

PRINTMAKER CAROLEE JAKES

The Space In Between

TRUE ABSTRACTION AND REPRESENTATION
BY DONNA CEDAR-SOUTHWORTH



Carolee Jakes

Carolee Jakes' hand-pulled prints are compelling and provocative, evoking a visceral response in the viewer that's often difficult to achieve with prints. Once seen, they leave an indelible impression; they are fresh, exciting and reflect the artist's explorations.

"My work combines old and new techniques and explores the visual continuum between representation and abstraction," Carolee says. "I've done portraiture—I like crisp representation—but I also love abstraction. And I think there's this huge space in between true abstraction and representation that I find fascinating. I don't think they have to be that clearly defined and I like to play in the middle to see what I can find," says the McLean resident.

Carolee's prints cover a broad spectrum of printmaking: woodcuts, etchings and screen printing. She enjoys making woodcut prints—the oldest printmaking process. "It's so tactile; I love carving in the wood. I love the physicality of it," she, who uses a reduction method of carving, says.

First she sketches her image in colored pencil onto wood. Then with a carving tool, she digs out the lightest section first. She then inks the entire block yellow and prints that area onto a sheet of paper (or several sheets if she's doing a limited edition). Then she carves out what she wants to remain yellow from the block. She then inks the entire block blue and prints that area onto the same sheet of paper and then goes in with her carving tool and removes what she wants to remain blue. She does this until the image is complete. "I like the motion in woodcutting—I like the line and the movement I can create," she says.

Carolee also does etching on zinc and copper plates. "Working on Lalo" strays from her traditional use of color and instead is rendered in graphite with gray tones. "I don't have another etching that I like as much as this one," she says. "I love this piece because it captures the relationship between the musician and the instrument."

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Konzert

Violoncello solo

A son ami Adolphe Fiesche
Komponiert 1877

Prélude
Lento $\text{♩} = 56^{**}$

VI. I

ad libitum

a tempo

a tempo

rit.

accel.
prenez

ff.

rall.

appassionato

a tempo

66

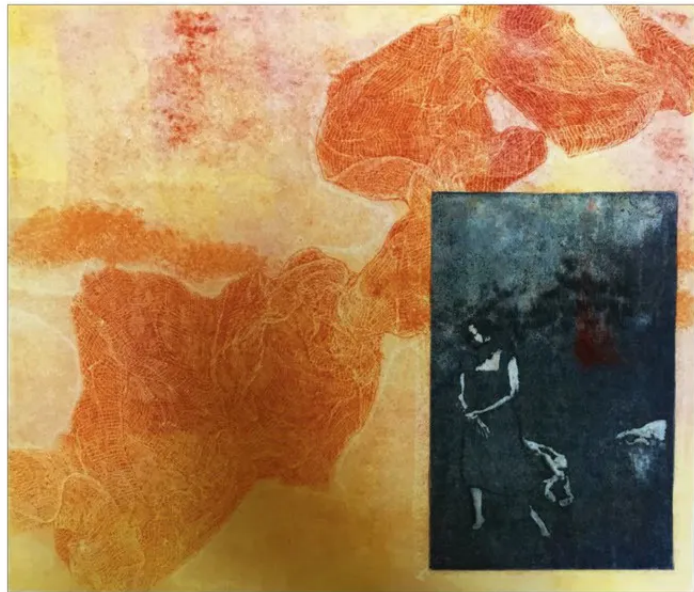
*) In der Erstausgabe der Partitur...
 **) Zu Heinrich Schiffs Fingerübung...
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 Dans la première édition de...



Carolee explains the process of etching on plate. First she covers the plate with a tar-like substance. Once dry, she uses a tool to draw the figure into the tar, a technique called "hard ground etching. ...Wherever you remove the tar, you put the plate into acid and the acid etches the metal." Then she removes the tar and begins an aquatint process. Like wood block reduction, she starts with the lightest section first, working her way down to the darkest. The aquatint creates the tones of gray. She devised this print using the collage-printing process called "Chine collé."

Carolee also makes a variety of colorful hand-pulled screen prints that incorporate photographic images. She frequently uses pigmented wax in her screen prints, a technique she learned from its creator Dennis O'Neil, whom she first studied under at the Corcoran School of Art and Design. Her resulting prints have a distinct mood with unusual color patterns, allowing viewers to explore and interact. "With printmaking I can create imaginary spaces—I love the colors and the way they glow," she says. "I enjoy working with handmade papers and seeing the torn edges. I like seeing the 'artist' in the work."

Carolee's prints are often called "painterly," which is not surprising since she is also an oil painter. Like





Page 30: "Waiting for Sunrise," oil on canvas, 36" x 72"

Page 31: "Working on Lolo," etching with Chine collé, 15" x 22"

This page from top: "Truck Stop Nor Cal," 11" x 14"; and "The Climb," (detail), 12" x 20"
Both are hand-pulled screenprints with embedded, pigmented wax.

Opposite from top: "She Lives in the Mountain," oil on canvas, 40" x 60"; and "Irene," etching and monoprint, 14" x 16"



her prints, when painting she combines "very old and very new ways," she says. "I use multiple layers and glazes to get the tonalities I'm looking for."

"She Lives in the Mountains" is based loosely on photographs Carolee took in Nevada. "The colors of the mountains blended exactly like a mountain lion." She achieves immediacy in her colors by mixing them directly on her canvas, allowing the colors to interact with each other in the painting.

Originally from Ohio, Carolee attended Duke University as a music major, and continued her education at the University of Maryland with a degree in nursing. Her husband's career brought them to Northern Virginia in 1979, where she worked in nursing for 13 years. She stayed home to raise three children, all of whom are musicians, and in 2005 she began studying at the Corcoran, earning her BEA in 2008.

"Printmaking and painting in oils are very different processes; I love them both," she says.

Carolee is represented at the Studio Gallery in Washington, D.C. She is one of three artists teaching a two-week workshop at the Skopelos Foundation for the Arts in July in Greece. é

Carolee Jakes | www.caroleejakesartist.com