

Jennifer Bartlett

MARCH 26 – APRIL 23, 2016
521 W 21ST STREET

NEW YORK – The Paula Cooper Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of diptych oil paintings by Jennifer Bartlett, created between 2007 and 2011. This exhibition marks the artist's first gallery show in New York since 2011. Her long history with the Paula Cooper Gallery includes the landmark presentation in May 1976 of *Rhapsody*, Bartlett's seminal project composed of 987 steel plates, now in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Known for monumental and conceptual multi-panel works composed of programmatic grids, Jennifer Bartlett negotiates an intersection between precise geometry and lyrical figuration. In the five diptychs on view, she expands her representational painting to engage the structural underpinnings of her natural surroundings. Houses, shorelines and marshes near her home in Amagansett or foliage, flowers and landscaped paths from her Brooklyn garden occupy her canvases. Based on Bartlett's original photographs, her compositions diverge to create a delicate discord within each diptych; the pairs of square panels juxtapose two images of the same scene but with shifting perspective, slight distortions of scale or altered perceptions. In *Rose* (2010-11), the two compositions seem to simply contrast in spatial proximity, though further examination reveals a complex abstraction. As Bartlett describes: "It's a little like a stereopticon, only off-kilter."

Painting with graining brushes, Bartlett builds layer upon layer to weave an expressionistic grid, a dense fabric rich with tactile complexity. Often used for decorative painting, a graining brush's multiple bristles groups are arranged equidistantly so that the painted gesture leaves a trail of parallel lines. Bartlett describes: "The graining brushes can be used horizontally and vertically, and then you have a grid. I begin by applying paint in terms of the image and then block it out by applying these lines. So the grid is built up over and over. I would use a regular small brush to bring something out, then take it down again, and build it up, and take it down and build it up." The effect is an image that teeters between calcification and disintegration, its many layers of nuanced colors rising and retreating on the canvas surface. The stratified grids ensconce the

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