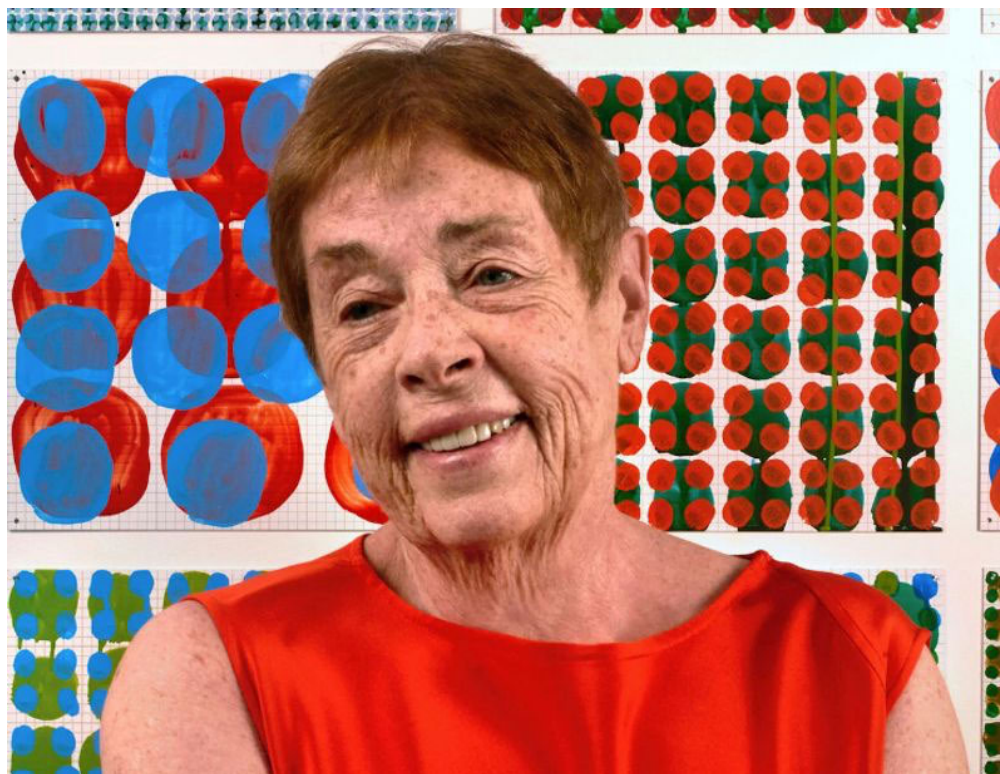


# FAR OUT



Credit: Takaaki Matsumoto

## **Abstract painter Jennifer Bartlett has died at age 81**

By: Jordan Potter  
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The New York painter, Jennifer Bartlett, known for her eminent work combining aspects of minimalism, abstract expressionism, and conceptualism, has died, aged 81.

Her death was confirmed by Marianne Boesky and Paula Cooper, the gallerists who have represented the fine artist since 2018.

In a statement, Cooper described Bartlett as “one of the best-known painters of her generation,” adding that Bartlett “leaves a vast and varied body of work.”

In 1968, Bartlett began working on square steel plates that later became the signature basis of her prominent artworks. For instance, *Rhapsody* (1975-76), which was first installed at Paula Cooper, filled the entire gallery and is now part of the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

Throughout her illustrious career, Bartlett “remained dedicated to the investigative and serial approach that was inherent to *Rhapsody*. Depicting everyday objects such as houses, shorelines, and domestic interiors, her work resulted in comprehensive examinations of a single motif, both figurative and abstract, and often combined a variety of media in a single work,” according to Cooper.

“Jennifer presents a strange combination of super-rational and nonrational content direct from the unconscious,” the actor and playwright Wallace Shawn, a longtime friend of Bartlett’s, told the *New York Times* in 2013. “She can paint an empty room or a house at night seen from the outside in a way that seems to expose the human soul or the strange irrational worms that are crawling underneath the surface. At other times, her work can have an explosive, happy quality, just with its rather obsessive mathematical side or the incredible sense of humour in her word paintings.”

For her famous series *In the Garden* (1980), the late artist drew a single domesticated plot in the South of France from around 200 different perspectives and later returned to the same subject in a series of paintings.

Other major series’ include *Swimmers and Rafts* (1979), which mixed steel plates and shaped canvases into multimedia studies, and *Sea Wall* (1985), a variety of boat paintings and sculptures on a shore.

Bartlett was born in Long Beach, California, in 1941. She studied at Mills College, where she earned a BA and went on to receive a BFA and an MFA from Yale in 1964 and ’65, respectively.

In her 40s, Bartlett began to replace her steel plate structures with large-scale figurative paintings but ultimately returned to her preferred medium with minimal, gridded arrangements of abstract plate designs in the 2010s.

Bartlett also completed high-profile commissions that resulted in more immersive environments, such as one for the lobby and offices of the Institute for Scientific Information in Philadelphia.

On top of her prolific work as an active artist, she also found time to write. Her *Cleopatra I-IV*, a conceptual study of the famed Egyptian queen across prose, poetry, and diagrams, was published in 1971. *History of the Universe*, a free-form autobiography, was also published in 1987.

“I have been honoured to represent Jennifer and grateful for the opportunity to continue to shepherd her work forward in concert with the incredible team that has long surrounded her,” Marianne Boesky said of her late client.

Bartlett’s works can be seen 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 Modern Art, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Tate Modern, and the Whitney Museum of American Art, among many others.