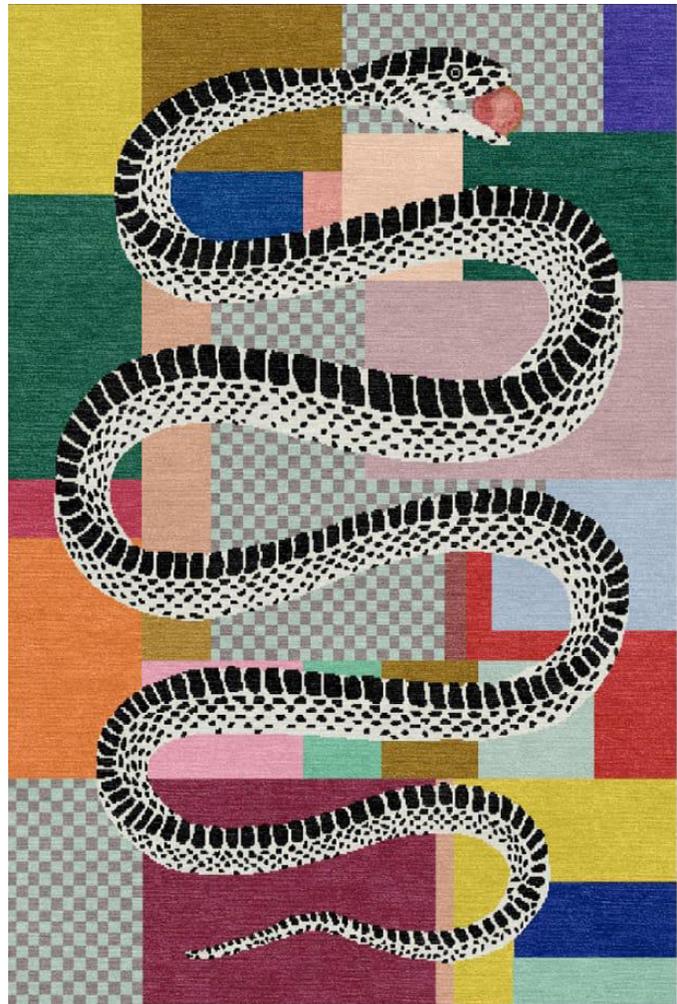


JANNA WATSON FRUIT OF THE LOOM

May 15-29, 2021
340 Dundas Street West, Toronto



Janna Watson, *Fruit of the Loom*, 2021
© Janna Watson
Courtesy of the artist and Bau-Xi Gallery

Bau-Xi Gallery is pleased to present *Fruit of the Loom*, an exhibition of new works by contemporary abstract painter, Janna Watson. On view at the gallery's Toronto location, 340 Dundas Street West, the exhibition combines Watson's previously separate painting and rug practices, exploring the interactions of art and design through the artist's feminist and Neo-Bauhaus point of view.

Watson is best known for her contemporary interpretation and approach to automatic painting. Taught at a young age by her late grandfather, Watson's dynamic compositions are manifestations of emotion and energy as described through the artist's distinctive treatment of colour, line and mass.

Inspired by her grandfather, who never found a market in rug making but exposed his granddaughter to the effort, artistry and time behind the scenes that goes into creating a rug, her work aims to challenge the value of both craft and high-art.

For the better part of a decade, the artist has operated her rug studio, Studio Watson, as a separate entity outside of her established painting practice. Working with a bespoke rug atelier — and one of the only female-owned and operated rug mills and ateliers in India — the artist's limited edition rug works are hand-knotted by highly skilled artisans.

In *Fruit of the Loom*, Watson brings both of her practices together, questioning the attitudes associated with 'craft' — an art form that has been devalued by its domestic associations.

With a nod to the Bauhaus movement — a radical utopian art school that pushed for the unification of art and design in the material world and was the only place that openly accepted women into its program — Watson's choice of medium consciously aligns with the crafts of textiles and ceramics that were allowed to be practiced by women at the time.

The artist's contemporary Neo-Bauhaus approach is inspired by and honours artists such as Anni Albers, Marianne Brandt and Gertrud Arndt, who challenged the notion of domesticity.

Fruit of the Loom also sees the further exploration of block colouring; a compositional element first employed by Watson in her exhibition, *Strange Legacy*, presented at the gallery's Vancouver space in 2019. While that was the first time Watson played with block colouring and geometry in her paintings, it has been a constant thread in her rug designs.

These graphic tropes are subtly introduced into Watson's mixed media works on panel. Playing with light pigments and fruit, this series possesses an elegant and powerful energy that is the result of decades of experimentation and inquiry.

Born in 1983, Janna Watson completed her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Painting and Drawing at OCAD University, graduating with honours in 2008.

In 2013, the artist mounted her largest project to date, creating a 11 x 31 foot site-specific piece for the lobby of AURA, Canada's tallest residential building.

The artist has been represented by Bau-Xi Gallery since 2010, and has mounted 20 solo exhibitions with the gallery between its spaces in Toronto and Vancouver. *Fruit of the Loom* marks the artist's 21st solo exhibition with the gallery.



Janna Watson, *Then Spoon The Lime Sorbet Into A Martini Glass*, 2021

© Janna Watson

Courtesy of the artist and Bau-Xi Gallery

BAU-XI GALLERY

Bau-Xi Gallery has spaces in Toronto and Vancouver. Bau-Xi Gallery acquired Foster/White Gallery (Seattle) in 2001, most recently acquiring Canada House Gallery (Banff) in 2018.

For all press inquiries, contact
toronto@bau-xi.com +1 416 977 0600