

“Nancy Lorenz: New Work at Morgan Lehman Gallery,” June 21, 2013



It's a treat to see an artist working confidently with unusual materials. In her exhibition *New Work*, Nancy Lorenz has made use of mother-of-pearl inlay, lacquer, white gold, and small amounts of pigment, among other materials, to create an engrossing body of work on view at Morgan Lehman Gallery until June 29th.

The artist's new works, while relatively monochromatic, possess surfaces that are sliced into—much like an etcher's zinc plate scratched by dry-point drawing. Lorenz's wide array of unusual materials merge through a process that is all her own. The exhibition embraces drawing and mark—incised hatching specifically—on panel, book cloth, or gessoed cardboard. Most of the larger pieces on view include at least one form of metal or offer glimpses of embedded pearl swirling refracted prisms.

While lyrical abstraction is Lorenz's vehicle in the new show, uninhabited landscapes are the destinations she arrives at beyond the fog. Each scratched surface relates to shifts in season or changing weather. Occasionally, intermittent bits of color flourish, accenting Lorenz's surfaces like cirrus clouds and enlivening memories of Turner or Frankenthaler. By request, visitors can also view the artist's subtle works on paper, like *Untitled* (2012), wherein color reigns more freely as the artist's typical slashing line-work carries over from her drawing in metal.

*WHITE GOLD WATER* | 2013 | WHITE GOLD, MOTHER OF PEARL, CLAY, PIGMENT AND SHELLAC ON PANEL | 24" x 18"

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An American who spent her adolescence in Japan, Lorenz now resides in New York and has recently returned from a residency at Cill Rialaig Arts Centre in Ireland—an environment which has informed several works in the new exhibition. One of the largest and most successful pieces on view is *Palladium Water* (2013), a billboard-sized work created in mother of pearl, clay, pigment, and shellac on panel, that suggests a horizontal flow of motion. Lorenz’s sharp slash-like incisions meander up and down as they move across the work’s iridescent surface, wiggling towards stability.

In *New Work*, compositional pressures flare up and then neutralize. Lorenz finds bending tensions that push against the overall gestalt of her images. Nothing in the show is overworked, in fact, the deeper she digs, the more she uncovers. Smaller white pieces on book cloth like *Untitled from Cill Rialaig VI* (2012), flutter with simplicity—perhaps lacking the depth of the artist’s more labored efforts. Still, even the smallest and most under-ripe of works in the exhibition hold secrecy—a primordial quality that feels remote and majestic.

Luxe materials and a brave but minimal approach to color and mark making evoke a distant quality, suggesting each work’s life independent from the viewer’s experience. Flattened fields, shimmering ravines, and vanishing horizons set this far-off stage, though the established mood is too insular to penetrate easily. Then, the viewer gets caught—embedded in crystalline geodes—pushing and pulling at the ages. In this state, Lorenz’s work inspires a new form of visual excavation.

-Matthew Farina, Contributing Writer



UNTITLED | 2012 | WATERCOLOR AND GESSO ON PAPER | 5.5" x 8"



PALLADIUM WATER | 2013 | MOTHER OF PEARL, CLAY, PIGMENT AND SHELLAC ON PANEL | 60" x 96"