

Carolyn Lavender ... weaves from nature her mysterious soul, playing the echo of her fascinating language.

This is the first time I deal with an artist's experience outside the Iraqi or Arabian art world. After the American Ted Decker curated and produced a group art exhibition for a number of Artists at the Phoenix College's Eric Fischl Gallery , my acquaintance and knowledge of Carolyn and her experience started. She is an art instructor at the same college.

After a few weeks, Ted invited me to meet Carolyn at her beautiful studio which is part of her house in Phoenix. I saw a lot of her work. Some hanged on the wall, others leaned against it. There were a number of catalogues which were notebooks that the artist made by collecting a number of photographic pictures taken from magazines and other sources. She then formed a model (sketch) from these photos which would be drawn after putting them together. She continues collecting these photos individually or collectively according to her vision that is controlled by her artistic taste. All this is put in what is called a journal or catalogue meaning a diary. Sometimes you can see some comments here and there. Though she began collecting photos when she was 14 years old, it wasn't until 1992 when she began using them as sources and

sketches for her art work. To be honest I have not seen such a style as used by Carolyn.

The other technique that the American artist Carolyn Lavender has adopted when drawing her paintings is taking a photograph of a landscape scene. Before that she puts a number of ideas or specifications in that spatial area which is to be photographed. Then she takes a picture of that place so as to be the sketch of her coming artwork. When looking at her work, I see some intended calmness. She uses black and white as if purposely to give this impression. She also uses degrees of pure black and white in such a perfect and fantastic way, very compatible with the expressive method. She not only wants to bring out the beauty of nature and its entangled relations among its components. She wants to dive in the qualities of these components and their degree of firmness and unity as active factors in this environment. Her attempt is an opening to a world not far from the viewer who might not have had such a contemplative glance left in his/her imagination by the incredible artist Carolyn Lavender.

This leads us to the diaphaneity situation beyond materiality of things; either they are part of our lives or surround us without noticing their importance or impact on our behavior because we deal with monotony of real life. We never pay attention to its spiritual importance. She detaches shapes from their private atmosphere, then puts them together in the new atmosphere of her own drawing and colored spatial although only in black

and white. This preciseness needs high skillfulness and ability which Carolyn Lavender has proved. As giving up all other colors and using only these two neutral colors means abandoning several choices in composing the visual text.

Carolyn Lavender has expressed this when she said, “I have abandoned the other colors so as to get rid of sharpness and bounds.” This led her unique artwork to take other dimensions making the white space itself (the negative gap) an integrating part of the work. We notice this in many of her works. This gap shaped a visual dimension although it does not have a specific shape. The filled space, either in ink or acrylic, represents the positive part of the work which shows the visual text. We can notice in one of her fantastic artworks (the conversation between a dog and a turtle) how the white negative space, where there is neither paint nor color, stayed as it is with no interference. We see that she has invested this space in a way that gives her work a visual dimension and artistic reveal, so beautiful that you see yourself in front of two different separated worlds.

Still we see harmony and contiguousness between these two structurally different spaces. This led these shapes, especially those of human beings and animals, to live in an abstract situation with this special gap surrounding them. I think that the white negative space has widened and deepened this feeling of the viewer as if each shape lives alone and separately from each other and still there is a hidden bond tying them together. This

mysterious bonding is not but only the effective impact that is part of the Artist's creative character due to the practical life she had lived since childhood. We realize that the impact of these creatures that live in cities and forests of her own creation has given a certain feeling and sense. This impact shows us that life in nature is deeper than we can imagine. We ought to realize it and then understand it to comprehend the mysterious and beautiful aspects that are hidden from our eyes or any slight glance. If we did try to understand, this will give us further valuable dimensions to observe the changes that take place in human and animal life and how we affect it and are affected by it.

The other fascinating characteristic of the artist Carolyn Lavender is her ability of free hand method when drawing features and faces of human beings or animals in a portrait, plus the other details that surround these shapes. The clearance and luxurious lines of her has created a high level of a dimension of beauty which has given spiritual and emotional reflections when tackling the imagination of the viewer. It exceeded in creating a structural build-up that attracts the viewer to contribute in building up the shapes and forms that are the center of the case. This has contributed in making such a balance so transparent between the colorful shades that emerge from the main colors, the black and white. What is special about Carolyn's experience is that one world mixes different components of nature. We see interference between more than one world and more than one motional scene. They move interfering with

other worlds and sceneries. We find the seal, the frog, the deer, the bear and man combined by this unique neighborhood. This tempts us to meditate and wonder about the meaning of these things and the ability of art and the artist to introspect these worlds through her own view and spotlight the language understood by mankind.

Thus she will be keener to maintain the beauty of this planet away from death and devastation done by misbehaving of people. Eventually the experience of Carolyn Lavender gives beautiful dimensions making art not only talking to nature and inspiring its shapes and dimensions, but making art one of the methods to maintain the beauty of creation of this planet which has always fascinated us by its beautiful phenomena.

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