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## **NANCY LORENZ: ALCHEMY**

December 28, 2019 - January 20, 2020

Opening Reception: Saturday, December 28, 2019 from 5-7pm

Artist talk with Ariel Plotek, Curator of Fine Art, The Georgia O'Keefe Museum, 4-5pm

GAVLAK Palm Beach is pleased to announce *Alchemy*, a solo exhibition of new paintings, sculpture and design by New York City based artist Nancy Lorenz (b. 1962, New Jersey). *Alchemy* is the artist's first solo exhibition with the gallery.

Nancy Lorenz's work fuses a deep understanding of Post-War abstraction with a reverence for the craft and materials of traditional Asian art. Reinterpreting Japanese aestheticism with unrestrained brushwork often yielding unexpected results, Lorenz employs techniques that give material form to the relationship between fine art, craft, and design. The range of her pictorial gesture is closer to the modern abstraction of Joan Mitchell and Lee Krasner, combined with traditionally-considered decorative techniques such as precious stone inlay, lacquer, and methods of water gilding and burnishing. The artist spent half a decade living in Tokyo, Japan, which left her with a deep understanding of luxurious materials, such as mother-of-pearl, *kijiro-urushi* (lacquer), and gold leaf, as well as the ability to employ them in painterly gestures that meditate on the Sublime.

The five years Lorenz spent in Tokyo imprinted her creative process with a Japanese influence that can be recognized in many of her paintings, fountains, screens and boxes. Exceptionally gifted in lacquering, Lorenz employs her own interpretation of this highly complex and sophisticated ancestral Japanese method which involves the use of as many as twenty successive thin coats, mixing her own pigments into the lacquer to achieve a dense visual effect. Lorenz's style also evokes Japanese prints and calligraphy, and the artist acknowledges: "In Japan, I grew up with the idea that there was no hierarchy between fine art and sublime craft. I always liked artists who worked in a range of materials and approaches."

*Alchemy* is conceived as the quest for an agent of material perfection, produced through a creative opus in which humans and nature collaborate with the final goal being the production of gold and/or other perfect substances from baser ones. The concept and

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philosophy behind the ancient Egyptian, Asian, European and Islamic discipline of alchemy directly corresponds not only to Lorenz's transmutation and sublimation of metals and precious materials, but also with the artist's connection with the outdoors and the natural world. Lorenz affirms: "Nature has always influenced my work, both in the materials I use, and as a thematic reference . . . Organic material such as mother-of-pearl has its own irregularities and provides unexpected patterning and incidental marks that I like to allow into my work." A recurring theme in her oeuvre, this transformation of ancient materials in new and unforeseen ways is central to Lorenz's artistic practice and her own personal pursuit of aesthetic alchemy.

Included in the exhibition are two grand-scale paintings (7 x 10 feet) that Lorenz created using her signature labor-intensive techniques that achieve her stylistic elegance and compositional harmony on a monumental scale. Juxtaposed with her smaller, more intimate gilt, gilded, and mother-of-pearl paintings, and accompanied by her "pour-boxes" and *objets d'art*, the exhibition provides a broad window into the boundary-blurring aesthetics of an exceptionally meticulous artist.

Bridging the genres of fine and applied arts and architecture, Lorenz has collaborated with several luminaries of the Design world: William T. Georgis, Peter Marino, Michael Smith, and William Sofield, to name a few, among others. Her work is regularly requested for larger projects, including creating custom decorative screens and opulent decoration commissioned by designer label Chanel stores worldwide, as well as by international hotels, and for private homes both nationally and internationally.

Nancy Lorenz was born in Plainfield, NJ in 1962 and currently lives and works in New York City. After living in Japan, she earned her BFA in Painting and Printmaking at the University of Michigan and received her MFA in Painting from the Tyler School of Art in 1988. Her work has been included in numerous exhibitions throughout the United States and internationally with recent highlights that include: *Nancy Lorenz: Moon Gold*, San Diego Museum of Art, San Diego, CA; *Beauty Reigns, A Baroque Sensibility in Recent Painting*, Akron Art Museum, Akron, OH; *Nancy Lorenz: Silver Moon*, Leila Heller Gallery, Dubai, UAE; *Nancy Lorenz: Boxes and Screens*, Pierre Marie Giraud, Brussels, Belgium; *Skies and Beyond*, Bottega Veneta at the Salon del Mobile, Milan, Italy. Lorenz has executed numerous public commissions at

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