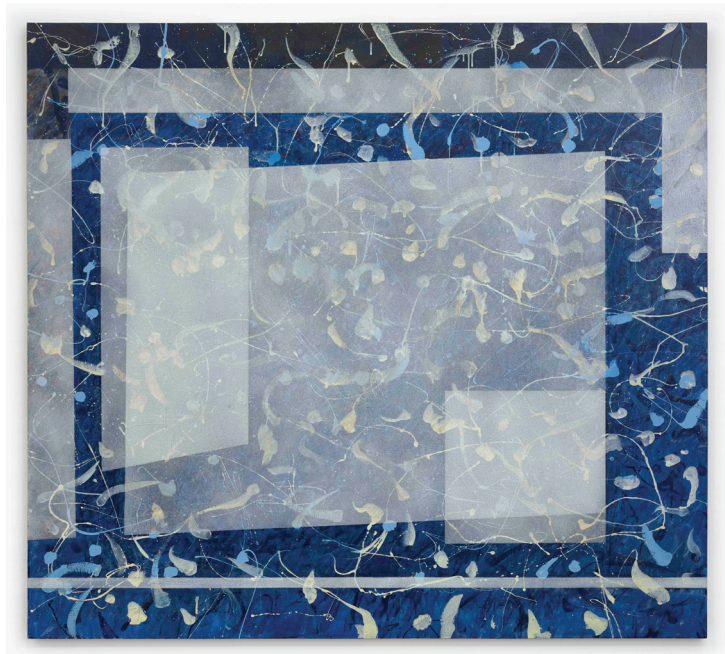




Nancy Genn, *Nocturne Ocean*, 1974, Acrylic enamel on canvas, 67 x 74"

Nancy Genn: A Painting Survey Works from the Late 1950s through 2023

A Life's Study: The Interplay of Color, Light, and Surfaces in the Natural World

September 5 - October 12, 2023

Opening reception:

Saturday, September 9 from 2:00 to 5:00 PM

Chelsea, New York at 508 W 26 ST, Suite 9F

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New York, NY—David Richard Gallery is pleased to present *Nancy Genn: A Painting Survey, Works from the Late 1950s through 2023*, on view from September 5 through October 12, 2023. The presentation focuses on the many series of paintings produced throughout the artist's eight-decade career that explore not only how we see, but also experience color in the natural world. Genn has studied the interplay between color, light, and surfaces through the many different lenses from which we view nature. This is Genn's debut exhibition with the Gallery and although she has recently been exhibiting internationally, this is her first solo exhibition in New York in 26 years.

This presentation, a survey of paintings by Nancy Genn (b 1929, San Francisco, CA) includes 22 representative works from 8 selected bodies of work that include: *Mistral*, *Evolution*, and *Celestial Space* series from the late 1950s and 1960s; the *Ocean Views* and *Sea Currents* from the 1970s; examples of the *Luminous*, *October Light*, *Roman*, *Marmaris*, and *Luce di Novembre* series of mixed media paintings from the 1990s through early 2000s; the paintings on paper, such as the *Opus*, *Rainbars*, *Orchard*, and *Shape of Water* series from 2007 through 2022; and the artist's most recent and extensive *Patagonia* series from 2014 through 2023.

Genn's artworks of handmade paper from 1975 through the 1980s are also included in this presentation. The handmade paper artworks are like literal paintings where the pigment is incorporated into the paper pulp and created by hand instead of a brush. Using layers of pulp with "tear ups" became known as the "Genn Method".

Nancy Genn is a highly accomplished artist who works in a diverse range of media and supports, including painting with oil, acrylic, and watercolor, drawing, calligraphy, collage, lithography, handmade paper, and cast metal sculpture.

About Nancy Genn's Artworks and Influences:

Nancy Genn's art is inspired broadly by three basic components that confront each of us daily. First is the natural world and specifically, the fundamental elements of the land, water, and light, including the interactions between them and their respective changes over time: daily, monthly, and seasonally. Genn has studied the interplay of light and surfaces as it relates to how we experience color in our lives. Such experiences could be from direct sunlight washing the landscape, or dancing on the rippled surfaces of water, or through cast shadows from architecture, or in her case, through the many dream-like layers of fog in the Bay Area around San Francisco, California where she has lived and worked her entire life. The artist, from her vantage point, frequently visualized the light from the sun and moon through the fog as planes of color, layered one in front of the other. Thus, she observed the light literally operating as thin translucent layers of color within framed structures from the urban architecture and bridges as noted below. From then on, Genn emulated those experiences in her various methods of applying layers of pigment on supports and creating her many compositions across numerous series of artworks.

The second component and influence is calligraphy and the communication between one another in and between seemingly complex and diverse cultures. The artist has experienced such communications in her own life and through her vast international travels to Europe, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East. In Genn's work many different symbols, characters, and letters and permutations thereof, become incorporated into her artworks through different media and processes and used across her many series.

The third component is architecture, both literally and metaphorically. A vital part of the artist's studio practice that began with replicating the layers and planes of fractured light as she viewed the landscape through the Bay Area fog. Then, followed by the introduction of angled and rectangular geometric forms around the interior perimeters of the canvas that created structural and framing devices, like portals for viewing the landscapes and seascapes far beyond the windows and porticos where she had such vast panoramic views and around the urban architecture and bridges within her site lines. Beyond the physical structures from where Genn views the sea and landscapes is the integration of architecture with nature that impacts the human psyche and human condition more broadly. The existence of architecture also creates and provides a framing and scaling device for how one views the monumentality of historical architectural structures as well as the wonder and awe of nature's heroic vistas. Beyond domiciles, internalizing architecture also creates intimate and personal spaces that melds structures with individual experiences, memories, and emotions that can create safe havens in one's mind.

Genn's approach to her art making has, and still is, focused on the influences in her life that are real and tangible, such as landscapes, water, calligraphy, and architecture as noted. Yet, she does not create a picture that literally depicts these subjects. Instead, she reduces elements of each to a referential essence that is further reduced, replicated, and abstracted to generate her unique iconography used to create her abstract artworks. Understanding this approach and the visual language that Genn produces, enables the viewer to see linkages between series of paintings and other media such as her sculptures, handmade paper artworks, and paintings on handmade paper.

There is a progression of scale, both physical and psychological in Genn's process and artworks. On a micro, internal and personal level it began with water, the sea, always wanting to be in and around water. Such works evoke introspection, a meditative quality that provides solace. In the 1950s and 60s this expressed itself as mark making, small gestural strokes that in and of themselves were random marks, yet aggregated they made a singular mark, but collectively in the composition they created abstract imagery that seemed familiar, triggering a memory or emotion. Such compositions evoked memories of a body of water, a language and dialog, or something agrarian like flowers in a field or an orchard, or notes and lyrical music, maybe even a celebration or parade. Moving on to the 1970s to a macro, grander scale emerged, more externally focused and inspired by the large vistas and views from her large upstairs porch and coincident with the effect of the local fog taking a lead role in Genn's work, both visually and aesthetically. The planes and layers of color and light became the subject while the geometric shapes provided the architectural structure as she viewed the Pacific Ocean in the distance. The interplay of architecture with environmental light and seasonal hues appeared again in the late 1980s and 90s with Genn's travels in Italy and her extensive "Roman" series of paintings. Later in the 2000s, a trip to Patagonia where experiencing the massive glaciers brought a tectonic scale to her aesthetic and a broader environmental perspective and historical world view to her artworks. It also marked a grand return to the basic element of water. The "Patagonia" series of tall vertical paintings with their distinct horizontal blue colored bands as supports for the cascades of water capture the striations from the soil trapped in the glaciers that come down to the water, marking the elevations over the centuries while the current waterfalls flow freely from the melting ice. The imagery was a literal marking of time, nature's "mark making" and visual record for all to see.

The lenses noted above by which we view landscapes can include direct experiences in the landscape or rippled surfaces of water, or through and around architectural elements and physical structures as well as the time of day, our personal memories, emotions, and specifically, in the artist's case, through the many layers of fog around the San Francisco Bay. The fog and spending her life viewing the world through that lens, which functions to diffuse and meld the colors and light with the landscape, seascape, and surrounding architecture that in turn, heightens Genn's introspection, imagination, and innovation. Hence, her creations de facto conflate numerous binary combinations of formal and aesthetic elements within a single composition and across a series or between series of paintings. Many of these binaries include gestural strokes combined with geometric elements, calligraphy and painting, pencil rendering and acrylic paint, nature and architecture, the vastness of the natural world and the

intimacy of one's domicile and personal space, reality and memory, literalness and allusion, light and dark. The combining of binaries within her artworks becomes a metaphor for conflicts, whether personal to the artist or broader cultural issues, that seem to be harmonically and poetically resolved in Genn's masterful compositions and coalescence of diverse shapes, materials, and media within a single composition.

Genn views her handmade paper artworks from the 1980s as a bridge between her paintings and sculptures. Pigment is a vital and integral component of these constructions that is physically incorporated into the paper rather than applied to the surface as a postproduction step. To produce the paper, the pulp and pigment together are mixed, squeezed, transferred, then formed by, and literally of, the artist's hand. Therefore, the paper functions as both the medium and support. Many such handmade paper artworks are embossed, layered, torn, and reconstructed to create fissures that reveal layers below and views into the core of the work, like portals into the soul. Many include handmade marks from graphite and only rarely any over painting. The imagery is a combination of architecturally inspired geometric planes of color, layered and overlapped with other planes of color like her paintings, but using opaque hues instead of thin translucent washes of pigment. The handmade paper artworks continue her love of calligraphic and gestural mark making combined with geometric shapes and border effects of color, emulating her views across the San Francisco Bay towards the vast atmospheric vistas of the Pacific Ocean and world beyond—just as she uses those same views and compositional approaches in her paintings. Thus, her views are frequently, but not exclusively, a combination of land and sea and celestial skies as seen through the Pompeiian architecture of her upper porch located on a hillside in Berkeley overlooking the bay through the fog and architecture in the distance. Hence the repetition of the compositional layers of geometry and color within and across the otherwise diverse media. Interestingly, the handmade paper artworks create a bridge between another age-old binary of fine art and craft.

Historical Perspectives of Nancy Genn's Artworks:

Nancy Genn was born and raised in San Francisco then lived in Berkeley for all her professional career where she also raised her family.

Close friends with Jay De Feo and Sonya Rapoport, the three women met each other while studying art at the University of California, Berkeley. Genn was friends with Nick Wilder, the legendary Los Angeles art dealer, and contemporaries with other women Abstract Expressionist artists in the Bay Area, including Sonia Gechtoff, Deborah Remington, and Lilly Fenichel. Notable male contemporaries included Sam Francis, a fellow classmate at the University of California, Berkeley; Peter Voulkos, a sculptor and founder of the ceramics program at Berkeley; Ronald Davis, represented by Nick Wilder; and Jack Zajac, a fellow sculptor and colleague who also loved to celebrate the shape and movement of water in his artworks.

Like so many women artists, Genn has had a productive and successful career with 15 solo exhibitions in US and international museums and her artworks included in 31 museum and foundation collections (see the lists following the images of paintings), yet her artwork is not as well known in the commercial sector as it should be given her scholarly and critic successes. In Genn's case, she had commercial gallery representation, such as with Susan Caldwell Gallery in New York as well as David Cole Gallery, John Bolles Gallery, and Takada Gallery in San Francisco. She focused primarily on producing her artworks and presenting in museum exhibitions with less emphasis on the commercial aspects of the art market.

The early 1950s and 1960s paintings by Genn with their notable lyrical, calligraphic marks were influenced by the artists Michel Tapié and Mark Tobey. Tapié thought of calligraphic marks as signs, metaphysical signs of a new way of communication. The sign was repeated as an approach toward self-realization, consciousness, and awareness through a meditative process within the artist. A tremendous influence on the early expressionistic paintings by Nancy Genn, Tapié, a critic, theorist and curator was known for his influences on Tachisme, an approach to expressionistic painting in France in the 1950s and 60s. Along with Dubuffet and Breton, Tapié co-founded the Compagnie de l'Art Brut. Tapié is also credited with L'art Informel by way of his book, "Art of Another Kind", published in 1952 describing a style of art making in Europe, and more specifically "action painting" and "lyrical abstraction", in response to American Abstract Expressionism. In Michel Tapié's seminal publication, *Morphologie Autre*, 1960, he located Nancy Genn's artworks alongside those of Carla Accardi, Alberto Burri, Lucio Fontana, and Emilio Vedova.

In 1989 Genn went to Rome as a visiting artist at the American Academy. She could not take her vats for creating handmade papers, so she turned to painting on already made handmade papers from Japan and France. This was a seminal period and return to painting, hence the reference to the "Roman Period".

We are delighted to be representing Nancy Genn and offering these paintings and others from her long career that spans eight decades.

About Nancy Genn:

Nancy Genn (1929), a California artist whose artworks have been exhibited and collected nationally and internationally, lives and works in Berkeley. She studied at the California School of Fine Arts (now The San Francisco Art Institute) and the University of California, Berkeley between 1947 and 1949. In 1978 she was awarded the prestigious United States/Japan Creative Arts Fellowship that allowed her to travel and lecture about her pioneering techniques in Japan. In the 1980s she received wide recognition for her experiments with paper, exhibiting with Robert Rauschenberg and Sam Francis in the US and in Asia (New American Paperworks, 1982-83). She was invited several times as visiting artist to Rome by the American Academy, also Turin by ICAR (International Center of Aesthetic Research), Venice by the Cini Foundation (2019) for an exhibition at Ca' Pesaro and recently to Todi (2020), to participate in the first Festival of Arts as a tribute to Beverly Pepper. Significant retrospectives of her artworks include *Planes of Light* (2003) at the Fresno Art Museum, CA, and *Architecture from Within* (2018) at Palazzo Ferro Fini, Venice.

Nancy Genn's Artworks In Selected Museum Collections:

Achenbauch Foundation, California Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco, CA
Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY
American Craft Museum, New York, NY
Auckland Museum, Auckland, New Zealand
Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY
Cincinnati Art Museum, Cincinnati, OH
Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento, CA
Des Moines Art Center, Des Moines, IA
Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice, Italy
Fresno Art Museum, Fresno, CA
Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indianapolis, IN
International Center of Aesthetic Research, Italy
Library of Congress, Washington, DC
Los Angeles County Museum, CA
Mills College Art Museum, Oakland, CA
Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY
Museo di Ca' Pesaro, Venice, Italy
Museum of Modern Art Jacksonville, Florida
National Museum of American Art, Washington, DC
The New York Public Library, New York, NY
New York University Art Collection, NY
The Oakland Museum, Oakland, CA
Palazzo Ferro Fini, Venice, Italy
Portland Art Museum, Portland, OR
San Francisco Museum of Art, CA
Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC
Southwest State University Art Museum, Marshall, MN
University Art Museum, University of California, Berkeley
University of Texas, El Paso, TX
Weisman Art Museum, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN
Western Carolina University Fine Art Museum, Cullowhee, NC

Solo Exhibitions in Museums:

M. H. De Young Museum of Art, San Francisco, CA
Fresno Art Museum, Fresno, CA
The Oakland Museum, Oakland, CA
Los Angeles Institute for Contemporary Art, LA, CA
Richmond Art Center, Richmond, CA
Istituto Italiano di Cultura Chicago/The Art Institute of Chicago, IL
Istituto Italiano di Cultura, Los Angeles, CA
Bollinas Museum, Bollinas, CA
Mills College Art Museum, Oakland, CA
America Assoc. for Advancement of Science, Washington DC
Cowell College Gallery, UCSC
Museo di Ca' Pesaro, Galleria Internazionale d' Arte Moderna, Venice, Italy
Carl Cherry Center for the Arts, Carmel, CA
University of California, Santa Cruz, Cowell College
Sanchez Art Center, Pacifica Center for the Arts, Pacifica, CA

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Nancy Genn
Cascade No 1
1969 ca
Oil on canvas
76 x 47"



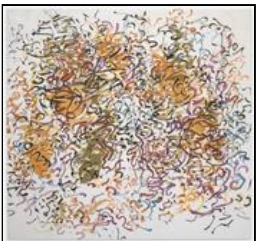
Nancy Genn
Celestial Shapes
1973
Acrylic enamel on canvas
70 x 94"



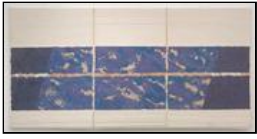
Nancy Genn
Celestial Space 3
1964
Oil on canvas
52 x 60"



Nancy Genn
Celestial Space 7
1966
Oil on canvas
68 x 75"



Nancy Genn
Emerging
1960
Oil on canvas
55 x 58"



Nancy Genn
Hydra 2
1982
Handmade paper
59 x 122"



Nancy Genn
In Honor of Michel Tapie
1959
Oil on canvas
43 x 61"



Nancy Genn
Luce Di Novembre 10
2004
Casein and colored pencil on paper mounted on lined over board
41 x 29"



Nancy Genn
Luce Di Novembre 18
2004
Mixed media mounted on linen on board
41 x 29"



Nancy Genn
Luce Di Novembre 8
2003
Casin on paper mounted on linen on board
41 x 29"



Nancy Genn
Nocturne Ocean
1974
Acrylic enamel on canvas
67 x 74"



Nancy Genn
Ocean View
1974
Acrylic enamel on canvas
56 x 82"



Nancy Genn
October Light 15
2003
Mixed media on canvas
74 x 66.5"



Nancy Genn
Oraibi 25
1981
HMP with casein embossed
25 x 35"



Nancy Genn
Patagonia 41
2021
Casein on canvas
72 x 36"



Nancy Genn
Patagonia 52
2022
Oil on canvas
72 x 36"



Nancy Genn
Patagonia 55
2022
Casein on canvas
72 x 36"



Nancy Genn
Patagonia 56
2023
Casein on canvas
72 x 36"