

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JENNIFER BARTLETT: HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSE—WORKS 1970-2011

***The Parrish Art Museum Presents the First Survey of the
Influential American Artist, on View April 27 through July 13, 2014***



Jennifer Bartlett, *Amagansett Diptych #1*, 2007-08. Oil on two canvases. 108 x 216 inches overall. Collection of the artist, New York

WATER MILL, NY 1/14/2014—The Parrish Art Museum has organized the first major museum survey of work by the groundbreaking artist Jennifer Bartlett. One of the most important contemporary American artists to emerge in the 1970s, Bartlett's radical and pioneering thematic and stylistic innovations have had a significant, enduring impact on contemporary American art of the last three decades. *Jennifer Bartlett: History of the Universe—Works 1970-2011* highlights the arch of Bartlett's career with 22 prime examples of work from each of her creative periods and series, ranging from her signature plate pieces, to complex architectural combinations of paintings and sculpture, to expansive diptychs and triptychs. The exhibition opens at the Parrish Art Museum on April 27, 2014, and will be on view through July 13, 2014.

"In presenting this concise yet comprehensive exhibition, we share the evolution of Bartlett's thought processes," says Parrish Art Museum Director Terrie Sultan. "It's the first time a viewer can actually follow that trajectory throughout the development of her entire career."

The featured works thoroughly explore Bartlett's ability to move seamlessly between abstraction and representation, two approaches that seem contradictory but often function in tandem in her paintings. As the artist notes, "abstract art and figurative art are one and the same...a square or a triangle are

geometric forms, but together they become a house.” The house image figures prominently throughout her work, signifying both a narrative and a sense of place.

For those reasons, the exhibition is ideally suited to the Parrish Art Museum, with its own minimalist, modern, open space awash in natural light.

Sultan explains, “Bartlett begins with a rigorous geometric minimalism, yet the work is transcendent. Her paintings are absolutely infused with light from within. The natural light in the galleries is ideal for bringing out that light and color in Bartlett’s paintings—many of which are depictions of the natural world. Beyond that, the structural similarities are startling. Bartlett’s aesthetic is rooted in the grid—as is the Museum. For decades, Bartlett has depicted a simple house in her work—a rectangle topped with a triangle. That basic geometric shape is the Parrish. The architecture of her compositions is intimately aligned with the architecture of this building.”

Jennifer Bartlett: History of the Universe—Works 1970-2011 begins in the 1970s with the artist’s monumental plate paintings, including *237 Lafayette Street*; and extends into the 1980s with, among other works, the three-panel cinematic narrative painting, *Pool*; and the 3-D exploration of a subject in *Double House*. Bartlett’s work from the 1990s is represented by selections from the highly personal series, “*Air: 24 Hours*,” documenting the passage of time, and the multi-paneled and multi-medium “*House Paintings*.”

In 2004, Bartlett began her series “*Word Paintings*,” incorporating her own writings into her work. On view from this series are the 60-plate *Twins* (homage to artist Elizabeth Murray) and *Purple Corridor*. More recent works on view—stunning paintings depicting Bartlett’s recurring themes of houses, gardens, and water—include the vast double perspective beach piece, *Amagansett Diptych #1* (2007–2008), and two important paintings from her most recent Garden Series, *Rose* and *Grasses*.

Jennifer Bartlett, born in Long Beach, California in 1941, received her B.A. from Mills College in Oakland, California in 1963, and a Masters in painting from Yale University in 1965. She moved to New York upon graduation, and spent a considerable amount of time on the East End of Long Island. In fact, while house-sitting in Southampton, Bartlett painted the first 100 plates of her seminal work, *Rhapsody*, critically lauded at the time as one of the most ambitious works of contemporary American art. She currently divides her time between her home and studio in Brooklyn, and a cottage in Amagansett. Bartlett’s work is in collections including The Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York; the Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; the Philadelphia Museum of Art; Israel Museum, Jerusalem; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Tokyo; and The Tate Gallery, London.

Jennifer Bartlett: History of the Universe—Works 1970–2011 is organized by the Parrish Art Museum, curated by Klaus Ottmann, former adjunct to the Parrish Art Museum and currently Director of the Center for the Study of Modern Art and Curator at Large at The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C. An accompanying catalogue features an interview with the artist by Parrish Art Museum Director Terrie Sultan, and an essay by Ottmann. The exhibition is made possible, in part, by the generous support of the Henry Luce Foundation, Gene and Sueyun Locks, Jennifer Rice and Michael Forman, and Jane and Barton Shallat. The exhibition was on view at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (PAFA) from June 27 – October 13, 2013.

The Parrish Art Museum's programs are made possible, in part, by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature, and the property taxpayers from the Southampton School District and the Tuckahoe Common School District.

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About the Parrish Art Museum

The Parrish Art Museum is the oldest cultural institution on the East End of Long Island, uniquely situated within one of the most concentrated creative communities in the United States. The Parrish is dedicated to the collection, preservation, interpretation, and dissemination of art from the nineteenth century to the present, with a particular focus on honoring the rich creative legacy of the East End, celebrating the region's enduring heritage as a vibrant art colony, telling the story of our area, our "sense of place," and its national—even global—impact on the world of art. The Parrish is committed to educational outreach, to serving as a dynamic cultural resource for its diverse community, and to celebrating artistic innovation for generations to come.

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