

2022 Distinguished Service to the Visual Arts Award



Carol Cole Levin is an artist, entrepreneur, philanthropist, collector, and tireless champion of groundbreaking women artists. Born Carol Cole in 1943 in Philadelphia, Mississippi, Carol now lives and works in Greensboro, North Carolina, where she is actively involved in the contemporary art community. She moved to Greensboro in 1984, as a single mother, where she met her late husband, Seymour Levin, in 1986, marrying in 1988. At his request, she has used her maiden name for her art, but added his name, giving him credit, for her philanthropy and collecting, because he made that possible. With Seymour taking care of living expenses, she could use the money from the sale of her computer software business to buy art.

A lifetime member and past President of the Advisory Board of The Weatherspoon Art Museum at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Carol has been instrumental in growing the Museum's collection, particularly of women artists. Along with her late husband, Carol has supported numerous leading-edge

exhibitions at the Weatherspoon, from *Hannah Wilke: Intra-Venus* in 1996 to the upcoming presentation of *Lorraine O'Grady: Both/And*. Artist Nancy Grossman has stated that her "voice was central in tipping the scales for what were considered controversial shows at the Weatherspoon."

Carol Cole Levin has supported exhibitions of artists in her collection at the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, the Jewish Museum in NYC, the Baltimore Museum of Art, Grounds for Sculpture, and the Institute of Contemporary Art, LA, amongst others. She is always willing to loan works from the collection.

Carol and Seymour have donated to Greensboro's Elsewhere Museum, a living museum that supports artists in a reimagined thrift store space; the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; the Weatherspoon Art Museum, amongst other organizations. Carol currently serves on the National Advisory Board of the Ackland Art Museum at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She has served on many nonprofit boards, including the governing boards of ArtTable, the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art (SECCA) in Winston-Salem, NC, and the Penland School of Crafts in Penland, NC; the cabinet of Elsewhere Museum; and the National Advisory Board of the Lucy Daniels Foundation in Cary, NC.

Carol's artistic career spans over forty years. Her surreal drawings from the 1970s and her later mixed-media breast sculptures are charged with a feminist critique derived from her life experiences.

In the spring of 2018, Carol had a solo show at the Weatherspoon Art Museum titled *Carol Cole: Cast a Clear Light*, based on the quotation of Tennessee Williams, "Let us not deny all the dark things of the human heart, but let us try to cast a clear light on them in our work." The exhibition included 24 of her own works and 62 works from her collection of other artists. In the fall of 2018, Carol had her first solo show in New York at Empirical Nonsense, titled *Carol Cole's The Bubble Blower*, named after her autobiographical drawings from the 1970s of a breast that inverted its nipple and became a bubble blower. In 2016, Carol showed her work at the Greensboro College art gallery in an exhibition titled *Carol Cole: Me and Tennessee*, based on her relationship with the plays and writings of Tennessee Williams.

Carol holds a BA from the University of Mississippi in 1964, triple majoring in Latin, English literature, and mathematics. Later, she turned to art and studied with notable artists including Lynda Benglis, Judy Chicago,

Elizabeth Murray, Philip Pearlstein, and Ida Kohlmeyer. She lives surrounded by the works of other artists, sharing their souls and spirits, in her art collection.

ArtTable's Distinguished Service to the Visual Arts Award acknowledges and celebrates remarkable leadership in the arts. Its recipients exemplify ArtTable's dedication to the lasting impact of the visual arts on our shared cultural life. Past recipients include Barbara Tober, Susan Unterberg, Estrellita Brodsky, Marian Goodman, Lowery Stokes Sims, Marieluise Hessel, Raymond Learsy and Melva Bucksbaum, Marguerite Steed Hoffman, Patricia Phelps de Cisneros, Patricia E. Harris, Marieluise Hessel Artzt, Kathan Brown, Mary Schmidt Campbell, Anita Contini, Alice Denney, Helen W. Drutt English, Elizabeth Easton, Sharon Helgason Gallagher, RoseLee Goldberg, Thelma Golden, Marian Goodman, Kathy Halbreich, Lila Harnett, Ann Sutherland Harris, Alana Heiss, Mary Jane Jacob, Leslie King-Hammond, Ruby Lerner, Susana Torruella Leval, Barbara Luderowski, Margo Machida, Ann Philbin, Lisa Phillips, Joan Rosenbaum, Linda Shearer, Roberta Smith, Susan Sollins, Susan Fisher Sterling, Marion Boulton Stroud, Paula Wallace, Yoko Ono, Toby Devan Lewis, Vishakha N. Desai, Elizabeth A. Sackler, Elizabeth C. Baker, Linda Nochlin, Iris Cantor, Paula Cooper, Marcia Tucker, Lucy Lippard, Stephanie French, Joan Mondale, Dianne H. Pilgrim, Emily Rauh Pulitzer, Agnes Gund, and Kitty Carlisle Hart.

In 2003, as a special gesture to ArtTable and the leading women it honors, Louise Bourgeois created an unnumbered, cast bronze edition to represent the award for Distinguished Service to the Visual Arts. EYE (cast bronze and silver nitrate with a polished patina) is cast each year in commendation to our awardee.