several internationally renowned critics and an exhaustive set of images.

Opening hours: Tuesday to Saturday, 11am to 7pm

Sunday and Monday open by appointment only

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