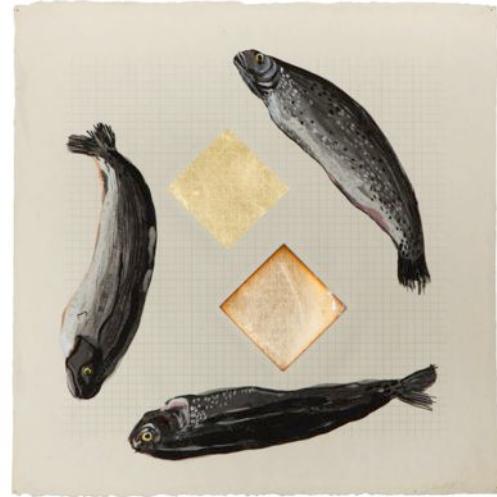


JENNIFER BARTLETT

Homan-Ji



Homan-ji 68A, 1995, Japanese mineral color with blue gold leaf over silkscreen grid on handmade Kozo paper, 24 x 24 inches



Homan-ji 187F, 1995, Japanese mineral color with gold and silver leaf over silkscreen grid on handmade Kozo paper, 24 x 24 inches

On view September 7 through October 29, 2012, The Drawing Room is pleased to present **Jennifer Bartlett: Homan-ji**, an exhibition of vivid paintings on handmade mulberry paper inspired by Bartlett's extraordinary commission to create a ceiling installation for the Homan-ji Temple in Choshi-shi, Japan. Stimulated by her first experience working with Japanese pigments, metal leaf and fresh imagery culled from her travels, Bartlett made two more *Homan-ji* sequences: a suite of 112 paintings in 1992, and in 1995 another large group that is the basis for *Homan-ji III*, a permanent installation of 220 glass panels at the Reagan National Airport in Washington, DC. In the current show, selections from these series reveal the dynamic interplay of Bartlett's distinctive combination of minimalist abstraction with figurative imagery, as paintings of the everyday bottle of milk, or a catch of fresh fish hang side-by-side with elegant latticed compositions and dot patterns on the grid.

The commission for the ceiling in Choshi-shi began with an invitation from the Buddhist temple's ninth generation monk who was intent to complete the restoration project his father began after World War II. In 1991 the monk proposed his idea to Hiroshi Kawanishi, a master printmaker, publisher and friend of Bartlett who took her to temples throughout Japan and guided her through Choshi-shi's fishing community. These local sites fueled her imagination and influenced her choice to work with traditional materials the have endured for centuries. To bring the project into the 20th century, Bartlett implemented one of her favorite organizational systems as a point of departure, enlarging the grid she had used as the armature for multi-paneled paintings since the early 1970s. Bartlett engaged Kawanishi to silkscreen a network of intersecting grey lines onto the Kozo paper sheets on which she then painted the temple's sequence of 321 paintings in seven color cycles.

Following this experience, and surrounded by photographs from Japan pinned on the walls of her New York studio, Bartlett delved further and painted dazzling works punctuated with squares of gold, silver and platinum leaf. The imagery of the later *Homan-ji* comprises four categories governed by grids, abstraction, figuration and dots. Several paintings of latticed brushstrokes capture the influence of Japanese textiles. In one example, intersecting bands of French blue and orange overlap a softer field of grey, echoing, though nearly concealing the silkscreened graph below. Sheets of silver and gold leaf positioned to form a star-like shape complete this brilliant dance of complements. In a related work, the palette is more subdued. Next to it, a painting of four purple cabbages, or perhaps one cabbage from four points of view, appears both naturalistic and expressive.

(over)

Another figurative painting subjects features a multicolored beaded bag and change purse rife with possibilities for an artist who has celebrated dots for four decades. Accented by luminous squares of gold and silver, tiny green, blue, yellow and red dots flicker over the objects' dark surfaces. Dots also figure prominently in two intricate arrangements, filling each square on the sheet. Here, the bright metallic patches animate Bartlett's rigorous minimalism.

The range of *Homan-ji* in this show reveals the extent to which Bartlett exploited the rich matte palette and varied textures that different mineral pigments offered, as they emulsified to various degrees when mixed with animal skin glue. The artist has commented that as in her other work, the color cycles she established helped denote the passage of time, but in the case of the *Homan-ji*, this strategy also served practical purposes. Because these pigments dried quickly, working on one color group at a time proved efficient. Some minerals were more easily homogenized, producing smooth, fluid brushstrokes while others left more translucent gestures of color embedded with traces of sandy accumulations. Bartlett mines the transparent quality of one pigment offset against the density of another to great effect in a spirited painting of rose-hued diamonds that overlay saturated swaths of deep red.

For more than forty years, Jennifer Bartlett's serial works have been singled out for their unusual juxtaposition of quotidian subjects with systems-oriented abstractions. By joining them so freely, she has created myriad syncopated rhythms on the walls of museums, public institutions, galleries and private collections worldwide. Two decades after they were made, this rare group of *Homan-ji* paintings has a fresh presence that clearly expresses Bartlett's unique perspective on the marriage of often-segregated styles of painting.

Jennifer Bartlett (b. Long Beach, CA, 1941) divides her time between New York and Amagansett. After graduating from Mills College, she received BFA and MFA degrees in 1964 and 1965 from the School of Art and Architecture at Yale University. Her works are in numerous public collections, including the Museum of Modern Art, New York, Brooklyn Museum, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Parrish Art Museum and Whitney Museum of American Art.

Please note new gallery hours: Monday, Thursday, Friday & Saturday 10 to 6; Sunday 11 to 5

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