

Art in America

Sarah Charlesworth, 1947-2013

by [brian boucher](#) 06/26/13



New York-based artist Sarah Charlesworth died June 25 from a cerebral hemorrhage, according to her dealer, New York's Susan Inglett, who spoke to *A.i.A.* by phone today. No further details were given.

Charlesworth created photo-based work, and her output was informed by an early engagement with Conceptual art. Strongly influenced by the writings of Roland Barthes, she engaged in work with notions of originality and the artistic production of meaning and of the status of the photograph.

Born in East Orange, N.J., in 1947, Charlesworth graduated from Barnard College in New York City, in 1969, with an art history major and many studio courses under her belt. In 1967 she studied with Douglas Huebler, initiating her interest in Conceptual art. She would meet many Conceptual art practitioners through Huebler, who was then turning away from his Minimalist-style sculptures toward dematerialized work, trying, as Charlesworth put it, "to lasso the idea in art."

Charlesworth supported herself for seven years after graduation as a freelance photographer, taking courses in various disciplines, including a photography course at the New School with Lisette Model. She lived with Joseph Kosuth for much of the '70s, and with him and several colleagues from Art & Language/New York, founded the art theory magazine *The Fox*, which put out three issues from 1975-76. In a 1975 contribution titled "A Declaration of Independence," she articulated a trenchant critique of Conceptual art: "'Art as idea' was once a good idea, but art as idea as art product, alas, moves in the world of commodity products."

She began to exhibit her work in 1976, and was soon included in group shows at venues such as New York's PS1, Metro Pictures and Tony Shafrazi Gallery. She later showed with Jay Gorney in New York, Margo Leavin in Los Angeles and Baldwin Gallery, in Aspen, Colo., where her exhibition "Available Light" is on view (through July 21).

Charlesworth taught at schools including New York University, New York's School of Visual Arts, Rhode Island School of Design and Princeton University.

The exhibition "Sarah Charlesworth: A Retrospective" was curated by Louis Grachos and Susan Fisher Sterling and jointly organized by SITE Santa Fe and the National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, D.C. It traveled from 1997 to '99 from SITE Santa Fe to the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, the National Museum of Women in the Arts, Cleveland Center for Contemporary Art, and the Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, Waltham, Mass. Her work is in public collections including those of the Art Institute of Chicago, Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles, Museum of Modern Art, New York, and the Stedelijk, Eindhoven, Holland.

She is survived by her children Nick and Lucy Poe.