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Dr. CAROLYN FARB
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Story Page 50

PHOTO BY SHAULIN HON



DR. CAROLYN FARB
**“Talented, Charismatic
 and Kind-Hearted”**

By VICTOR BENNETT FORBES
PHOTOGRAPHS BY SHAULIN HON

*Carolyn and Maximillan (Lucas Terrier) next to Jesse Lott’s **Dragonfly**, metal with mixed media under Lowell Boyers’ painting **Bridge**, 2008.*

“A Shaman in the art community, Lott,” says Carolyn, “turns discarded items into images of ourselves. He scavenges streets and garbage bins for raw materials. He likes using found organic industrial materials to make art, and that was out of necessity. He had a fabulous show in 2009 at the Station Museum in Houston and he’s widely exhibited in Texas, throughout the South and at the Studio Museum in Harlem, New York. His mythological creatures and ordinary people symbolize the pain and spiritual conditions of the human being.

Classic Southern belle, self-described “original cowgirl,” collector extraordinaire and hero to many an artist, Dr. Carolyn Farb, of Houston Texas, developed her love of all things artistic at an early age. In her teens, she spent summers at her grandfather Jackie Freedman’s legendary resort, The Sands Hotel in Las Vegas. There she watched the Rat Pack in all their glory cavorting around the premises. “The Sands was his dream,” recalls Carolyn, “a place in the sun. I followed him around like a shadow, and I idolize him to this day. He was very charismatic, and never met anyone who didn’t adore him.” There were shows in the Copa Room, headquarters of the Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Sammy Davis Jr. crew “Howard Hughes had a bungalow right behind my grandfather’s home on a street that was named after my grandmother. It was a different time, very glamorous. I remember Lena Horne being there on location while they were shooting Sergeants Three.”

Later on, while a student at Rice University, Carolyn took a course with Elaine de Kooning, herself a legendary art world character. Not only

was she married to the King of the Abstract Expressionists, but she was an extraordinary artist in her own right. “We stayed outside and painted,” said Carolyn. “It was a special time in my life before I ever decided who I was. I was growing, emerging and experiencing. I also had a yen for acting and went to California to study.” Under contract with Desilu Studios (owned by Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz), it was an adventurous period for an adventurous young woman. Those superstars set the tone for things that followed. “There was only one Frank Sinatra, only one Lucy and Desi. Originals,” she attests, “are best.”

Another original, none other than the inimitable Kinky Friedman is one of Carolyn’s closest friends. He

story continues on page 52



At left: The entrance of the Farb residence features Lalique Panels in the front door and Franco Mondini Ruiz’s decorative Urns/Vases flank the entrance of residence c. 2007, 20” x 20” x 48”. Based in San Antonio and New York, Ruiz Works in a variety of media and not afraid to push boundaries and work the art market. He has had many individual exhibitions, selected group exhibitions, lectures, panels, grants and residencies i.e. Rome Prize 2005, Pollock-Krasner Foundation. Grant 2000, New York State Council for the Arts, Visual Artist, and a Penny McCall Foundation. Grant 2003



Master Bedroom: Yigal Ozeri, *The Red Dress, (Homage to Velasquez)*, Oil on canvas 1980s. Originally from Tel Aviv, Yigal moved to New York and combined a realistic technique which speaks of the influence from New York Ash Can School and a painterly vigor reminiscent of the later Abstract Expressionism. *A Chance for Choice*, a collaboration of Katy Anderson and Patrick Medrano, 2006. Katy Anderson is the photographer. She says she is driven by instinct. She has studied and experimented with all photographic mediums and techniques. Her preference is large format photography 4' x 5'. To quote her, "If I could say it in words, I wouldn't need to photograph." Patrick Medrano has a process that is in the moment, like a wave that's born and breaks at it's own will. The goal is to produce, inspire, and promote the creative spirit.



In the Media Room

are Chinese artist Alex Guefeng Cao's *Pixelated* photographs. "Each work," notes Carolyn, "pairs homage with conceptual insight in black and white images that are made with a love for the mosaic process. All the color that is needed are the various shades of grey and the digital stitching of black and white tiles. I have the one of **Mick Jagger vs. Keith Richards** after Vadukul (#2 of a Limited Edition) and **Carolyn vs. Marilyn** with images from the *Texas Women* book by David Woo and Richard Pruitt.

British artist Nick Veasey, *The Mini Driver*, c-type x-ray photographic print. This image of his mini Cooper reveals the technicality of the vehicle. He works with x-ray imaging in his studio to create over sized photographic images. He would love his mini to be lit up on Broadway. He is now working in light boxes (images of DJ Dex in *Light Box* at the front of his show in Paris)

under the mini Cooper:

(left) **Janis and Tina at Madison Square Garden, 1969** by Amalie R. Rothschild. Amalie's photos bring back the Fillmore East. Rock and roll was a baby back then.

(center) **Robert Rauschenberg** by photographer Sebastian Piras. Piras is primarily a photographer but has other interests; film making and culinary art. He dedicates himself with unabated passion. He has captured both known and unknown players in the international art scene, Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein. David Ross former director of the Whitney Museum described his portraits of artists as "Probing and beautiful producing a win at both ends of the camera."

(right) **Don't Look Back, Apple Corps Headquarters, London** by Baron Wolman 1968. It's a fashionably attired George Harrison reading *Don't Look Back*, with Bob Dylan's image on the cover. Harrison admired the songs and music of Dylan who was a major influence on him. They co-wrote *I'd Have You Anytime* and recorded it with Dylan's song, *If Not For You*. They were later band-mates in the Traveling Wilburys.

*The guitar is a signed Paul McCartney.



Carolyn's Flower, by Dorothy Hood, mixed media. "It's on fire, isn't it?" Carolyn was the associate producer of a documentary film, *Dorothy Hood: The Color of Life*. She lived in Mexico and had a circle of friends that included Pablo Neruda, among others. There will be a retrospective with a monograph at the Art Museum of the South in Corpus Christi in 2016.

The work to Carolyn's left is a C-print by Oleg Dou, *Katia's Tears*. "He is a very important young photo-realist from Russia."

describes her as "Very talented, charismatic and kind-hearted. Carolyn and I are old friends. She stands up for the underdog and has given a lot of people a break, a chance. She has raised money for everybody at one time or another and doesn't care what the trend is. She always comes through. I've never seen a party or event that she initiates that doesn't succeed, so God bless her. If you need somebody to raise millions of dollars for some charitable thing that sounds good, they call Carolyn. There probably isn't an institution, art museum or dance group that she has not raised millions of dollars for. If she really wanted to be in the world of business and all that she would be dynamite. She's a lot like me: she doesn't like to burn bridges and hates to say no."

A well-known singer/songwriter/band-leader (who can forget Kinky Friedman and the Texas Jewboys?), a successful novelist, entrepreneur (with his own brand of Tequila and cigars) and a perennial candidate for Governor of his home-state ("As long as Willie Nelson keeps playing, I'll keep running"), Kinky and Carolyn also share a love of canines. His Utopia Animal Rescue Ranch (nearing its 20th year, "It's good work") is home to about 60 strays at the moment as well as four of Kinky's. Carolyn's two dogs, Max and Lucas, "have become two of my closest intimates. I'm really attached to them even though I'm not a fan of pedigree dogs. But then again, it's not their fault. They play her like a Stradivarius."

Carolyn's good nature and loyal nature has earned her the confidence and friendship of other great Texas musicians, Jerry Jeff Walker and Willie Nelson among them, and she enjoyed a long rapport with Bob Rauschenberg, who loved to talk about his Port Arthur roots and his home-girl, Janis Joplin. When Kinky has a new record or book out, Carolyn is always on hand to help. "Anybody who is worth knowing, Carolyn knows," continues Kinky. "She may be one of the few people who has a sensitivity about the art and the struggles, lifestyle and trials and tribulations of the artist."



Pony Morrison's All-Girls Academy. 2010. Nathaniel Donnett, conte and graphite on paper bags. A multi-media artist inspired by African American culture, psychology and human behavior. *You're Eating Yourself To Death and You're Too Dumb to Know It*, 1990, Forrest Prince. Mixed media. His take on American food stuffs from processed meats to injected eggs are as timely today as ever.



Joseph Cornell Bottle, *The Tribute to France Nuyen*, Glass bottle, assemblage. To my knowledge this is one of 3 bottles he did. It is signed and dated 1958 and came with a dossier of clippings and notes compiled by Cornell from 1958–1971. With notes on France Nuyen on oriental culture to current events. He never traveled farther than New York City.



Henri Rousseau, *L'Alle du Parc Montsouris*, significant park scape by "La Douanier" – this work is done in green tonalities that he favored in such subjects. He was famous for his primitive, untutored style. To quote Max Beckmann on Rousseau "I was thinking of my grand old friend Henri Rousseau, that Homer in a concierge booth, with his prehistoric dream that sometimes brings me very close to the gods."

Below Rousseau is an Erté sculpture.

Continues the Kinkster, "My definition of an artist is anybody who is ahead of his time and behind on his rent. If you think you want to be an artist, the first step is to be miserable. No happy person created anything worthwhile.

"I like her attitude and outlook on things and all this time I've known her I can't really say if she's a Republican or Democrat. She's very close to my heart. Long may she wave."

Carolyn always loved art. She went for it and is very protective of artists. "People ask of them, ask them to donate things and they often never get anything back." One of the artists she went for was the late Vladimir Gorsky. She introduced him to his wife Jeanette, herself an accomplished artist/designer/photographer. Vladimir was a top-notch artist and incredibly kind and loving man. Carolyn attended their wedding in the Elvis Chapel in Las Vegas. She was the maid of honor and the Mayor was the best man. "I was in his mural, *Tapestry of the 20th Century* portrayed as Joan of Arc." His early death from brain cancer came as a shock and was devastating, yet he lives on through his art. "We all want to remain relevant," continues Carolyn. "My work in philanthropy has shown me that you can indeed move mountains."

Carolyn's first major acquisition was a Rousseau she won at auction. She was seated behind a post but "the auctioneer saw my paddle and I still have it. When I went to Paris years ago, the people at the Pompidou Art Center could not get over the fact that a woman from Texas could own such a piece. It was truly a turning point for me, giving me such a sense of freedom."

Another very important early acquisition was a Frida Kahlo, purchased many years ago before she became an iconic person. "I carried that painting with me all over the world and when my son died ten years ago, I wondered what would happen to it if something happened to me and I let it go. It was destined to be my painting, though. It came to me when it was sold to someone who could not fulfill the obligation."

Serendipity often plays a part in Carolyn's finds. "I don't go by trends as they come and go. I go by what I like, my instinct. I creatively do my installations and they work. That's how I find many things, like the Erté sculpture. I went to a sale to look at it and I left with it. Sometimes art comes to you in unexpected ways when you are not anticipating it."

Such as her prized Schnabel. "Someone was trading that piece in and I happened to be at the Pace-Wildenstein Gallery in New York just as they were putting it up on the wall. It was one of his 80s masterpieces — plates and all — with almost a Jesus-like quality to the subject matter." It's hanging proudly in her home to this day and Carolyn is pleased to report not even a piece of a plate has fallen off.

Another work of the many she adores came out of Andy Warhol's Factory in New York City, and wasn't a Warhol but part of his own collection, *The Wind*, by British artist David Forrester Wilson.

In our 40 years of publishing this art magazine, we have come upon countless artists, dealers, gallerists, curators and collectors. Some with a genuine feeling for art and artists. Few, if any, have the passionate, near agape love for the artist as Carolyn Farb. "Artistic freedom needs to be treasured. There are artists who are magnificent but it is not quite their time. And there are wonderful gallerists, although not as many strong ones as there used to be, ones who take it as a sacred ritual to look after their artists and not just themselves."

She puts that same spirit into her fund-raising work. Carolyn Farb personifies the perfect volunteer whose commitment to hard work has set the standard for philanthropic efforts. She attests that no matter how much energy and creativity she puts into a project, she has received much more in return. "I can be totally exhausted, but sparkling inside." The key to her volunteer work is her hands-on involvement, as well as the leadership she provides. Her dynamic vision, her intensity of purpose, and her total commitment distinguishes her as a role model for all volunteers. Her life exemplifies public service and is an example of the power of one individual's commitment to a cause.

From medical research, children's charities, and women's issues to the arts, education, and the environment, Carolyn's skill, talent and entrepreneurship as a volunteer fundraiser for hundreds of worthwhile nonprofit organizations has been fine-tuned to equal that of the best professional fundraisers in the world.

His Mother's Baby Boy, 1987, Julie Speed, a Texas based surrealist was mining the past for images that fire her imagination to create ambivalence and incongruity. Speed's technique weaves 20th century modernism with that of the 15th century Northern realism – an anomaly that exemplified in her reliance on engraved images. Her body of work shows the power of the individual artist to make us think deeply about our own interior lives. "I like it when I don't have a plan, you don't tell anybody you'll be anywhere at any time, and when you come to the fork in the road, you will close your eyes and chose a direction, and I really like Motel 6 because they don't have any art on the wall and they leave a light on for me."

For more on Carolyn Farb
<http://www.carolynfarb.com>



Family Room

Long view: Julian Schnabel, **Portrait of Mario Diacono, 1983, Oil, plates and bondo on wood**, American artist and filmmaker; Schnabel has had major exhibitions with Mary Boone Gallery and Leo Castelli Gallery. This piece is representative of his best period and size. I actually corresponded with Mario who related Julian to great artists like Barnett Newman, Jackson Pollock and Mondrian giving greater understanding and depth to his work, revealing his thoughts. At the back of the sofa is Robert Rauschenberg's **Fanfare (Arcadian Retreat), 1996, Fresco: 2 panels**. In the 1990's Rauschenberg started experimenting with wet fresco which is part of a larger series, **Arcadian Retreats**. He was a personal friend whose legacy is as one of the best artists of the 20th century.

I chaired an event for The Menil where he was honored. He liked Mexican food, talking about Janis Joplin who was from Port Arthur as he was, and his Mother and sister Janet Begnaud from Lafayette. I have letters and photographs from him and many of my artist friends.

Maria Izquierdo, **Portrait of Cathie, 1939**. She is known for her engaging portraits and melancholy still lifes. European Modernism was important to her; however, Mexico's culture, popular arts and rural landscape provided her with a life-long source of subjects. Maria painted at the same time as Frida Kahlo. The subject in the painting was the sister of MacKinley Helm, author of **Modern Mexican Painters Today**. Her name is inscribed next to 17 artists on the wall of the monument Jose Clemente Orozco

Joseph Piccillo, # 6. He enlarges his figures until they fill the entire space. They gain power as they gain in size. Since the time of Degas, the cropping of an image is a technique derived from photography that connotes immediacy.

Fred Gardner, **The Chaise Lounge, 1928**. This was the period for Gardner's greatest experimentation and synthesis. His work is a blend of American and European elements. He was interested in the way people related to each other, the manner in which they conversed, and how they occupied space. The way he composed the relationship of the figure to the background (and lack of interest in the face) set him apart from his predecessors: Bellows, Sloan, Henri.



Carolyn vs Marilyn Alex Cao, From China, lives in New York Pixelated photographs – each work pairs “homage with conceptual insight-Black and white photography paired with love for the mosaic process – All the color that is needed is the various shades of gray and the digital stitching of black and white tiles. I have the one of *Mick Jagger vs. Keith Richards* after *Vadukul* (#2 of ltd. Edition) and *Carolyn vs Marilyn* with image from *Texas Women Book* by David Woo and Richard Pruitt.