

# The Philadelphia Inquirer

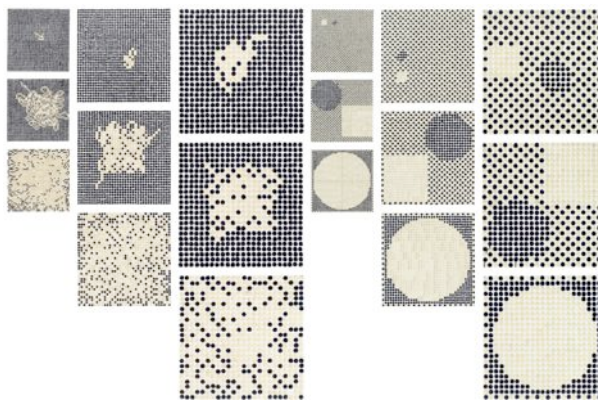
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## Her past is now her present, happily

An Artist returns to the style that made her a star 30 years ago.

By Edith Newhall  
For The Inquirer

If you admire Jennifer Bartlett's enamel paintings on baked enamel steel plates, the minimalism-tweaking works that made her a young New York art star of the 1970s, and if you found yourself thinking recently that she should hurry up and reclaim her early style, you may be a mind reader. Bartlett has returned unambiguously to her past in her current show at Locks Gallery.



Detail, *Song*, 2007, enamel over silkscreen grid on baked enamel steel plates, 6 ft. 3 in. x 97 ft. 4 1/2 in. overall

At 97 feet long, and taking up two entire walls of the gallery's second-floor space, Bartlett's sprawling new plate painting, *Song*, may be second in monumentality to *Rhapsody*, her 153-foot-long enamel plate work from 1975-76, but it is a more rigorous, more abstract work, like the enamel plate paintings she made between 1972 and 1974, several of which are included in this show.

There are some vaguely recognizable elements in *Song*. A waxing and waning moon, perhaps, and a houselike structure come into focus. Now, of course, any Bartlett enamel painting, composed as it is of so many hand-painted dots on silkscreened grids, will seem to be referencing pixels. But what makes *Song* exciting is its lyrical sense of motion within the confines of those plates and grids, all created with black and tan dots. Bartlett seems to be happier orchestrating many parts moving along the wall, too, than caught within the edges of one stretched canvas.

More of Bartlett's early enamel plate paintings and her preparatory sketches for *Rhapsody* are on display on the gallery's third floor.

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