

Carol Carreno

carolcarreno.com

I was given an aptitude test for my first job. That's because I wasn't quite sure what clerical meant. I'm a product of Catholic school, after all. That's how I began working as an illustrator at eighteen. Through a company program, back then, I began taking art classes at Syracuse University in the evenings.

Marriage, relocation, and children took me in a different direction. I completed my education as a nontraditional student after my last child was out of the house. Growing up Catholic in a small conservative town, with an alcoholic father, challenged my worldview. Time has given me the benefit of many life experiences—resulting in depth and maturity in my art. Not too many artists can say they've been inside a cloistered convent and behind the walls of a city jail.

I love stimulating conversation, Puccini, flannel sheets, National Public Radio, chipmunks, Barcelona, good books and the church of be kind to others. I tell you this because if I could paint all day, I would. I also write short stories with a writers group, some poetry and a few songs.

Education

1994

Bachelor of Science, Graphic Design, State University College at Buffalo, NY

1986

Associate of Art, Written and Visual Communications, State University of New York Empire State College, Saratoga Springs, NY

Selected Exhibitions

2012

Members' Exhibition, Hallwalls Contemporary Arts Center, Buffalo, NY

Members' Exhibition, Burchfield Penney Art Center, Buffalo, NY

2011

Members' Exhibition, Carnegie Art Center, North Tonawanda, NY

2010

Black & White Show, Market Street Art Center, Lockport, NY

Members' Exhibition, Hallwalls Contemporary Arts Center, Buffalo, NY

Celebrating Women, Market Street Art Center, Lockport, NY

2009

Members' Exhibition, Carnegie Art Center, North Tonawanda, NY

Niagara County Women Artists, Niagara Arts & Cultural Center, Niagara Falls, NY

Niagara Frontier Plein Air Painters, Partners in Art Gallery, North Tonawanda, NY

2008

Drop Hammer exhibiton, Subversive Theatre, Buffalo, NY

National Exhibition, Impact Artists' Gallery, Buffalo, NY

The Artists Among Us, Burchfield-Penny Art Center, Buffalo, NY

Members' Exhibition, Carnegie Art Center, North Tonawanda, NY
Featured Artist, Kellick Building, Niagara Falls, NY

2007

Niagara Frontier Art Exhibit, Kenan Center House Gallery, Lockport, NY

The Locks Then and Now, Market Street Art Center, Lockport, NY

A Self-Portrait Show, Market Street Art Center, Lockport, NY

Recent Paintings of Carol Carreno, Youngstown Free Library, Youngstown, NY

2006

National Women's Exhibition, Impact Artists' Gallery, Buffalo, NY

Members' Exhibition, Art Dialogue Gallery, Buffalo, NY

2004

Regional Artists' Exhibition, Art Dialogue Gallery, Buffalo, NY

Niagara Frontier Art Exhibit, Kenan Center House Gallery, Lockport, NY

Awards and Honors

2010

Seeing With the Eye of an Artist, artist lecture, Dale Association, Lockport, NY

2009

Community Forum, Lockport Community Television, Lockport, NY

2006

Special Opportunity Stipend, New York Foundation for the Arts, Arts Council, Buffalo and Erie County, NY

2004

Award of Excellence, Niagara Frontier Art Exhibit, Kenan Center House Gallery, Lockport, NY

Art Views, Lockport Community Television, Lockport, NY

2000

Second Day Issue, Cancellation Stamp Design, United States Post Office, Youngstown, NY

1993

Artistic Excellence Award, National Competition, Strathmore Paper Company, Appleton, WI

Exhibition Checklist

All works are collection of the artist.

Break Dance, 2011, oil and acrylic on canvas, 42 x 30 in.

Crows, 2012, oil and acrylic on canvas, 25 x 50 in.

High C, 2011, oil and acrylic on canvas, 38 x 30 in.

Models n Museums #4, 2008, oil on canvas panel, 30 x 24 in.

Models n Museums #5, 2008, oil on canvas panel, 30 x 24 in.

Reclining Nude, 2004, oil on panel, 18 x 24 in.

Reclining Nude I, 2012, oil and acrylic on canvas, 37 x 51 in.

Sitting Nude, 2004, oil on panel, 20 x 16 in.

Spring Break, 2011, oil and acrylic on canvas, 50 x 56 in.

Three Vases, 2011, oil and acrylic on canvas, 66 x 50 in.

Through the Looking Glass, 2012, oil and acrylic on canvas, 26 x 34 in.

Tornado, 2011, oil and acrylic on canvas, 46 x 22 in.

Woman Combing her Hair, 2012, oil and acrylic on canvas, 54 x 38 in.

TopSpin

Artists of the Buffalo/Niagara Region

The museum's Tops Gallery—dedicated to the exhibition of work by local and regional artists—presents the **TopSpin** series. **TopSpin** features a broad range of visual expressions, varied in media as well as message, and focuses mainly on new and emerging artists.

TopSpin is made possible through the generous Support of Tops Friendly Markets, LLC.

TOPS



This exhibition is made possible with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts, Celebrating 50 years of building strong, creative communities in New York State's 62 counties.

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TopSpin
Artists of Western New York and Beyond

Carol Carreno: *Fragments of a Beautiful Journey*

March 3-April 21, 2013

Opening reception with artist talk at 3:00 p.m. Sunday, March 3, 2:00-4:00 p.m.



carolcarreno

Through the Looking Glass, (detail), 2012, oil and acrylic on canvas, 26 x 34 in.



Reclining Nude I, 2012, oil and acrylic on canvas, 37 x 51 in.



Tornado, 2011, oil and acrylic on canvas, 46 x 22 in.



Woman Combing her Hair, 2012
oil and acrylic on canvas, 54 x 38 in.



Spring Break, 2011, oil and acrylic on canvas, 50 x 56 in.

How has your artistic journey brought you from traditional figure studies to Cubist/mosaic figure studies to the transformative broken glass series?

Several years ago an art critic from the *Buffalo News* reviewed a group show, which included one of my floral pieces, commenting “Flowers, flowers, flowers, I know it’s Spring but...” This made me realize I needed new material and a subject that wasn’t in competition with all the other artists who are doing, or have done, this particular theme. Consequently, I went back to what I loved most and that was the human figure. Viewers, I soon grasped, respond to what they know and understand intimately.

A subsequent lecture at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery made me recognize that I should “get into the conversation.”

I needed to challenge myself and my viewers with something new and different. It was no longer acceptable (for me) to continue painting what already had been done, and done well by other artists, but the question was how can I build on the past to create my own spot of time.

Listening to the radio one day, I heard a speaker describe a magical road in a third-world country that sparkled in the sunshine with imbedded glass. Broken glass had found its way from the adjacent trash piled alongside the road—a unique visual contrast and a great metaphor for life. Furthermore, I had recently completed a figurative series inspired by the mosaics of Pompeii. These large pieces were executed using repeating dabs of paint. One viewer remarked, “It’s so fascinating that soft female flesh can be represented



Break Dance, 2011, oil and acrylic on canvas, 42 x 30 in.

with sharp pieces of glass.” Here I was, unconsciously, using my new metaphor. At present, I use actual broken glass as inspiration and add various titles, hoping to create meaningful viewing experiences that help demystify some of the opaqueness of contemporary art for audiences.

Do you find the act of breaking glass therapeutic and calming or stressful?

When I break my glass vessels I employ all the safety gear: safety glasses, thick leather gloves, leather jacket, dust mask—and head outside to my garage. I either place the glass piece in a large garbage can to shake/crush with a brick or put the piece in multiple large heavy-duty plastic bags to heave onto the concrete floor. As I do this, I reflect on the energy that will be transferred into the finished painting (a-la Jackson Pollock!). I’ve come to love those preparatory high notes that are generated through the sound of breaking glass.

How much of working with the broken glass is spontaneous? Do you consciously re-arrange the glass into a constricted still life?

At first, all the art coming through this process of breaking glass was done spontaneously with themes such as pain,



High C, 2011, oil and acrylic on canvas, 38 x 30 in.

My metaphysical series begins with the furious sound of breaking glass. Razor sharp pieces of blue tumblers, brown and green beer bottles, orange candle holders, clear liquor bottles and jam jars, a red vase—useful vessels before now slammed and smashed—resulting in a repository of latent danger along with dazzling sparkle and amazing beauty.

The works featured in *Fragments of a Beautiful Journey* exemplify the complexity of life’s emotions. They also illustrate life’s energy through the powerful impact as glass is shattered. After all, life is like a glass—delicate, strong, perilous and scintillating—sometimes able to be restored—sometimes not—but in the end *different*.

Carol Carreno, 2012

delight or grace. However, I found these labels were too nebulous for the viewing public. Using more familiar titles helped bridge from traditional to non-representational art. Sometimes, if I’m working on a particular idea, I do a bit of manipulation to direct the work to a more satisfactory visual for the viewer.

While visiting your studio in Youngstown, NY, I observed that you not only save the broken glass, but meticulously separate it by color and archive it...why?

I try to keep all the large or unique broken vessels (vases, bottles, wine glasses, etc) in separate containers much like individual models—for future use. I hope to have them come again to pose for me. Using one color tends to unify a piece. Consequently, I keep the different colors of broken glass separate. I also love looking at the colored shapes as the sun hits them—much like prisms. Now, I use clear glass as I can bring the colors up in my mind. I always recycle any discarded glass, carefully, for safety reasons. And, as I previously indicated—my favorite “models” frequently come back.

Interview with the artist conducted in February, 2013.