

With Gesture and Color

The power and possibility of spontaneous gesture in concert with pure color, catalyzed by chance, the body, and the imagination.

Gesture: I believe in the importance of the spontaneous gesture. It is a gift of the body, and whether bold and sweeping, cramped or tangled, there is a message in all of it. The message has meaning not yet assigned, waiting to be recognized and developed by the receptive spirit.

Color: Color is a gift of the gods. From the strength and clarity of black and white to the dazzle and infinite dimension of pure color, its power and blessing should not be stinted. Yet how much color can we absorb without being blinded?

Process: I have always been compelled by gesture. In 2020 I began working with large black calligraphic gesture on a dirty-white textured ground. After a while color reappeared in intense single hues. In late 2021 I tried some painted pieces of a translucent paper on a failed black-and-white canvas and was intrigued by the effect. I liked the delicacy, light transmission, and visual permeability of the translucency in contrast with the earthiness of the texture, all in interplay with organic line. And I liked the chance involved in spontaneous gesture and a random stack of colored shapes.

Vision: Because I start with an improvisation and work with whatever comes from it, style and subject vary a lot in these collages, from the fully non-objective to an abstracted space that might include the symbolist or the figurative. Ultimately, I want to be excited by the conversation I see going on within the frame – the dialogue among the pictorial elements. I seek a musical dynamism that has both charm and charge and also a kind of truth I can't get at any other way.

Dedication... This collection was much affected by the sudden passing of a lifelong friend in 2022. The experience of deep loss, the shared adventures of a lifetime, and his own strong visual style deeply influenced many of the works. This work is dedicated to Philip M. Klasky and to those who loved him.

Chris Carraher is a native of Southern California. Since 1992 she has been in the Mojave Desert and lives and works on a vintage homestead in Wonder Valley. The homestead cabins and the desert as both physical and metaphysical landscape have figured prominently in both her artwork and her activism.

*She maintains a studio blog and website at
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