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THE BLOG

SERIOUSLY GO: Jennifer Guidi at LAXART

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Los Angeles-based artist Jennifer Guidi is adept with, and well-followed on, Instagram, where her photos of cropped architectural forms reveal sublime and fleeting glimpses of L.A.'s built environment. (She admits that she often has to stop driving to snap them.) But Guidi is first and foremost a painter, with a new series of large-scale abstract canvases. Her first exhibition in New York brought her Field and Sand paintings to the city in time for Frieze Week. An exhibition of new work is on view LAXART in Los Angeles through June 28 and will be featured during New York magazine and Persol's Culver City Artist Tour on Saturday, June 21; [click here for the full schedule](#).

Guidi recently returned from Afghanistan, where Hammer Museum curator Ali Subotnick led a small group of artists to research a project involving local rug weavers.

What originally drew you to rugs?

Growing up, my grandmother taught me how to sew, knit, and crochet. I still love the repetitive motion of hands making things. Then, two years ago, I went to Morocco to find rugs. I bought forty-three and became obsessed with their backs and stitches.

I started out by making a small group of works on paper, from photographs I took of the backs of the rugs. At first, I was trying to imitate a stitch, but what I really connected with was the repetitive motion of making that mark. It wasn't about the stitch anymore, or a rug, but about this new mark-making—a new way for me to make an abstract painting. With the paintings, I don't make photographs or drawings beforehand. It's an intuitive process as I go along.

And how did you come to work with sand?

I've always liked the texture of sand and have wanted to do something with it but didn't know how. After I started making these paintings—which I call Field Paintings—I was on the beach on the North Shore of Kauai, and I started thinking about how I could be making the same marks in the sand. When I got home, that's when I started.

Do you think of Yayoi Kusama's infinity nets? Walter De Maria's Lightning Field also comes to mind—how it's about puncturing something into the earth.

Right, I'm making my mark. And I love Kusama's net paintings. They're amazing.

When you were in Afghanistan, it must have been interesting for you to reconnect with weaving.

It was amazing to see how rugs are actually made, and how many people are sitting at a loom together. I'd envisioned a woman—the mother of a family—weaving by herself, but it wasn't the solitary process I expected. In reality, the mother takes care of the home while the grown children weave the rugs. They're all sitting together, about seven or eight of them.

For the Hammer Museum's project, will you be making a rug?

I'll be designing a rug that will be made in Afghanistan.

You have a personal connection to this practice, from sewing with your grandmother, and you've translated it into new forms. How does this recent experience tie into your work with the backs of the Moroccan rugs?

I'm not sure yet. I'm still thinking about that.