

SIDER Culture



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—KELLY WEARSTLER

(think Ming Dynasty meets Franz Kline). Lorenz credits the five years she spent in Tokyo with her family as a teen with largely shaping her artistic sensibility. "I became enamored with Asian crafts and how a teacup can be just as revered as a painting," she says.

After earning her MFA at Temple University's Tyler School of Art in Philadelphia—where her classmates were intent on becoming the next Basquiat or Schnabel—Lorenz moved to New York to apprentice under an Asian lacquer restorer, eventually opening her own restoration studio. Her big break came in the form of a 1998 John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation fellowship and designer William Sofield. "He would check on antiques he was having restored at my studio and see my paintings," says Lorenz of Sofield, with whom she shares a love for Japanese aestheticism. After Sofield commissioned pieces for the Soho Grand Hotel and a number of private residences, other designers began to follow suit. Smith tapped her to do a piece for The Beverly Hilton lobby, and she's a go-to for such Hollywood elite as Cindy Crawford and Joel Silver.

Today, a small room in Lorenz's studio is dedicated to hundreds of miniature examples of her work that clients browse through to get an idea of what they like before dictating the size, which can be as large as the customer desires. "But it's not like, 'Oh, I need a certain shade of green.' I have a lot of creative freedom," says Lorenz. She also has a lot of devoted fans. Says Smith, "She has a wealth of ideas. Nothing is ever repetitious—it always feels fresh."

While Lorenz's paintings hang in an array of disparate venues—from the Portland Museum of Art to the Obama White House—her work seems particularly suited to high-fashion boutiques, where her pieces' glittery, high-gloss surfaces complement the luxe merchandise. Currently Lorenz is working on a 12-panel screen for architect Peter Marino's redesign of the Chanel flagship store in Paris. Tom Ford, Bottega Veneta, Gucci and Tiffany & Co. are also clients. "It's funny—if you ever looked in my closet you would never guess I worked for these people," laughs Lorenz. "I don't get much fancier than a pair of Gap jeans." **LAC**

ALL THAT GLITTERS

Artist Nancy Lorenz's abstract works are making a serious splash with LA tastemakers. *By Evelyn Crowley*

What do top LA-based designers Kelly Wearstler and Michael Smith have in common, aside from spot-on taste and a roster of famous clients? The answer: Nancy Lorenz. Over the last two decades, the Manhattan-based painter has amassed a following of architects and collectors eager to commission her large, luminous works for projects across the globe. "What I do is not trendy," says Lorenz. "It's about beauty. I'm as much an artisan as an artist."

Lorenz's paintings luxuriate in their materiality.

Using wooden panels, she favors a palette of exotic mediums, including mother-of-pearl, gold and silver leaf, and copper, playing up their natural luster with techniques such as lacquering and water gilding. "Her rich, textural work is the jewelry to interior projects I've designed," says Wearstler, who has several Lorenz paintings in her personal collection.

Those familiar with Lorenz's art note its distinct East-meets-West flavor. The refined techniques of Oriental craftsmanship are fused with the bold, gestural brushwork of Abstract Expressionism



TEARS OF A SHELL (FOR ADRIAN) | 2003 | MOTHER OF PEARL, LACQUER AND PIGMENT ON PANEL | 72" x 40"