

MASSIMODECARLO

JENNIFER GUIDI

ECLIPSE

Mysticism and science are transferrable and inextricably related in Jennifer Guidi's new exhibition of paintings, *Eclipse*. Guidi's unique practice of applying sand grounds with patterned divots, then over-painting with chroma-rich oils, intersects two and three-dimensional planes like sine waves or tiny sand dunes scalloping her surfaces. Her work furthers Modernist histories of minimalism and spiritual abstraction, recalling perhaps Agnes Martin's subtle geometric repetitions or Hilma af Klint's seraphic forms and auratic color gradients: occult renderings that connect earthly material to aether. Guidi's meditative process of developing compositional radial systems, in which "starting points" generate centrifugal mark-making force that often begin slightly left to represent the heart as an energy source, manifest loose, spherical circulatory systems of elliptic ovals, like blood coursing through veins and arteries, pinning meridian points. In this suite of paintings, scalloped paint marks also recall moon phases, as the exhibition's title suggests. Visual tension is sustained through breathless, sweeping movement and careful, slow method as Guidi's self-described "mandalas" archive gestural contrast and opposition.

Contrast—that necessary component in dualism and its paradoxical opposite, nondualism—is thematically central to this exhibition. Drawing on Palazzo Belgioioso's Neoclassical architecture that locates harmony between grandiose, decadent scale and simplified geometric forms after Vitruvius' principles of symmetry (proportion idealized through *firmitas* (strength), *utilitas* (functionality), and *venustas* (beauty)), Guidi's paintings symbolically riff on emblems in the building's details. For example, the ceiling's plaster applique bust of Venus, goddess of love, and the terrazzo floor's 8-point star, denoting a mandalic compass linking heaven to earth, inspired Guidi to step up her compositional calibrations of chance, intuitive growth, and engineering with esoteric investigations of archetypes like serpent and pyramid. Her rainbow-spined snake paintings are visual manifestations of raw kundalini energy moving through chakras, uncoiling into third eye enlightenment through the serpent's forehead. In her exhibition's cosmogony, snake represent rebirth, transformation, and eternal renewal—apt for a Spring opening date—while pyramids might spark reference to the Ancient Egyptian architectural practice of erecting triangular bridges between living and dead to aid in afterlife navigation, or, Neoplatonic visions of a pyramidal world order. Phases must close to invite new openings: lunar eclipses symbolize obscurity and our unconscious self, while solar eclipses connote an unfastening of pristine eras through quintessential consciousness.

Through usage of sacred motifs, the installation's relative arrangement connotes our rotating planet and corresponding celestial bodies, celebrating sunrise and moonrise, light and shadow. Astronomy is as primary as geology in this body of work, as in the next room, Guidi's pair of solar and lunar eclipse paintings evoke the simultaneity of time's apparent passing and illusory transfixation. With her triangular canvases, an increased sense of transcendentalism is at play, as if conjuring such powerful symbolic combinations might alchemically morph the artworks into precious metals. Further considerations of color, as well, invite one to wonder if Guidi has contemporized an alchemical Magnum Opus: a summoning of some philosopher's stone through use of color. Guidi's sweeping project, paralleling the building's architectural details, in other words, is in keeping with the 18th century's last blast of Post Renaissance alchemical romance, during which hermetic and platonic philosophies were re-stylized. While during this era, there was still a mystical respect for embedding coded insignia into cultured surroundings, by 1787 alchemy and its newer sibling discipline, chemistry, had been divorced, thus establishing false and destructive dichotomies between science & spirit, mind & body. Transmutation as a goal in Western scientific experimentation—that one should seek the infinite reform and reincarnation of valuable material—was effectively killed.

These speculative axioms, however, are merely possible filters for representation or narrative overlay. The work's abstraction ultimately remains as open to interpretation as Guidi's opaque, matte-pigmented surfaces. Slivers of color poke through broad monochromes, hinting at layered visions that, if x-rayed, would reveal clandestine visual conversations that the artist has with herself. Experienced either way, Guidi's exhibition, like the Palazzo's masonic language, reminds the viewer that reunification of the ethereal and corporeal is beauty's golden key.

—Trinie Dalton

{ MDC }

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Jennifer Guidi was born in Redondo Beach, California, in 1972. Lives and works in Los Angeles. Recent solo exhibitions include: *Field Paintings*, LAXART, Los Angeles (2014); *New Paintings*, Nathalie Karg Gallery, New York (2015); *Pink Sand*, Harper's Apartment, New York (2016); *Visible Light/Luce Visibile*, Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Villa Croce, Genoa, Italy (2017). Selected group shows include: *Marinade*, BBQLA, Los Angeles (2015); *No Man's Land: Women Artists from the Rubell Family Collection*, Rubell Family Collection, Miami (2015); *#crowdedhouse*, Harper's Books, East Hampton, New York (2015); *The Afghan Carpet Project*, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2015); *Unpacking: The Marciano Collection*, Marciano Art Foundation, Los Angeles (2017); *Generations: Female Artists in Dialogue, Part 1*, Sammlung Goetz, Haus der Kunst, Munich (2018); *One Day at a Time: Manny Farber and Termite Art*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, USA (2018). Jennifer's work is included in prominent collections such as the Hammer Museum and the Rubell Family Collection.

Hard Facts:

Massimo De Carlo, Milan

Piazza Belgioioso, 2 - 20121 Milan, Italy

From April 4, 2019 to May 18, 2019

Opening reception on Wednesday April 3, from 19:00 to 21:00

Open Tuesday to Saturday, 11:00 – 19:00

For further information and materials:

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