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## Galleries: Museum in a gallery

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For The Inquirer

Locks Gallery often gives the impression of being a small museum, and the uninitiated would have no reason to think otherwise during the gallery's current exhibitions of early paintings by Thomas Chimes and Jennifer Bartlett.

Chimes, a Philadelphia artist who died in 2009 and whose career was the subject of a retrospective at the Philadelphia Museum of Art in 2007, should have been better known during his lifetime, as each posthumous show of his work proves. Not least of them is this beautiful exhibition of symbolic landscape and crucifix paintings made between 1958 and 1962, after a seven-month trip to Europe. It's not surprising to learn that Alfred H. Barr Jr., the first director of the Museum of Modern Art, bought one of Chimes' landscapes for the museum in 1961 — and one for himself.



Jennifer Bartlett, "5725 East Ocean Boulevard," 1977, enamel over silkscreen grid on 99 baked enamel steel plates, 77 x 350 inches

Chimes' landscapes, his first mature body of work, were clearly influenced by the compositions of van Gogh's wheat-field paintings, but his signature palette of purples, reds, yellows, and blues gives his landscapes the appearance of stained glass. Some of the shapes in his slightly later crucifix paintings recall Matisse's cutouts, but his compositions of landscapes crowded with crosses seem to have sprung entirely from Chimes' imagination.

The enamel plate paintings made between 1976 and 1978 that constitute Bartlett's show are the first gathering of her paintings relating to her addresses in California and New York as well as those of her artist friends living in SoHo at that time. They continue her development of the house motif she initiated in her 1970 dot painting House Piece.

Two of the largest works in this exhibition are, in fact, museum pieces — 2 Priory Walk, made in 1977, on loan from the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and Falcon Avenue, Seaside Walk, Dwight Street, Jarvis Street, Greene Street (1976), borrowed for this occasion from the Whitney Museum of American Art (Bartlett was one of the 10 artists in the Whitney's seminal "New Image Painting" exhibition of 1978).

Bartlett's multi-plate "address" paintings show her using a freer hand and a greater variety of marks than in her earlier enamel paintings, even allowing the occasional drip. You can easily imagine them as love letters to friends.

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