

Jean Jones and the Love of Painting

Michael Kurtz

For Jean Jones, painting was a means of escape and survival, a way to find solace and to assert herself in a society that acted to marginalise her. It played this role at every stage of her life: enabling time in nature away from the violence of the blitz and the chaos of the city, emphasising the visual against the literary pretension of post-war Oxford, and allowing her to cling onto her identity even as mental illness threatened to destroy it.

The British painter grew up in a world ravaged by war and personal turmoil, in which the old ideals of truth and morality were increasingly devalued. Unsettling distortions, lonely expanses and mask-like faces appear in her pictures as dark reminders of this world. In this biography, though, Michael Kurtz sees her work as a sustained effort to find coherence and joy in spite of all. Her tumultuous life and passionate art are described here in unflinching detail for the first time, in this large format hardback, packed with examples of Jean Jones' powerful paintings.

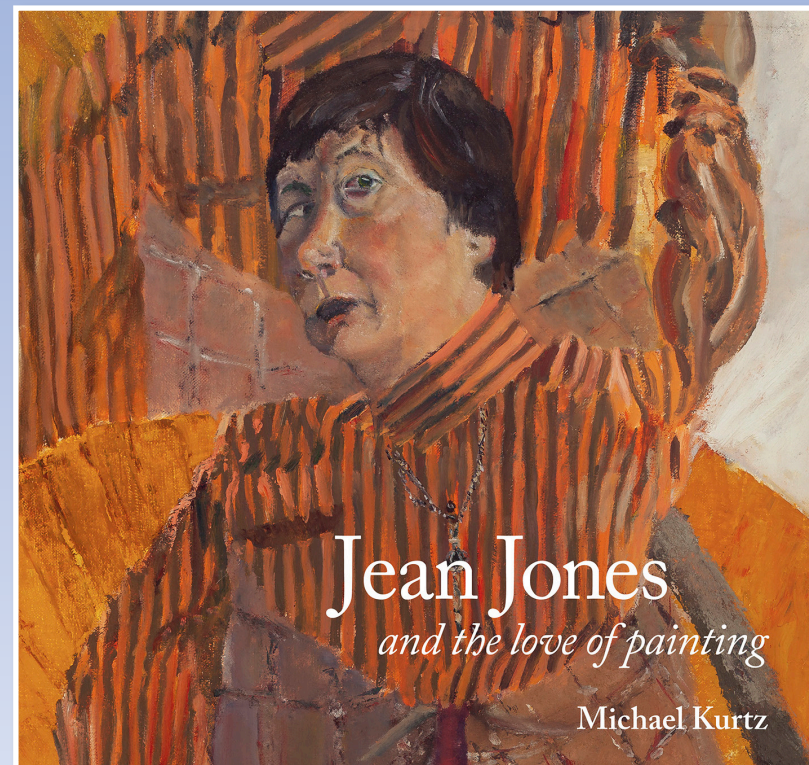
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michael Kurtz is a writer and curator based in London. He read History of Art at the University of Oxford, where he won the Gibbs Prize in 2019 and co-founded the Jean Jones Estate in the same year. His writing about visual culture has appeared in *e-flux*, *The London Magazine* and *Burlington Contemporary*, and in 2023 he won the International Award for Art Criticism.

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