



The Art of Tess Jaray

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Text by Richard Davey

Text by John Stezaker

Text by Alison Wilding

Interviewer Alister Warman

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- Published to accompany the exhibition *Landscapes of Space: Paintings and Prints by Tess Jaray*, Djanogly Art Gallery (now part of Lakeside Arts, University of Nottingham), 21 February–27 April 2014
- Tess Jaray RA (b.1937) is a leading British painter, printmaker and writer on art. Now in her eighties, she continues to make new work. Though her works are abstract, Jaray is 'an architect's artist'
- She taught at the Slade School of Art from 1968 to 1999 – the first woman to do so – and since the 1980s has completed several public art commissions
- Born in Vienna in 1937, her family escaped the Nazis, moving to England the following year. During her time as an art student at St Martins School of Art and the Slade, she spent formative periods living in Paris and Rome
- Her first-hand experience of Italian Renaissance and Baroque architecture ignited her interest in the experience of architectural space – a huge influence on her art. She was made an Honorary Fellow of the RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) in 1995
- This is the first monograph devoted to the artist, and features texts by fellow leading British artists Alison Wilding and John Stezaker, along with others by art historians
- While Director of the Serpentine, contributor Alister Warman was responsible for giving solo exhibitions to female artists such as Jaray (in 1988) and fellow contributor Alison Wilding at a time when it was less common

Examining the geometry of pattern, repetition and colour within her surroundings, British artist Tess Jaray has explored painterly perspective since the 1960s. This comprehensive and richly illustrated volume was produced in celebration of a 2014 exhibition of paintings and prints by Jaray.

Although her work is resolutely abstract, Jaray's two-dimensional work and public art – both of which celebrate the vitality inherent within archetypal rhythms and patterns – have been informed by her interest in the spaces of Italian Renaissance art and architecture, along with more contemporary influences.

Jaray focuses on producing the illusion of space, using perspective to create a field of spatial paradox that equates to distance and closeness in the mind. In many of her works the area of pattern – whether polygons, waves or rectangles – is contained by a strong, grounding background colour, thereby controlling the movement of the forms.

From Italian architecture and Islamic mosaics to Kazimir Malevich and Lucio Fontana, this volume situates the artist within the tradition of abstract painting and the history of art. Featuring texts by fellow artists, alongside illustrations of a large group of Jaray's paintings, this first monograph explores her contemporary influence.

Richard Davey is a curator and writer on contemporary art and artists, and Senior Research Fellow in Historical and Critical Studies in the School of Art and Design at Nottingham Trent University.

John Stezaker (b.1949) is a leading British Conceptual artist renowned for his distinctive collage and appropriation works.

Alison Wilding (b.1948) is one of Britain's foremost sculptors. She is the Coordinator of the 2022 Summer Exhibition at the Royal Academy.

Alister Warman was the first official Director of London's Serpentine Gallery, after which he served as Principal of the Byam Shaw School of Art (now part of Central Saint Martins). Warman died in 2020.

