
BARTLETT

JENNIFER BARTLETT

SELECTED WORKS

November 22 - December 31, 1980

HALLWALLS

Buffalo, New York

November 23, 1980 - January 4, 1981

ALBRIGHT-KNOX ART GALLERY

Buffalo, New York

This exhibition is the first project in *FOUR BY THREE*, a series of four exhibitions and concurrent artists' residencies in 1980-81, jointly sponsored by the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, CEPA and HALLWALLS, all of Buffalo, New York. The program is made possible by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency, and the New York State Council on the Arts.

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INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

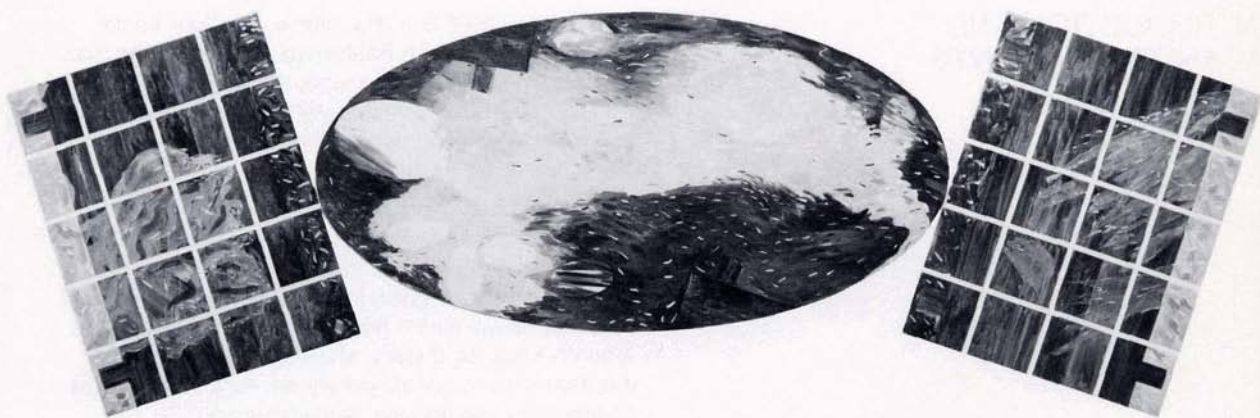
FOUR BY THREE is a descriptive title. Four artists, Jennifer Bartlett, John Baldessari, Judy Pfaff and Jim Pomeroy will present their work at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, CEPA and HALLWALLS during a jointly-sponsored year-long series of cooperative projects during the 1980-81 season.

The advantages of such cooperation cannot be overestimated. The programming of all three organizations is greatly enriched by the introduction of young artists and new ideas. Special one-gallery installations will enrich the exhibition program of the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, showing the most recent developments in contemporary art. As a result of this cooperation, installations, workshops and performances will take place in the alternative spaces, making use of the greater flexibility of small organizations as well as their specific spatial arrangements, which more readily allow for a greater diversity of activities.

Recognizing that each organization is best suited for particular types of activities and that each has a distinct audience, we plan to take advantage of our respective strengths by coordinating programming and by pooling resources, funds and audiences. At the same time, we hope to insure wider exposure for contemporary work in the local artistic and academic community. Such extensive programming would be impossible without the close cooperation of all the members of the three organizations involved. These are unfortunately too numerous to be named, but those who were most instrumental in making this venture a reality must be singled out: Robert T. Buck, Director, and Susan Krane, Assistant Curator, at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery; William J. Currie, Director, and G. Roger Denson, Exhibition Director, at HALLWALLS; and Tom Damrauer, Director of CEPA.

In preparing Jennifer Bartlett's exhibition, my profound thanks go to Paula Cooper and Douglas Baxter of the Paula Cooper Gallery, New York, and to the other lenders. Above all, I want to thank Jennifer Bartlett for generously sharing her time and ideas during my work on this project.

CHARLOTTA KOTIK
Associate Curator
Albright-Knox Art Gallery



5. *Swimmers and Rafts, Ellipse*, 1979
oil on canvas; enamel paint, silkscreen grid and baked
enamel on steel plates
c. 6'5" x 1'8" (40 plates, 1 canvas)
Private collection

JENNIFER BARTLETT: GRIDS AND CANVAS

CHARLOTTA KOTIK

When, in 1915, Heinrich Wölfflin published his *Principles of Art History*,¹ he had formulated the theory of five alleged polarities by which to distinguish two basic morphological systems inherent to the art of the past — that of classical origin represented by the clarity and strict order of the High Renaissance and the contrasting agitated intricacy of abundant forms represented by the Baroque. The quoted polarities are: linear and painterly, plane and depth, closed and open form, unity and multiplicity, clarity and obscurity. Documenting his theory solely with examples of historical art, his work, which was so overwhelmingly influential in the development of art historical discipline early in this century, seems entirely devoid of answers to the problems posed by contemporary art.

We must, however, consider one aspect of Wölfflin's thought: his almost prophetic perception that the two modes — the strictly classical and excitedly baroque — not only succeed one another, but that this succession is essential for advancement within the constantly transitional and endless flow of time. Since both phenomena are essential for maintaining the continuum, there is no valid reason to consider one lesser than the other. And in order to understand fully what follows, we must wholeheartedly grasp and accept that which comes before. In fact, Wölfflin suggested that his categories could be called "five different views of one and the same thing."² This applies to the development of style, not only within an artistic period but within the works of one artist as well.

In her work, New York painter Jennifer Bartlett has proven again and again that a particular image can progress from a strict linear system toward a composition of swirling brushstrokes; from two-dimensional flat planes toward dramatic pictorial depth; from monochrome to polychrome and from the simple grid to complex shapes of support. The multiple forms of expression in her work are not the result of the influence of various styles and painting techniques of the past, as has sometimes been incorrectly suggested. In Bartlett's case, as in the case of all mature artists, they are a natural expression of the inner necessity to formulate her ideas into plastic reality in various ways. She is constantly searching for the expression that most accurately captures the original impetus, an elusive idea that requires different solutions each time.

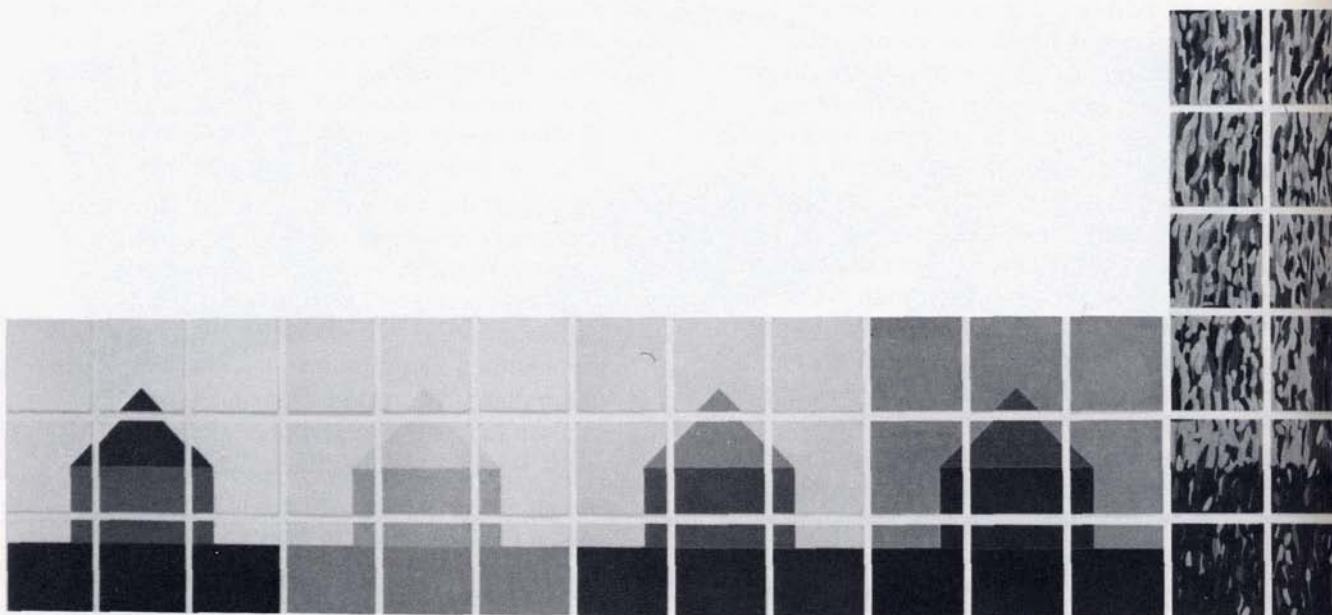
When Jennifer Bartlett first began to paint, she used large stretched canvases. The size of her work has always been monumental — but the technical complications of working in this oversized format were highly restrictive for this

energetic and determined artist. Consequently, in 1968, Bartlett first began to mark steel foot-square plates with a series of dots. In keeping with the minimal aesthetics of the time, Jennifer Bartlett was investigating the possibilities of the modular grid in her own particular way.

"It was at the time when there was so much talk about conversion to the metric system when I started to think more concentratedly about proportions. The foot is the size of an ideal proportion, not too big, not too small — it struck me as an ideal solution to break my large compositions into small units and the square foot was an ideal unit."³

From then on Bartlett had the white, baked enamel steel plates industrially produced, printed with a light grey-green silkscreen quarter-inch grid. A series of dots, either in combinations of blue, green, red and black or in single colors, was applied in mathematical and precise ways to illustrate elaborate narrative schemes in her early compositions. The squares themselves were arranged into yet another large grid on the wall, separated by an inch-wide space.

In 1975-76 Bartlett executed *Rhapsody*, an environment composed of 988 plates. Line, triangle, square, tree, mountain, ocean and house were systematically explored, together with the expressive properties of color. *Rhapsody* was a giant undertaking, crucial for Bartlett's formal vocabulary and subject matter as well as for her experimentation with looser brushstrokes, all of which influenced her subsequent works. Although she had planned a series of paintings to explore all of the elements listed above, she became so fascinated by the shape of the house (which is, in effect, a combination of pure geometric forms) that her work was dominated by it for years to come.

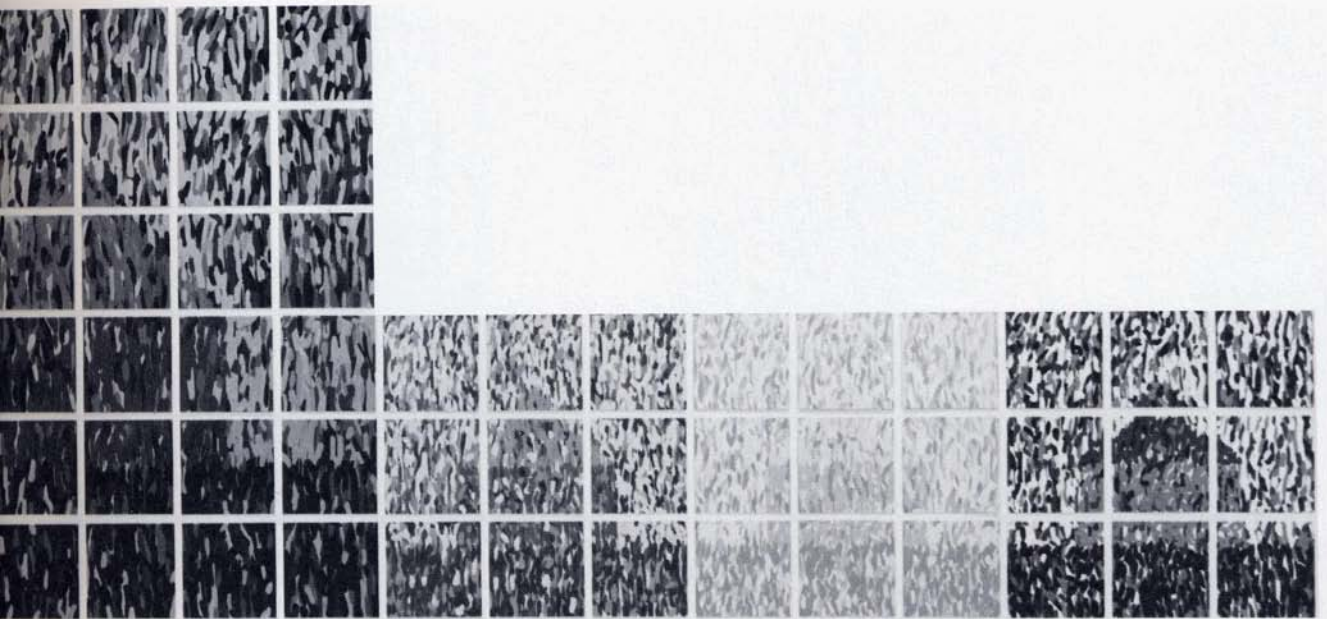


1. *5725 East Ocean Boulevard*, 1976-77
enamel paint, silkscreen grid and baked enamel on
steel plates
6'5" x 19'2" (99 plates)
Courtesy Paula Cooper Gallery, New York

Furthermore, the didactic structure of *Rhapsody* accentuated Bartlett's other involvement — fiction writing — which is reflected in her visual work by the introduction of elaborate narrative schemes. In the visual sphere the narrative does not only follow linear progression; Bartlett frequently confronts us with sets of opposing entities that present us with numerous versions of the same subjects. The phenomenon of time seems to be the catalyst — its profound effect on us and our surroundings is a theme of many of her paintings.

In *27 Howard Street; Day and Night*, 1977, the title itself suggests what the image presents — the joyous, shimmering image of a house, with the contours obliterated by light on the left and clearly defined in the serene calm of the nocturnal scene on the right. The open form and loose brushstrokes are replaced by stark linear forms, clearly conveying the changing mood of the scene. The set of prints based on the same subject is masterfully executed, displaying superior handling of intaglio techniques.

In *5725 East Ocean Boulevard*, 1976-77, Bartlett manipulates the image of the house in a series of variations — from strictly representational to abstract; from highly outlined structure to bare suggestions of the original shape. The strict observation of the grid structure utilized in this piece is also observed in *Graceland Mansion*, 1977, wherein the element of perspective alters our perception of



the schematized structure of the house. A complex set of prints of various techniques, based on this painting, established Bartlett as an exquisite painter-printmaker.

Subjects of Bartlett's paintings are drawn primarily from her immediate surroundings, but through her will to create a universal system of semi-abstract signs she transforms them into private, sometimes indiscernible codes. The human figure, which has recently become an integral part of all her work, is represented by the elongated, slim shape of an ellipse. It has enlivened her work since its first appearance in 1977, in *Termino Avenue*.

In her series of *Swimmers* paintings, Bartlett endowed the simple oval shape with the energy of movement and with a variety of emotions and set the strictly defined formal relationships within a framework of time.

In *Swimmers at Dawn, Noon and Dusk*, 1978,

there is the combination of a tripartite image executed in two different media: oil on canvas to begin with, and then the familiar metal plates set in a grid. Although the size of both parts is identical, the right part seems larger as a result of the space left between the plates. We are still aware of the dots, an original mark used by Bartlett, but we see them transformed into bold rhythmic brushstrokes which simulate with self-assured bravura the shimmering effect of light on the water surface. As her belief in her own ability to handle paints and a diversity of sizes and materials grows stronger, Bartlett's painting gesture becomes even freer in her subsequent compositions.

In *Swimmers, Rafts and Ellipse*, 1979, the parts are physically separated, although tied by the common subject matter. Elusive images of swimmers in the central ellipse are surrounded by numerous shapes less ambiguous in their



10. *Swimmers at Dawn, Noon and Dusk*, 1978
oil on canvas; enamel paint, silkscreen grid and baked
enamel on steel plates
6'5" x 24'9" (72 plates, 3 canvases)
Courtesy Paula Cooper Gallery, New York

appearance than in their symbolic meaning. The diagonally positioned grid arrangements on the sides enhance the feeling of a drama.

Water at Sunset, *Swimmers at Sunrise*, 1979, and *Sunrise, Sunset II*, 1979, can function as independent works, but together they again project Bartlett's concern for creating a unit through the combination of opposites. The overall shape of both pieces is similar — a large square in the center representing the everchanging water surface, surrounded by the swirl of "swimmers." But, where there is a grid of steel plates in one piece, there is an

uninterrupted canvas in the other. The circling "swimmers" are also represented in two manners, painted on canvas in one; in a grid arrangement of steel plates in the other.

In the course of her extremely prolific career, Bartlett liberated herself from the notion that there is only one solution to each problem, and the visual variety of her current work is the result of her indefatigable search for a range of solutions and expressions. She firmly believes that settling for only one solution inevitably brings stifling stagnation. Over the years her ability to present a range of plastic expression, even within a single work, has become unsurpassed. Combining the canvas with steel plates, Bartlett creates a physical dichotomy of continuity and interruption, of matte and gloss, and of raised and flat surfaces. The freedom of

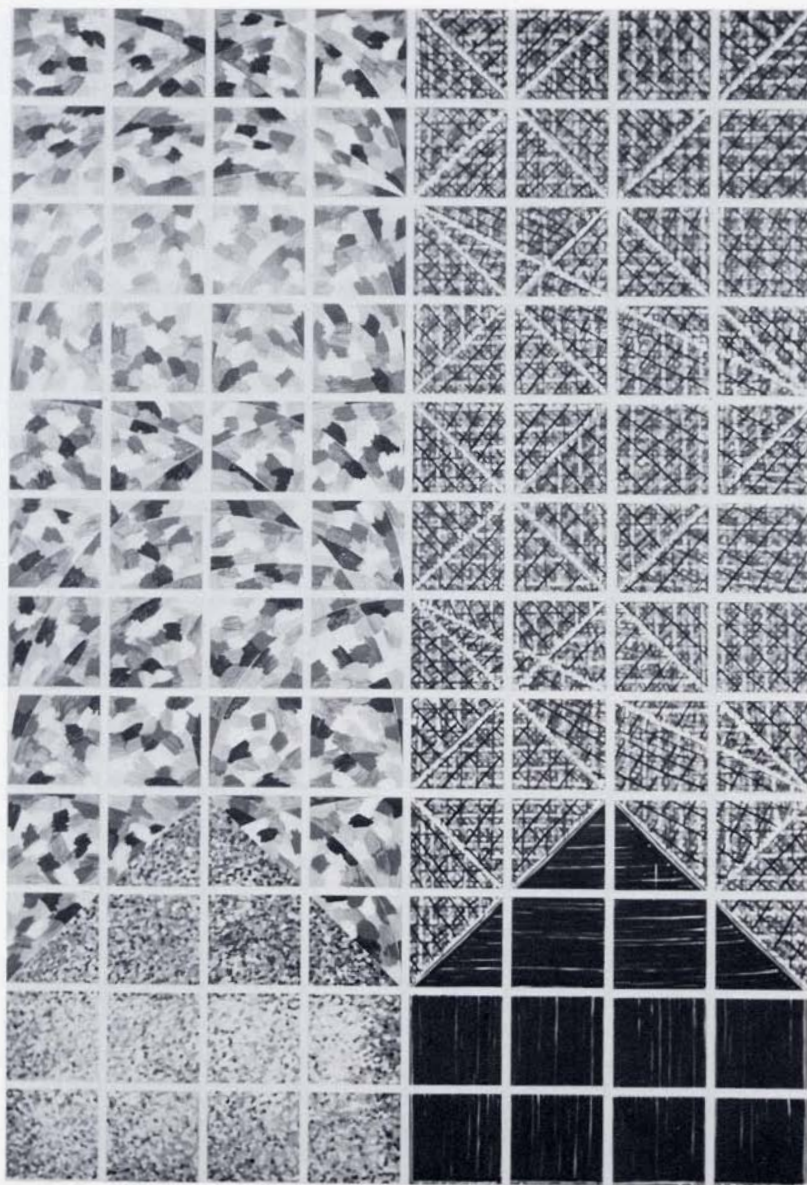


energetic brushstrokes is contrasted by the strictness of the dot, that rudimentary mark characteristic of her earlier pieces which is still discernible in her current work. Bartlett's new spontaneity belies her strict adherence to the complex system of predetermined and totally formulated strategies and principles. Her free-wheeling energetic style is, in fact, strictly controlled and can, therefore, successfully combine diametrically opposed elements. By creating her personal code system, Bartlett conveys to the viewer her own perception of the real world and its events. She chooses familiar subjects, many of which were traditional subjects of art for centuries. She takes landscapes and the human figure, strips them of all their unnecessary elements and searches for their inner substance. She has chosen her elaborate and diversified style precisely for this

purpose. For her work, the following quotation from Wölfflin's book is most appropriate: "At all points the style strives to grasp the firm and enduring elements of form. Nature is a cosmos and beauty is revealed law . . ."⁴

NOTES:

1. Heinrich Wölfflin, *Principles of Art History/The Problem of the Development of Style in Later Art*, Henry Holt and Company, New York, 1932; translated by M.D. Hottinger from the seventh German edition, originally published in Munich 1915
2. Ibid, p. 227
3. Interview with the artist, October 1980
4. Wölfflin, p. 135



2. *27 Howard Street; Day and Night*, 1977-78
 enamel paint, silkscreen grid and baked enamel on
 steel plates
 12'11" x 8'7" (96 plates)
 Courtesy Paula Cooper Gallery, New York

JENNIFER BARTLETT

Born: Long Beach, California, 1941

Education: Mills College, Oakland,
California, B.A., 1963
Yale School of Art and
Architecture, B.F.A., 1964
Yale School of Art and
Architecture, M.F.A., 1965

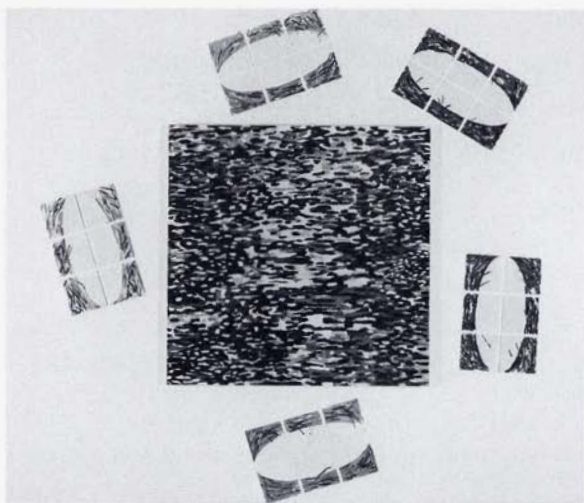
CATALOGUE OF THE EXHIBITION

All dimensions are given with height preceding width and depth. All information regarding titles, media and dimensions has been supplied by the lenders.

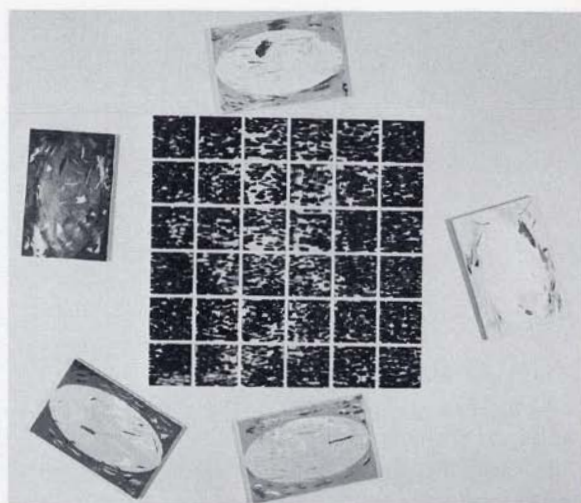
*Asterisk indicates works illustrated.

WORKS EXHIBITED AT THE ALBRIGHT-KNOX ART GALLERY

- * 1. *5725 East Ocean Boulevard*, 1976-77
enamel paint, silkscreen grid and baked enamel
on steel plates
6'5" x 19'2" (99 plates)
Courtesy Paula Cooper Gallery, New York
- * 2. *27 Howard Street; Day and Night*, 1977-78
enamel paint, silkscreen grid and baked enamel
on steel plates
12'11" x 8'7" (96 plates)
Courtesy Paula Cooper Gallery, New York
- * 3. *Water at Sunset, Swimmers at Sunrise*, 1979
oil on canvas; enamel paint, silkscreen grid and
baked enamel on steel plates
c. 12' x 12' (30 plates, 1 canvas)
Courtesy Paula Cooper Gallery, New York
- * 4. *Sunrise, Sunset II*, 1979
oil on canvas; enamel paint, silkscreen grid and
baked enamel on steel plates
c. 12' x 12' (36 plates, 5 canvases)
Courtesy Paula Cooper Gallery, New York
- * 5. *Swimmers and Rafts, Ellipse*, 1979
oil on canvas; enamel paint, silkscreen grid and
baked enamel on steel plates
c. 6'5" x 1'8" (40 plates, 1 canvas)
Private collection



3. *Water at Sunset, Swimmers at Sunrise*, 1979
oil on canvas; enamel paint, silkscreen grid and baked enamel on steel plates
c. 12' x 12' (30 plates, 1 canvas)
Courtesy Paula Cooper Gallery, New York



4. *Sunrise, Sunset II*, 1979
oil on canvas; enamel paint, silkscreen grid and baked enamel on steel plates
c. 12' x 12' (36 plates, 5 canvases)
Courtesy Paula Cooper Gallery, New York

WORKS EXHIBITED AT HALLWALLS

6. *Graceland Mansion*, 1977
enamel paint, silkscreen grid and baked enamel on steel plates
4'3" x 21'7" (80 plates)
Private collection
7. *Graceland Mansions*, 1978-79
print in five parts
color drypoint, aquatint, silkscreen, woodcut, lithograph
24" x 120"
edition of 40 with 16 artist's/printer's proofs
Courtesy Paula Cooper Gallery and Brooke Alexander, Inc., New York
8. *Untitled (Graceland Woodcut-State I)*, 1978-79
set of five color woodcuts on handmade Japanese paper
each 27 3/4" x 27 1/2"
edition of 20 with 8 artist's proofs
Courtesy Paula Cooper Gallery and Brooke Alexander, Inc., New York
9. *Untitled (Graceland Woodcut-State II)*, 1978-79
set of three color woodcuts on handmade Japanese paper
each 32 7/8" x 32 1/2"
Courtesy Paula Cooper Gallery and Brooke Alexander, Inc., New York
- *10. *Swimmers at Dawn, Noon and Dusk*, 1978
oil on canvas; enamel paint, silkscreen grid and baked enamel in steel plates
6'5" x 24'9" (72 plates, 3 canvases)
Courtesy Paula Cooper Gallery, New York
11. *Day and Night*, 1978
set of two black and white drypoints and one black and white etching on Arches paper
8 7/8" x 5 7/8" — plate size
15" x 11" — paper size
edition of 35
published by Multiples, Inc.
Courtesy Paula Cooper Gallery, New York

12. *Day and Night*, 1978
set of three drypoints, two in color and one in black and white
color drypoints on Arches paper
29 1/2" x 19 3/4" — plate size
31 1/4" x 21" — paper size
black and white drypoint on Rives BFK paper
29 7/8" x 20 1/2" — image and paper size
edition of 35
published by Multiples, Inc.
Collection of Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York

SELECTED ONE-ARTIST EXHIBITIONS

- Reese Palley Gallery, New York, January 4-25, 1972.
Paula Cooper Gallery, New York, March 9-30, 1974.
Garage, London. *Jennifer Bartlett/Joel Shapiro*, April 23-May 17, 1974.
Hopkins Center Art Galleries, Dartmouth College, Hanover, N.H. *Jennifer Bartlett/Robert Filliou*, August 13-September 5, 1976.
Paula Cooper Gallery, New York. *Jennifer Bartlett: Rhapsody*, May 8-June 2, 1976. Traveled to Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati; Documenta 6, Kassel, W. Germany; University of California, Irvine; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Art Museum of South Texas, Corpus Christi.
Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Conn. *Matrix 28: Jennifer Bartlett*, February-March 1977. Catalogue, text by Andrea Miller Keller.
Paula Cooper Gallery, New York, March 19-April 13, 1977.
Paula Cooper Gallery, New York, October 8-November 9, 1977.
Margo Levin Gallery, Los Angeles. *Jennifer Bartlett: Recent Paintings*, December 14, 1978-January 20, 1979.
Davis Art Gallery, University of Akron, Akron, Ohio. *Jennifer Bartlett Paintings*, October 3-23, 1979.
The Clocktower, New York. *Jennifer Bartlett: Swimmers Atlanta*, September 19-October 13, 1979.
Paula Cooper Gallery, New York, November 7-December 1, 1979.
Galerie Mukai, Tokyo, May 25-July 19, 1980.

Akron Art Institute, Akron, Ohio. *Jennifer Bartlett Paintings*, September 13-November 2, 1980.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- The Museum of Modern Art, New York. *Seven Walls*, January 26-March 6, 1971.
Kunsthaus, Hamburg, W. Germany. *American Women Painters*, April 12-May 14, 1972. Catalogue.
Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indianapolis, Ind. *Paintings and Sculpture Today*, April 26-June 4, 1972. Catalogue.
Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minn. *Painting: New Options*, April 23-June 4, 1972. Catalogue, text by Dean Swanson.
Paula Cooper Gallery, New York. *Small Series*, December 9, 1972-January 13, 1973.
Virginia Museum of Fine Art, Richmond, Va. *Works on Paper*, September 27-November 10, 1974.
Paula Cooper Gallery, New York. *Gallery Group*, September 14-October 10, 1974.
Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. *34th Biennial of Contemporary American Painting*, February 22-April 6, 1975. Catalogue, texts by Roy Slade, Linda Simmons and Randall DeLeeuw.
Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris. *9e Biennale de Paris*, September 19-November 2, 1975. Catalogue.
The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, Ill. *34th Exhibition by the Society for Contemporary Art*, May 10-June 15, 1975. Catalogue.
HALLWALLS, Buffalo, N.Y. *Approaching Painting: Part One*, January 13-February 4, 1976.
Institute for Art and Urban Resources, New York. *Rooms P.S. 1*, June 9-26, 1976. Catalogue.
The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, Ill. *72nd American Exhibition*, March 13-May 9, 1976. Catalogue.
Akademie Der Künste, Berlin. *SoHo Downtown Manhattan*, September 4-October 17, 1976. Catalogue. Traveled to Louisiana Museum, Humlebaek, Denmark.

- University Art Galleries, University of California, Santa Barbara, Calif. *Contemporary Approaches to Painting*, October 6-November 7, 1976.
- Galerie Mukai, Tokyo. Exhibition organized by Paula Cooper Gallery, New York. 1976.
- New York State Museum, Albany, N.Y. *New York: The State of Art*, October 8-November 27, 1977. Catalogue.
- Kunsthaus, Zurich, Switzerland. *Aspekte Konstruktiver Kunst*, January 14-February 27, 1977. Catalogue. Traveled to Kunstmuseum, Düsseldorf, W. Germany; Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris; Louisiana Museum, Humlebaek, Denmark; Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, The Netherlands; Niels Onstad-Sonja Henie Foundation, Oslo.
- Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. *1977 Biennial Exhibition*, February 19-April 3, 1977. Catalogue, texts by Tom Armstrong, Barbara Haskell, Marcia Tucker and Patterson Sims.
- Paula Cooper Gallery, New York. *Tenth Anniversary Group Exhibition*, September 5-October 4, 1978.
- Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. *New Image Painting*, December 6, 1977-January 28, 1978. Catalogue.
- Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. *1979 Biennial*, February 6-April 8, 1979. Catalogue.
- Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. *Decade in Review*, June 19-September 3, 1979.
- Hayden Gallery, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Mass. *Corners*, September 29-November 4, 1979. Catalogue.
- The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. *Recent Acquisitions*, October 6, 1979-January 28, 1980.
- Institute of Contemporary Art of the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pa. *Urban Encounters*, March 19-April 30, 1980. Catalogue.
- Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, Texas. *Extensions: Jennifer Bartlett, Lynda Benglis, Robert Longo, Judy Pfaff*, January 20-March 2, 1980. Catalogue.
- The Museum of Modern Art, New York. *Printed Art: A View of Two Decades*, February 15-April 1, 1980. Catalogue, text by Riva Castleman.
- The Whitechapel Art Gallery, London. *Pictures for an Exhibition*, March 30-May 18, 1980.
- Galerie Yvon Lambert, Paris. *Paula Cooper at Yvon Lambert*, February 16-March 15, 1980.
- Brockton Art Museum, Brockton, Mass. *Aspects of the '70s: Painterly Abstraction*, May 4-August 24, 1980. Catalogue.
- XXXIX Biennale di Venezia, Venice. *Drawings: The Pluralist Decade*, June 1-September 30, 1980. Exhibition organized and catalogue published by the Institute of Contemporary Art of the University of Pennsylvania. Texts by Edit deAk, Howard N. Fox, Janet Kardon, Rosalind Krauss, Richard Lorber, John Hallmark Neff and John Perreault.

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- Salle, David. "New Image Painting." *Flash Art* (Milan), no. 88-89, March-April 1979, pp. 40-41.
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- "Prints and Photographs Published." *Print Collector's Newsletter* (New York), vol. XI, no. 4, September-October 1980, pp. 129-130.

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, N.Y.
 Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin, Ohio
 Burroughs Wellcome Center, Raleigh, N.C.
 Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, Dallas, Texas
 H.H.K. Foundation, Milwaukee, Wis.
 McCrory Corporation, New York
 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
 The Museum of Modern Art, New York
 Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, Pa.
 Prudential Insurance, Homedale & Newark, N.J.
 Security Pacific Bank, Beverly Hills, Calif.
 Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minn.
 Whitney Museum of American Art, New York
 Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Conn.

PUBLIC COMMISSIONS

Swimmers Atlanta, commissioned by the General Services Administration for the Federal Court Building, Atlanta, Georgia

LENDERS

Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York
 Paula Cooper Gallery, New York
 Cooper and Alexander, New York
 Private collection

FOUR BY THREE

JENNIFER BARTLETT

November 22-December 31, 1980

HALLWALLS

November 23, 1980-January 4, 1981

Albright-Knox Art Gallery

JOHN BALDESSARI

April 3-May 17, 1981

CEPA

JUDY PFAFF

date to be announced

Albright-Knox Art Gallery

HALLWALLS

JIM POMEROY

date to be announced

HALLWALLS

