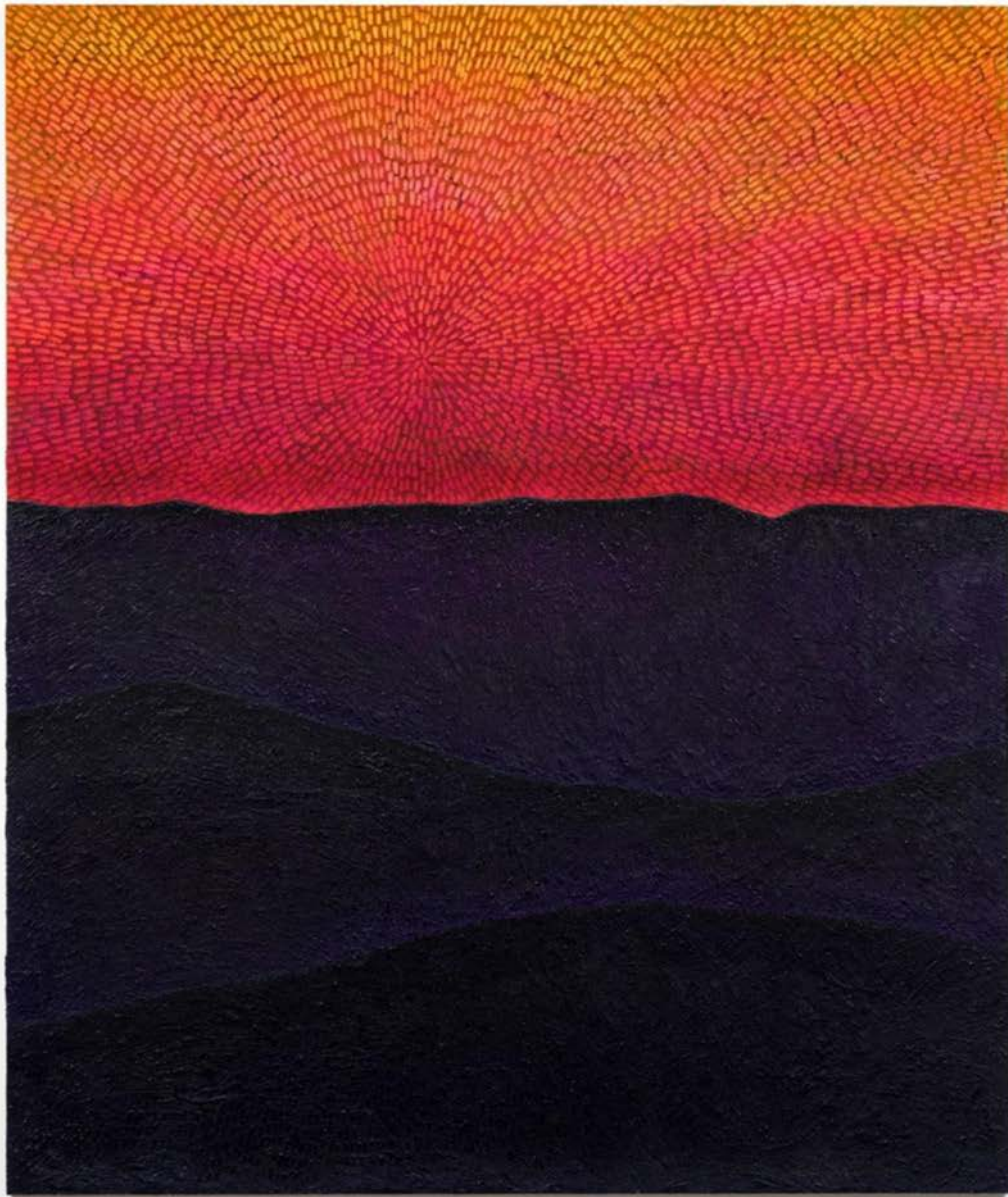


Ko, Christina, "Sunset Boulevard," *Prestige*, Hong Kong Art Basel Supplement, March 2018, pp. 22-25

*Society's Luxury Authority*  
**PRESTIGE**

PROFILE



OPPOSITE PAGE  
FORCE OF INSTINCT  
(PAINTED UNIVERSE  
MANDALA SF #1G, SUNSET  
SKY, BLACK-PURPLE  
MOUNTAINS, NATURAL  
GROUND), 2018

# SUNSET BOULEVARD

*It's not enough to be a great artist nowadays – just ask Jennifer Guidi (or not). Christina Ko takes a look at the sand-painter whose work is causing a ruckus in collector circles around the world*

IF YOU GOOGLE Jennifer Guidi, the first article that pops up is titled "If another person asks me to get them a Jen Guidi I think I might just vomit in my bed: the next must-have market darling has emerged". The Artnews piece was quoting art collector/advisor/curator Stefan Simchowicz, who sensationalised the recent hot streak this LA artist was on by pouring vitriol on bandwagon-jumpers looking to buy and flip Guidi's work. "I am sick of you and I am sure Jen is as well," he continued.

Talk of market manipulation always arouses great interest, and Guidi's work is particularly interesting in this context. More often than not, artists try to divorce themselves (or at least, so they say) from the process of buying and selling, but the fact remains: the people who collect your art have a great say in how you are critically perceived. And Guidi's work is very often and very much in the right hands: at the Hammer Museum, in the Rubell Family Collection, part of the Marciano Art Foundation. It's been reported that at recent shows, buying was a two-for-one deal: in order to acquire one for yourself, you first had to purchase another and donate it to a museum. Has all this talk overshadowed the work? Guidi is certainly doing her best to diffuse the chatter in this area, avoiding questions that centre on the sales and the secondary market.

Almost ironically, her pieces are ethereal, beautiful paintings created using sand and echoing the shapes of the mandala, born of Guidi's

meditative practice, which, one imagines, takes her far away from thoughts of commerce and reputation. "Meditation does feed how I make my work and the work in return feeds my meditation practice. I like to think of the energy that moves in and out of the work – in a similar way that I think when I am sitting and pulling in the energy of the universe and also giving as much back as I can. I believe that through repetition I am able to hyper-focus and get into the zone, which enables me to see new ideas," she says.

Before she started doing the sand paintings which are so popular now, Guidi was still a painter, albeit one whose work was a little less abstract. "I'd been thinking about using sand for years before I did," she says. "I'm not sure why, but if I looked at sand I would think, how can I use it in a painting? I think when I decided to let it be what it was and trowel it on to the canvas it finally made sense to me as a medium."

Her colour palette borrows heavily from the natural world, with hues redolent of Californian sunsets. And of course, her source material comes – literally – from the beach. It's fairly easy to identify Guidi as an artist from the West Coast contingent, a label she's happy to wear. "My parents moved around Southern California quite a bit when I was a child. They were both from the East Coast and were drawn to living close to the beach. We spent a lot of time on the beach. But most of my childhood was spent in Palm Desert, California. I also lived in San Diego County and Orange County. As a Southern California native I

Ko, Christina, "Sunset Boulevard," *Prestige*, Hong Kong Art Basel Supplement, March 2018, pp. 22-25

PROFILE





do feel like the West Coast is truly my home. I loved visiting LA since I was a young child. Some people consider it to be an ugly place. But it has always been beautiful and exciting to me."

For her upcoming show at Gagolian in Hong Kong this month, Guidi will show 14 new paintings that are richer in bold, primary colours and harder-edged than her previous work. There will be "three mountain paintings, one sunset painting and six triangular paintings", but all still offering the same zen-like quality and Californian hippie-trippy vibe that has become her calling card.

As this is Hong Kong, the collector vultures will be more than ready to descend upon a newish name, one now endorsed by institutional and collector demand. It's arguable that the Artnews article will only exacerbate the demand for Guidi pieces by trend followers (lucky side effect, or all part of some diabolical plan?), leaving Guidi free to continue her own artistic exploration, blissfully estranged from the hullabaloo of market chatter.

Which is how an artist should be able to work, anyway. It took Guidi decades to find her flow, and now that she's in the groove, she's going to keep doing what she does: creating. "One painting informs the other and sparks new ideas," she says. "I was unsatisfied with my earlier work. I painted images as a way of recording people and things in my life. But I was more interested in capturing a feeling over making something look realistic. I had tried many times before to make this change, but it took me over 20 years to finally find what I was meant to do."

**OPPOSITE PAGE**  
JENNIFER GUIDI

**THIS PAGE:**  
FROM TOP: DETAIL  
OF *LIGHT UP YOUR  
ENVIRONMENT* (BLACK  
#5MT, WHITE SAND #2E,  
MULTICOLOR GROUND),  
2018; *BREATH FILLS YOU*  
(PAINTED SAND SF #2P,  
YELLOW SKY), 2017

