



CAROL REED:
not just black or white



Carol Reed

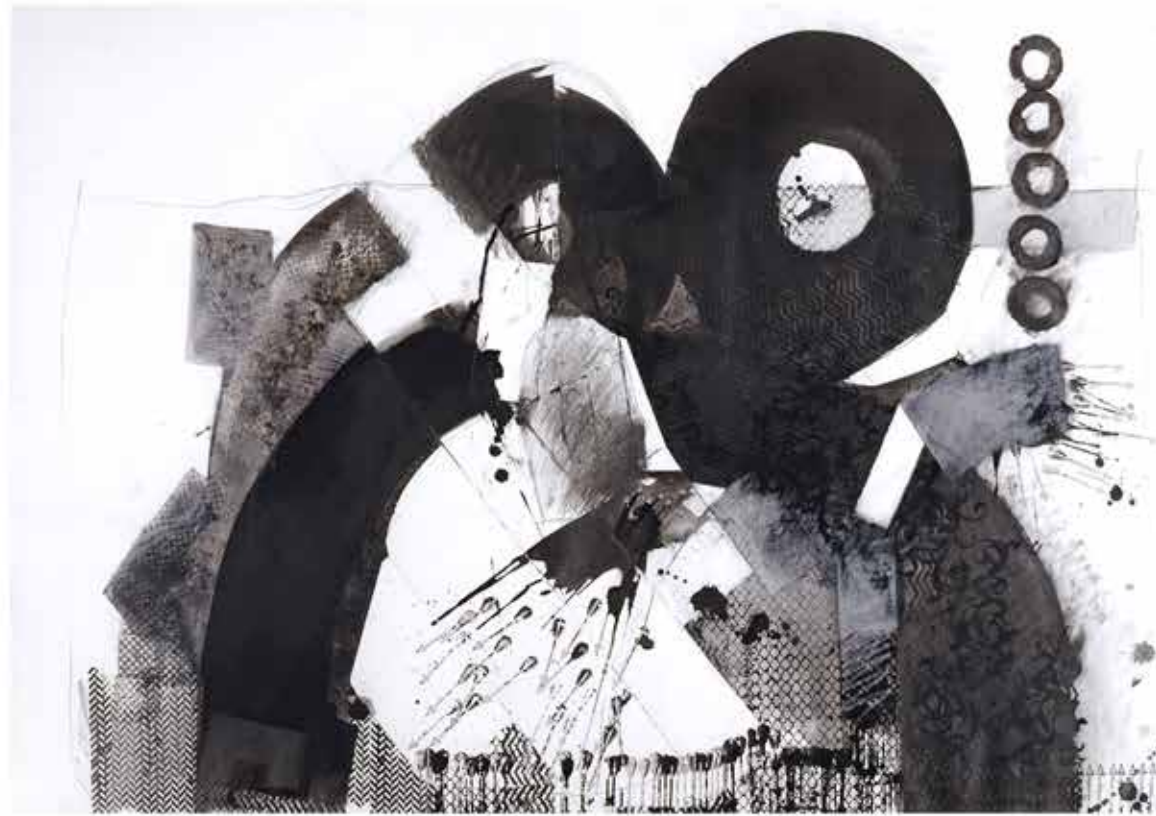
Carol Reed's work is a study in contrasts. Robust bold shapes play against delicately printed and subtle areas of color. Seemingly accidental marks add drama to carefully constructed compositions. Abstract elements aid a strong narrative underpinning. Her work is both personal and artistically mature. Reed is motivated by cultural curiosity – material, political, foreign (she was awarded a Fulbright Fellowship in 2007 to live and paint in India), plus a passion for textiles, fabrics, and fashion, all of which combine visually in work that is both cerebral and fanciful in turn.

On paper, she paints, scrapes, scratches and prints: nothing is random. These are thoughtful works where a set of shapes acts as a code, a personal visual language intended as an internal dialogue, filtered through the artist's lens. There are stories hidden behind the abstraction available to the viewer who takes the time to look. Her bold lines draw the eye and have the dramatic punch of a Willem de Kooning or Robert Motherwell drawing. This is juxtaposed with intricately layered detail that is reminiscent of the fine-art prints of Mauricio Lasansky and Gabor Peterdi. The artist maintains control by handling these disparate elements through an evolved editing process. But control is never allowed to obfuscate the surprise marking, the lucky accident, or the bold stroke. To act as a ringmaster of this complex mixture calls for experience and intuition combined with a strong sense of design.

Cover Image: *Keystone 7*, 44 x 32, 2015
Top Image: *Lavender Site*, 44 x 32, 2015



River Door, 22 x 30, 2016



Carbon Arch, 44 x 30, 2015

Each piece in this exhibition is created from a unique visual language of often reused and repurposed shapes. By using a set array of elements – heavy watercolor paper, black ink, powdered charcoal, colored pencils and rubber stamps, she builds and deletes, working through a process of subtraction to find her image. At the same time, she eviscerates irrelevant elements by covering them with torn and glued overlays. The result is heavily constructed shapes with deep marks, geometry, and hard edges, which lead us on further examination to delicate pattern and soft rubbing – clear evidence of the artist's hand. The continuity of shapes and technique allows the individual pieces in the exhibition to connect, as if in conversation with one another. Yet each individually retains its own identity and evokes different emotional reactions and narratives.



Several pieces suggest vast aerial views, perhaps the pattern of a bombed city or the broken keystones of ancient arches, in another work, the intimacy of a brocade dress tossed over a yellow bed. Yet all is implied, nothing is forced. In a smaller piece entitled *Serpent's Tooth* (a work reminiscent of Chinese scroll painting), the curved abstract shape, the tooth itself, and the Shakespearean reference in the title tell a fabled story rich with meaning. But it is up to the viewer to peel back the layers. Each piece in this exhibition merits close examination. This is not work to be swallowed whole in one bite, these pictures are to be contemplated and reviewed on many occasions and in many moods. -Rosemary Feit Covey



Top Image: *Black brocade - yellow bed*, 44 x 42, 2015
Bottom Image: *Serpent's Tooth*, 15 x 15, 2015

Artist Statement:

The art I make is an extension of my painting practice – giving physical form to the intangible, outside the logical confines of language. My non-representational approach is both painterly and graphic with intuitive markings, spontaneous gestures and constant revision. The subject choices and titles are inspired by pursued interests and follow rules of my distinct artistic taste. I am interested in puns, visual ironies, mixed messages, and the shifted meanings of components out of context. Through simple recurring shapes, both original and imprint, I look for affinities that unite the seemingly unrelated to build personal meaning with broader connections to related subject matter.



Avalanche, 15 x 22, 2016

Red Roof House, 15 x 22, 2015



Hand to Mouth, 44 x 32, 2014

Carol Reed's background in art includes undergraduate degrees in art education, fine arts and a master's degree in design. Additionally she holds an MFA in studio painting from the Maryland Institute, College of Art. She was Assistant Professor of Design at the University of Alberta, Canada, before joining the staff of the Smithsonian Institution in educational travel and museum outreach. As a cultural heritage and communications consultant for the World Bank she designed exhibitions and education programs to help put a public face on cultural partnerships. Her extensive international travel as influenced and informed the art she makes and her work has been included in exhibitions in Brunei, Seville Spain, and Bujumbura Burundi In 2008, the American Center in New Delhi India hosted a solo exhibition of 32 paintings. Her work is included in over thirty public, corporate, and private collections including the Art Bank DC, The United States Department of State, The Library of Congress, The Smithsonian Institution, The World Bank and the National Museum of Women in the Arts.

Generous acknowledgement to artist Rosemary Feit Covey for the catalog statement. Born in Johannesburg, South Africa, her work is housed in more than forty major museum and library collections worldwide. She is the recipient of a Rockefeller Foundation Fellowship and most recently a retrospective of her prints, paintings, and installation work was held at Johns Hopkins University's Evergreen Museum.

Photography by Gregory Staley

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