

MARIANNE BOESKY GALLERY
NEW YORK | ASPEN

Jennifer Bartlett: Works on Paper, 1970–1973

On View: January 21 – February 18, 2023
Opening Reception: Saturday, January 21, 2023, 6–8 pm
507 West 24th Street



Jennifer Bartlett, *Untitled* drawings, 1971. Pen and colored pencil on paper.
Each: Image dimensions: 11 x 8 1/2 in, 27.9 x 21.6 cm. Framed dimensions: 13 1/8 x 10 1/8 in, 33.3 x 25.7 cm.
© Jennifer Bartlett. Courtesy Marianne Boesky Gallery, New York and Aspen, Paula Cooper Gallery, New York, and The Jennifer Bartlett 2013 Trust. Photo: Lance Brewer

New York, NY – Marianne Boesky Gallery is pleased to present *Jennifer Bartlett: Works on Paper, 1970–1973*. Featuring never-before-exhibited Bartlett drawings, the exhibition offers a window into the artist's early practice, as she developed and rehearsed the forms and ideas that she returned to throughout her career. *Jennifer Bartlett: Works on Paper* is the first exhibition to exclusively feature the late artist's drawings from this foundational period.

An unwavering force in American art for more than 50 years, Bartlett passed away in 2022, leaving a legacy of visually bold, intellectually rigorous work that was never contained to one movement or idea. Bartlett drew inspiration from Minimalism, Abstract Expressionism, and Conceptualism—sometimes deploying strategies of all three movements within a single work. Often grounded in precise mathematical abstractions, Bartlett's paintings and room-sized installations constantly called into question the rigid—often self-imposed—constraints and restrictions of the grid, resulting in dynamic compositions with deep poetic and aesthetic resonance.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Bartlett began experimenting with systems of shape, color, and language on gridded paper. Her best-known work from this period incorporates systematic patterns of dots on enameled steel. The drawings featured in this exhibition are visually and conceptually distinct while retaining clear connections to motifs and ideas that resonate throughout her career.

The 77 works in the exhibition make Bartlett's process—which the artist considered a critical element of her practice—visible on paper. Three discrete genres emerge: house drawings, geometric drawings, and color grids. The color grid drawings, which the artist began in 1970, incorporate a

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rainbow of color segments arranged within swaths of metallic paint, as Bartlett explores the effects and patterns she can create using color. In the house drawings, all from 1971, Bartlett employs systems of numbering, language, and color, as she develops the house motif that would feature prominently in her monumental installation *Rhapsody* (1975–76) and permeate her work for the rest of her career. Bartlett's first solo exhibition at Marianne Boesky Gallery in 2019, *The House was Quiet and the World was Calm*, featured works from 1970 through 2014 that all employed the motif, which embodies both simple geometry and poignant symbolism within its form. With the 1973 geometric drawings, which are visually distinct from the artist's other work, Bartlett plays with the mathematics of the grid, removing units one at a time as she meditatively explores the possibilities of shape.

Jennifer Bartlett: Works on Paper foregrounds Bartlett's systematic approach to artmaking, and the ever-present sense that Bartlett was always building up to a grand idea. In a sense, she was: In 1975, Bartlett produced *Rhapsody*, composed of nearly 1,000 square steel plates and first installed at Paula Cooper Gallery, where it overtook the entirety of the gallery. The themes, motifs, and ideas Bartlett explores in these drawings are all visible in *Rhapsody*.

This exhibition is presented with gratitude to Paula Cooper Gallery for their collaboration and long history with Bartlett and her estate. During the run of the exhibition, a selection of Bartlett's early plate works—from the same period as the works on paper—will also be on view at Marianne Boesky Gallery. The gallery will also present a solo booth dedicated to Bartlett's *Fire* series paintings at Frieze Los Angeles February 16–19.

A monograph dedicated to Bartlett's works on paper, featuring an essay by Kate Nesin and designed by Takaaki Matsumoto, is forthcoming in fall 2023.

Jennifer Bartlett's (1941–2022) first survey exhibition was held in 1985 and traveled to the Walker Art Center, the Brooklyn Museum, and the Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute. In 2006, her early enameled steel plate paintings were surveyed at the Addison Gallery of American Art. Klaus Ottman curated her second traveling survey exhibition in 2013–14, *Jennifer Bartlett: History of the Universe—Works 1970–2011*, which traveled to the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and the Parrish Art Museum. In 2014, the Cleveland Museum of Art exhibited all three of her monumental plate pieces, *Rhapsody*, *Song*, and *Recitative* in the exhibition *Epic Systems*. Bartlett's works are in the collections of the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, the Museum of Modern Art, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Tate Modern, and the Whitney Museum of American Art, among many others.

About Marianne Boesky Gallery

Since its inception in 1996, Marianne Boesky Gallery's mission has been to represent and support the work of contemporary international artists of all media. The gallery expanded its flagship location in 2016 to the adjacent space on West 24th Street. This space more than doubles the gallery's footprint in Chelsea, allowing for ever more ambitious solo and group shows that highlight dynamic narratives and parallels across artist, media, and theme. In 2017, the gallery opened a location in Aspen, CO, presenting rotating exhibitions by both gallery artists and artists invited to present special projects. Marianne Boesky Gallery currently represents over 30 esteemed artists of different generations and backgrounds. These recent expansions highlight the gallery's ongoing experimentations with space and architecture as well as its continued commitment to the needs and interests of its dynamic roster of artists from around the globe.

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