

*From West to East to West*

Benigna Chilla

July 3 - August 1, 2021

Thompson Giroux Gallery

written by: Irene Lyla Lee



*From West to East to West*, Mixed media, 72" x 51"

The material orchestrates its own making. This sentiment resounds in Benigna Chilla's show *From West to East to West* at Thompson Giroux Gallery in Chatham, NY. Through the month of July, internationally renowned artist and teacher, Benigna Chilla will show her large scale paintings. The show connects a collection of her early work from the 1960's, to her most recent pieces, ranging from 2016-2020. The ties between the disparate time periods in Chilla's work evoke powerful colors, provoking texture, and mazes of pristine geometric patterns.

These vivid paintings are works Chilla created after teaching in Bhutan in 2012. They weave intentionally chosen textile fragments with broad, handmade pigments in durable pieces that are balancing acts of color, shadow, and shape. The show also features lucid pastel sketches from her early work that transform organic material into colorful ecosystems, and her series of *Letters and Recipes*: collages formed with her mother's writings.

Benigna Chilla, born in 1940, began her studies in Germany at the Folkwangschule für Gestaltung in Essen. As a student of Bauhaus professors, she studied a broad range of skills, from typesetting to drawing, sculpture, and printmaking. She draws on her range of expertise to explore the world through her creative practice. Often she collects fragments of textile which are adhered to the canvas and become the seed from which the painting is constructed.

Chilla moved to America in 1969, completing her graduate studies at the State University of New York at Albany and the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. She has held residencies at Yaddo, the Djerassi Foundation, the Atlantic Center for the Arts and the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown, MA. Chilla has taught at institutions such as Cornell, Brown, Berkshire Community College, RISD, contemporary art at VAST in Bhutan, and National Institute of Fashion Technology in India. Chilla lives half of her year in Chatham, NY, and the other in Kolkata, India. She has had over forty solo exhibitions both nationally and internationally. Despite the far reaching nature of her practice and travels, her work remains an intimate reminder to create vessels for what has come before.

Thompson Giroux Gallery

57 Main Street

Chatham, NY 12037

No appointments necessary, limited number of people in the gallery at a time.

photo credit: David Lee