



Sherron Francis (b. 1940)

Sherron Francis (b. 1940, Chicago, Illinois) is an American artist associated with the second generation of Color Field painting and post-Abstract Expressionism. Her work is distinguished by luminous, atmospheric surfaces and a restrained palette modulated with exceptional subtlety, creating works that evoke an ethereal presence and a deep sense of spirituality.

Francis studied interior design at the University of Oklahoma before earning her BFA from the Kansas City Art Institute in 1963, where she studied alongside Dan Christensen and Ronnie Landfield. She later received her MFA from Indiana University and took on a teaching position at Eastern Michigan University. In 1968, she relocated to New York, settling in SoHo at a pivotal moment in the development of contemporary painting. There, she became associated with a tight-knit community of artists including Dan Christensen, her close friend from the Midwest, and also Larry Zox, Walter Darby Bannard, and Larry Poons. In 1969, Francis was a founding member of the Bowery Gallery, where she held her first solo exhibition in 1970. Initially working in a figurative mode painting male nudes, she soon turned to abstraction, aligning herself with a generation of painters who moved away from the hard-edged geometry of the previous decade toward a more lyrical and material expressive approach.

Her introduction to André Emmerich Gallery by Dan Christensen marked a turning point in her career, as Emmerich was the leading gallerist for Abstract Expressionism and Color-Field painting and had presented solo exhibitions for Hans Hofmann, David Hockney, Morris Louis, Helen Frankenthaler, and Kenneth Noland. In 1973, she showed in a solo exhibition that established her critical reputation, followed by inclusion in the 1973 Whitney Biennial. In response to her work, Peter Schjeldahl wrote for the *New York Times*: “Francis has...sidestepped the danger of seeming hopelessly derivative of such artists as Mark Rothko, Morris Louis and Helen Frankenthaler —by, it seems to me, the use of a single canny formal device. All her canvases are tall, vertical rectangles. What this shape achieves is a physical presence that supports the paintings' fragile play of color and texture. Bearing roughly the proportions of the human body, but bigger in size, her pictures confront the viewer with a satisfying firmness, inviting delectation.” Her work from this period is characterized by stained and brushed surfaces that produce softly grained textures, within which amorphous zones of color emerge and dissolve. Using a muted palette of pinks, blue-greens, and warm, golden browns, Francis developed a highly nuanced approach to color.

Francis received a total of six solo exhibitions in the 1970s, two of which were held at André Emmerich Gallery in 1973 and 1974, with later showings at Tibor de Nagy in 1978 and again in 1980. She also exhibited widely in group exhibitions throughout the 1970s and early 1980s in New York, as well as venues in Houston, Baltimore, Kansas City, and Detroit. Her work was collected by prominent figures such as Clement Greenberg and Helen Frankenthaler, underscoring her proximity to key critical and artistic circles of the period. In the late 1970s and 1980s, Francis expanded her material practice, experimenting with acrylic and gel mediums that allowed for greater physicality in her work. Her paintings became increasingly gestural and tactile, incorporating thick impasto and mixtures of pigment and gravel. By 1980, she had also begun creating clay works, which she exhibited alongside artists such as Kikuo Saito and Betty Woodman.

Francis also maintained a dedicated teaching career, holding positions at the Ridgewood School of Art and Design from 1972 to 1985 and Cooper Union from 1978 to 1985, where she influenced a generation of younger artists. By the mid-1980s, shifting conditions in downtown New York led Francis to permanently

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relocate to the North Fork, marking a gradual withdrawal from the New York art world. Francis's work is now held in many private and public collections, including the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, the Art Gallery of Alberta, the Everson Museum, the Museum of Southern Texas, the Power Gallery of Contemporary Art in Australia, and the Portland Art Museum.

Artist CV

Selected Solo Exhibitions

Lincoln Glenn, NYC, 2026
Lincoln Glenn, NYC, 2024
Lincoln Glenn, Larchmont, New York, 2022
Rubiner Gallery, Detroit, Michigan, 1985
Watson/de Nagy & Co., Houston, Texas, 1984
Clayworks Studio Workshop, NYC, 1982
Douglas Drake Gallery, Kansas City, Missouri, 1981
Watson/de Nagy & Co., Houston, Texas, 1980
Tibor de Nagy Gallery, NYC, 1980
Bell Gallery, List Art Center, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, 1979
Tibor de Nagy Gallery, NYC, 1978
B. Kornblatt Gallery, Baltimore, Maryland, 1977
Janie C. Lee Gallery, Houston, Texas, 1974
André Emmerich Gallery, NYC, 1974
André Emmerich Gallery, NYC, 1973
Bowery Gallery, NYC, 1970
Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, 1966

Selected Group Exhibitions

Art Museum of South Texas, *Modernism of the 1970's*, Corpus Christi, Texas, 2008
Portland Art Museum, *Clement Greenberg: A Critics Collection*, Portland, Oregon, 2001
Columbia Museum of Art, Columbia, South Carolina, 2001
Douglas Drake Gallery, *Small Paintings: Big Issues*, NYC, 1993
Douglas Drake Gallery, *Wood*, NYC, 1989
Douglas Drake Gallery, *Toot*, Kansas City, Missouri, 1985
Watson/de Nagy & Co., *Clayworks*, Houston, Texas, 1984
C.D.S. Gallery, *Artists Choose Artists*, NYC, 1983
Rubiner Gallery, *Selected Paintings of Contemporary Abstractionists*, Detroit, Michigan, 1982
Garth Clark Gallery, *Painters in Clay*, Los Angeles, California, 1982
Martin Gerard Gallery, *Clayworks*, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, 1982
Traveling Exhibition, *Clayworks*, Squires Art Gallery, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Virginia, 1981
Douglas Drake Gallery, *Abstract Paintings*, Kansas City, Missouri, 1981
Watson/de Nagy & Co., *New Work New York*, Houston, Texas, 1981
Clayworks Studio Workshop, *Visiting Artists*, NYC, 1981
Traveling Exhibition, *Broken Surface*, Virginia State, Bennington College, Tibor de Nagy, 1981
Martin Gerard Gallery, *Clayworks*, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, 1981
American Academy & Institute of Arts and Letters, NYC, 1978

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Edmonton Art Gallery, *New Abstract Art*, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, 1977
Museum of Fine Arts, *Modern Painting: 1900 to the Present*, Houston, Texas, 1975
Dootson/Calderhead Gallery, Seattle, Washington, 1975
Janie C. Lee Gallery, Houston, Texas, 1975
Gallerie André Emmerich, Zurich, Switzerland, 1975
Museum of Fine Arts, *Three Young American Painters*, Houston, Texas, 1974
Whitney Museum of American Art, *Whitney Biennial Exhibition*, NYC, 1973
Louise Ferrari Gallery, Houston, Texas, 1973
New Gallery, Cleveland, Ohio, 1973
Janie C. Lee Gallery, Houston, Texas, 1973
Gallerie André Emmerich, Zurich, Switzerland, 1973
Galleria 11 Fante Di Spade, Rome, Italy, 1972
André Emmerich Gallery, *New Talent Show*, NYC, 1972
The ART Gallery, State University of New York, Albany, New York, 1970
Eastern Michigan University, *Five Man Invitational*, Ypsilanti, Michigan, 1970
Bowery Gallery, New York, 1969
Western Michigan University, *8th National Print & Drawing Biennial*, Kalamazoo, Michigan, 1968
University of North Dakota, *North Dakota Annual*, Grand Forks, North Dakota, 1966
Evansville Museum, *Midstates Exhibition*, Evansville, Indiana, 1966
Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, 1966
Evansville Museum, *Midstates Exhibition*, Evansville, Indiana, 1965
Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, 1965
Evansville Museum, *Invitational Exhibition*, Evansville, Indiana, 1964
Speed Museum, *Invitational Exhibition*, Louisville, Kentucky, 1964
Speed Museum, *Louisville Art Center Annual*, Louisville, Kentucky, 1964
Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, 1964
Studio Gallery, Geneva, Illinois, 1964
Studio Gallery, Geneva, Illinois, 1963

Education

Undergraduate Studies: University of Oklahoma, 1958-1960
Bachelor of Fine Arts: Kansas City Art Institute, 1960-1963
Master of Fine Arts: Indiana University, 1963-1966

Teaching Experience

Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, 1964-1966
Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, Michigan, 1966-1968
Connecticut College, New London, Connecticut, Guest Lecturer, 1974
Ridgewood School of Art and Design, Ridgewood, New Jersey, 1972-1985
The Cooper Union School of Art, New York City, New York, 1978-1985
Metropolitan State College, Denver, Colorado, Visiting Artist, 1987

Selected Public Collections

Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas
Art Gallery of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada

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Everson Museum, Syracuse, New York
Museum of Southern Texas, Corpus Christi, Texas
Power Gallery of Contemporary Art, Sidney, Australia
Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan
Portland Art Museum, Oregon
Parrish Art Museum, Water Mill, New York

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M. Bartolucci, "Sherron Francis is the AbEx Painter You Need to Know Now," *Introspective Magazine*, September 26, 2022, <https://www.1stdibs.com/introspective-magazine/sherron-francis/>.
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H. Harrison, *The New York Times*, Sunday, August 4, 1992 L.I. Sec.
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C. Abatt, *Birmingham Eccentric*, January 17, 1985.
M. Miro, *Detroit Free Press*, January 18, 1985.
V. Tatransky, "The New Avant-Garde", *Art International*, Vo. XXVII-2, April-June, 1984, p. 31.
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V. Tatransky, "Sherron Francis", *Arts Magazine*, September 1982 p. 39.
V. Tatransky, "Group Show", *Arts Magazine*, May 1981, p. 35
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Roanoke Times and World News, Sunday, September 17, 1978.
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L. Johnson, *The Sun*, May 15, 1977.
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K. Whee, "A Personal Definition of Pictorial Space", *Arts Magazine*, November, 1974.
"New York Letter", *Art International*, November 15, 1974, p. 57.
A. Holmes, "Two Young Americans Follow Gallery's Stars", *Houston Chronicle*, October 3, 1974.
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