

SARA GENN: ARTIST STATEMENT

New Alphabet, 2019

People think that design is merely about how things look but really, it's about how things *function*. We may understand this importance in the context of machines and technology, but the same qualities should be required of all things, especially art. Paintings are made to engage, incite and connect, but they also have the chance to quietly work within the perfection of their own archaic technology.

Having recently set up a studio in a 1960 midcentury house in Palm Springs, California, within spaces of sublime quiet and at the edge of the wilderness of Joshua Tree, the high desert and the San Jacinto Mountains, I'm struck again by the power of a new environment to radicalize the basic principles that have always driven my work: asymmetry, asperity (the roughness or irregularity of things,) simplicity, austerity and intimacy—all nudging toward a striving for balance, rhythm, harmony and defiant softness. The Japanese aesthetic of *wabi-sabi* and its principles acknowledge that objects and experiences are most beautiful when they evoke a feeling of spiritual longing.

My mother's Japanese heritage and my father's life as a Canadian landscape painter have influenced my process, execution and themes. My work strives to offer simultaneously, a place of visual shelter and excitement and to occupy space with objects that blur the signifiers of gender, craft and monuments. As much as these works seek to embody colour field foundations and to straddle the ineffable sensations of weightiness and weightlessness, they're also concerned with tactile materiality and light-bouncing surface illusions. The super-flatness of saturated void spaces and their edges are meticulously created freehand: no projection, resist or tape is used.

"Never let go of the fiery sadness called desire." (Matsuo Basho)

Based in New York City since 2003, Sara Genn was born in Vancouver, Canada in 1972 and graduated with a BFA from Queen's University at Kingston, Ontario. She relocated to California in 2018. Genn's paintings have been featured by Nissan Infiniti, The Toronto Arts Council, in film and television and in *The New York Times*, *Create*, *Introspectives*, *House Beautiful*, *House and Home*, *NYLON Japan*, *Town and Country*, *W*, *Domino*, *American Art Collector*, *New York Magazine*, *LONY* and *Tatler* as well as in the Rizzoli Publication *New York Parties*, *Private Views* and for the Faberge Big Egg Hunt. Genn is also a composer and independent recording artist, certified Gold in France and blogs twice-weekly on art to over 50,000 global subscribers.