

Jennie C. Jones: A Line When Broken Begins Again

Jennie C. Jones (American, b. 1968) creates paintings, sculptures, drawings, and sound installations that explore the relationships between visual art and music. She is especially interested in minimalism and Black sonic avant-garde traditions. Using simple geometric forms, a limited color palette, and unconventional materials like felt, sound-absorbing panels, and instrument strings, Jones creates artworks that alter the acoustics of their environments and bring our attention to the spaces that surround us.

After studying painting at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (BFA, 1991) and Rutgers University (MFA, 1996), Jones spent her early career producing sound works, drawings, and sculptures from found materials like albums, speakers, cables, and CD racks. With these conceptual works, she began her ongoing investigation into the history of listening and music culture. In the early 2000s she returned to painting. As Jones has described, her work “thread[s] painting, architecture, and acoustics together, to bring my poetic and heartachy love of music history together with the narrative of how American modernism was constructed, which left out American music.” Over the last two decades, Jones has produced a singular body of work that unites the visual and aural, with a careful eye toward color, form, and texture.

For *A Line When Broken Begins Again*, Jones presents new paintings and collages alongside sound-based works and a site-specific sculpture. On view in the Pulitzer’s lower-level galleries is *Other Octaves*, the first exhibition curated by Jones. Together, these presentations offer new insight into the breadth of her practice and the diverse influences that have informed her thinking.

Jennie C. Jones: A Line When Broken Begins Again
is on view Sept 5, 2025 – Feb 1, 2026.

This exhibition is curated by Stephanie Weissberg, Senior Curator, with Heather Alexis Smith, Assistant Curator. All works are by Jennie C. Jones.



To listen to a playlist created by the artist, use the QR code.



Scan for the digital exhibition guide on the free Bloomberg Connects app.

1. ***Bass Notes with Leaning Hum***, 2025
Acrylic on canvas, architectural felt, and acoustic panels
Courtesy Alexander Gray Associates, New York, © 2025 Jennie C. Jones

2. ***Phrasing to the Floor, Softly, as in an Evening Sunset (for Nina)***, 2025
Acrylic and architectural felt on canvas and brass in four parts
Courtesy Alexander Gray Associates, New York, © 2025 Jennie C. Jones

Here, Jones uses form, composition, and color to reference musical principles. The work is composed of two painted canvases resting on a strip of sound-absorbing architectural felt. Jones draws attention to the intersection of the two forms with a strip of felt and bright red paint at the top edge of the lower canvas. The brilliant color reverberates onto the surface behind it, creating what the artist refers to as a “hum.” This effect, which appears in many of the artist’s paintings, reflects Jones’s description of her work as “a type of deeply personal synesthesia” that is rooted in “seeing sound.”

With the work’s title, Jones references musical phrasing—how notes are sequenced to express emotion and meaning. She also nods to the song “Softly, as in a Morning Sunrise” (1928), which has been performed widely by jazz luminaries including John Coltrane, Miles Davis, the Modern Jazz Quartet, and Abbey Lincoln.

3. ***Two Hushed Movements (Diptych)***, 2025
Acrylic, acoustic panel, and architectural felt on canvas
Courtesy Alexander Gray Associates, New York, © 2025 Jennie C. Jones

When you look closely at Jones’s work, you’ll notice subtle shifts in color and texture. For many years, she carefully avoided leaving visible signs of how her paintings were made. But more recently, her work with printmaking—especially the physical act of pulling ink across a surface—has led her to embrace more painterly gestures.

On the right side of each of these canvases, layers of cream paint remain visible under expressive brushstrokes of cool gray. These traces appear in a number of Jones’s works. She calls them “pentimenti,” an art-historical term that refers to brushstrokes or changes that the artist once covered up but have started to show through again.

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In this gallery, Jones's paintings and works on paper are shown alongside the first freestanding sculpture she has designed for an indoor space. Sitting in the center of the room, *Point of Perspective* (#13) engages with Ellsworth Kelly's monumental wall sculpture *Blue Black*, permanently installed at the far end of the gallery. Upon entering the space, *Point of Perspective* appears in the foreground with *Blue Black* behind it. As you move into the gallery, Kelly's sculpture is temporarily eclipsed by Jones's.

Jones's interest in Kelly dates to her time as a student at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, where she earned her BFA in 1991. While she was there, the Art Institute of Chicago installed several large works by Kelly near its American Art galleries. Jones admired the elegance of Kelly's forms, but she was also conflicted. Like many Black artists working in the moment, Jones felt constrained by pressures to avoid abstraction and instead make work that explicitly represented her identity. She reflects, "I was angry at [Kelly's] freedom! I wanted to effect change, but I also wanted to be that unrestricted, free to meditate on form, to look at the color of a blue jay's cap or the rounded red belly of a fat robin and see the curve as a composition. I was, after all, a girl from Ohio whose first drawings were of trees."

With *Point of Perspective*, Jones expands elements from her paintings into a monumental scale. She has placed a bass trap, a device used to muffle low sound frequencies, where the two flat planes of the sculpture meet. This choice links the sculpture to her paintings (#s 4-10), which also include sound-absorbing materials like acoustic panels and architectural felt. A strip of red paint on the back of the work radiates color onto the surface above. Jones refers to this quiet but powerful effect as a "hum." This detail can also be seen in nearby works, such as *Triple Bold Bar, End Measure* (#4) and echoes the soft red glow coming from the gallery just down the hall.

4. **Triple Bold Bar, End Measure**, 2022
Acrylic, acoustic panel, and architectural felt on canvas in two parts
Courtesy Alexander Gray Associates, New York, © 2025 Jennie C. Jones
5. **Long Low Rest with Hum**, 2025
Acrylic, acoustic panel, and architectural felt on canvas
Courtesy Alexander Gray Associates, New York, © 2025 Jennie C. Jones
6. **Deep Red, Black**, 2025
Acrylic, acoustic panel, and architectural felt on board
Courtesy Alexander Gray Associates, New York, © 2025 Jennie C. Jones
7. **Soft Tone with Red Break**, 2025
Acrylic, acoustic panel, and architectural felt on canvas
Courtesy Alexander Gray Associates, New York, © 2025 Jennie C. Jones
8. **Soft Sharps, Line Break**, 2023
Acrylic, acoustic panel, and architectural felt on canvas
The JLS Collection
9. **A Line When Broken**, 2025
Acrylic, acoustic panel, and architectural felt on canvas
Courtesy Alexander Gray Associates, New York, © 2025 Jennie C. Jones
10. **Hushed with Black Red Edge**, 2025
Acrylic, acoustic panel, and architectural felt on canvas
Courtesy Alexander Gray Associates, New York, © 2025 Jennie C. Jones

11. **Complex Octaves Diptych #1**, 2025
Acrylic on paper in two parts
Courtesy Alexander Gray Associates, New York, © 2025 Jennie C. Jones

12. **Complex Octaves Diptych #2**, 2025
Acrylic on paper in two parts
Courtesy Alexander Gray Associates, New York, © 2025 Jennie C. Jones

Paper has been an important material for Jones throughout her career. She often produces drawings and collages like these (#11 and #12) in parallel to her paintings and sculptures as a way to think through similar ideas and forms across media. Like many of her works on paper, these compositions reference musical notation, here in the form of staff lines. Cut pieces of painted paper create a sense of rhythm and motion across the pages, further underlining the works' relationship to music. Several of the vertical forms also call to mind Jones's towering sculpture *Point of Perspective* (#13), on view nearby

13. **Point of Perspective**, 2025
Wood, MDF, acoustic bass trap, latex, and acrylic paint
Courtesy Alexander Gray Associates, New York, © 2025 Jennie C. Jones

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14. *RPM (revolutions per minute)*, 2018

Digital sound piece, 3:34 min.
AP - Exhibition copy, not editioned
Courtesy Alexander Gray Associates, New York, © 2025 Jennie C. Jones

16. *Measured Earth Tone*, 2025

Acrylic, acoustic panel, and architectural felt on canvas
Courtesy Alexander Gray Associates, New York, © 2025 Jennie C. Jones

15. *Interlude*, 2025

Digital sound piece, 1:15 min.
AP - Exhibition copy, not editioned
Courtesy Alexander Gray Associates, New York, © 2025 Jennie C. Jones

With these two works (#14 and #15), Jones explores the interplay between sound and architecture. To create *RPM* (#14), she layered three distinct tones: one produced by a glass singing bowl, one produced by a metal singing bowl, and a third generated digitally. The glass and metal tones recall the basic building blocks of most modern buildings, including the Pulitzer, where glass is a prominent material. Jones carefully sited this work in a gallery adjacent to a long bay of windows that allow natural light to stream into the space. Here, the sound becomes an audible manifestation of the building and its connection to the natural world. *Interlude* (#15) introduces a gentle droning tone that punctuates moments of silence following *RPM*. Created from electronic feedback, the work connects to legacies of musical experimentation and dissonance explored by Jones in *Other Octaves*, the exhibition she has curated in the Pulitzer's lower galleries.

