

# Eugenia Pardue

## Artist Statement:

In my painting there is a sense of luxury, rooted in the luxuriance of nature. As a child I frolicked in nature, camping in the forests, swimming in Santa Cruz, and running around my family's 80-acre farm in Minnesota. I spent my early adult years in New Orleans and Miami, sultry sub-tropical cities with spicy cuisine and brilliant colors. But not until I lived in Portland, Oregon, with its gorgeous gardens lining the avenues, did I begin to translate nature's sensuality and fecundity into my art.

My work references flowers, vines, trees, seed pods, and other vegetative motifs I find in the world around me, as well as in antique floral prints, wall paper, tiles, tapestries, and jewelry design. In an artist residency in the Czech Republic, I lived and painted in an 18<sup>th</sup> Century palace—an immersion in the splendors of the baroque and rococo, which impressed upon me the ties between the decorative arts and the narrative, myth-making power of contemporary abstract painting.

I have always been a colorist, so when I began to work monochromatically a few years ago, I saw my white-on-white paintings as pure, meditative, and sacred. Working all in white also enables me to concentrate the viewer's visceral response on the paintings' surfaces, which reach out from the picture plane and engage the senses. In my studio I use tools to braid, mold, and weave paint into shapes that are sometimes soft and graceful, sometimes spiky and dynamic.

After the shapes are created and positioned, I envelop them in sheets of acrylic paint, until their contours rise like islands from a glassy-smooth sea. The finished works are both painterly and sculptural, minimalist and maximalist, serene and dramatic, with undertones of danger and seduction. In our increasingly detached digital age, I aim to bring viewers back into touch with the opulent physicality of art, and to remind them of the beauty within themselves.