



“ANN GARDNER:
EXPANDING THE
PERCEPTION OF LIGHT”

On View At

HEATHER GAUDIO FINE ART

November 20th, 2021– January 8th, 2022

Light, transparency and reflection will take your breath away this month at Heather Gaudio Fine Art in downtown New Canaan. “Ann Gardner: Expanding the Perception of Light,” the artist’s first solo exhibition at the gallery, will feature a range of works expressing her life-long exploration of light, color, pattern, and volume. After experimenting with different materials and processes, Gardner’s artistic enquiry landed her with the one material that has become her signature medium: glass. Known to be one of the most ancient man-made materials, glass allows Gardner to not only stretch the boundaries of its physical properties, but it also gives her the “honesty,” as she puts it, to express that which interests her.

Gardner’s sculptural works are presented in a range of formats, shapes, and scales. The artist hand-cuts colored glass into tiny mosaic pieces and assembles them onto steel armature structures. These come in a variety of forms, such as curved geometric shapes, tubular ovals, waved panels, star bursts or round compositions created in a series. Their volumes protrude into space and recede into themselves, thereby allowing for additional flickering of light, color, and reflection to take place. Some of the sculptures are mounted onto walls while others are free-standing or suspended from the ceiling.

The artist is also known for creating large-scale, site-specific installations that not only bring attention to the works themselves but also to the environments they occupy. Understanding the physical space, who uses it and for what purpose informs her decisions on design and visual outcome. Gardner uses glass in a very precise way, understanding that its very nature is ageless, and the works will transcend time. These larger scale commissions can be presented in the form of sculptures or mosaic murals. Cognizant of the physical space and light that surround them, Gardner mindfully and carefully selects the materials and palette that is best suited for each setting. The spaces become activated with reflections, transparency, and light.

The spectrum of Gardner’s palette is broad, with colors ranging from soft golds, silvers and blues to dynamic reds, bright greens, and yellows.

The exhibition at Heather Gaudio Fine Art will feature new mosaic wall-mounted sculptural works that emphasize pattern, reflection, shifting light and color. Also showcased, are a new series of hand-blown glass orbs that are less structured than her mosaic work. For Gardner, this new glass orb series poses a different way to think about the material. She wanted to relate to the glass as a material that “holds a breath.” As she states, “this is really the only process where one can create a thin barrier between what is inside and what is outside.” Gardner directs the molten glass as the orbs get inflated with air, deliberately keeping the shapes off center. Typically, the objective of blown glass is to keep it centered and controlled, creating as perfect concentric circles as possible. Her intention is freer which allows her to create wonderfully organic shapes.

The innately beautiful bubbles in soft blues, greys and gold can hang from the ceiling or can be free-standing. They direct the viewer’s attention to transparency and the light beyond their physical edges. Arranged in clusters, their clarity becomes more nuanced when they overlap each other. This series of orbs was showcased at the Boise Art Museum in Idaho last year to great critical acclaim.

Also featured in the exhibition at the gallery is a new work on paper Gardner created in 2020 when working with glass in the studio was not available to her. Gardner took to walking around Lake Washington during those months and she became interested in the translucency and glow of light on the watery surface. She translated this experience into a two-dimensional expression by applying watercolor on silver-leaf paper. The metallic surface rendered the depth and luminous effect she was seeking, and then creased the paper to evoke the texture of water. This multi-sheet work is arranged in a grid and can be extended to a larger scale if so desired.

Gardner has been the recipient of numerous awards and grants, including fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts. Her work has been featured in many solo and group shows around the country. In addition to her large-scale public and corporate commissions, her work is included in the collections of the National Museum of American Art, the Detroit Institute of the Arts, the Seattle Art Museum, and the Corning Museum of Glass, to name a few.