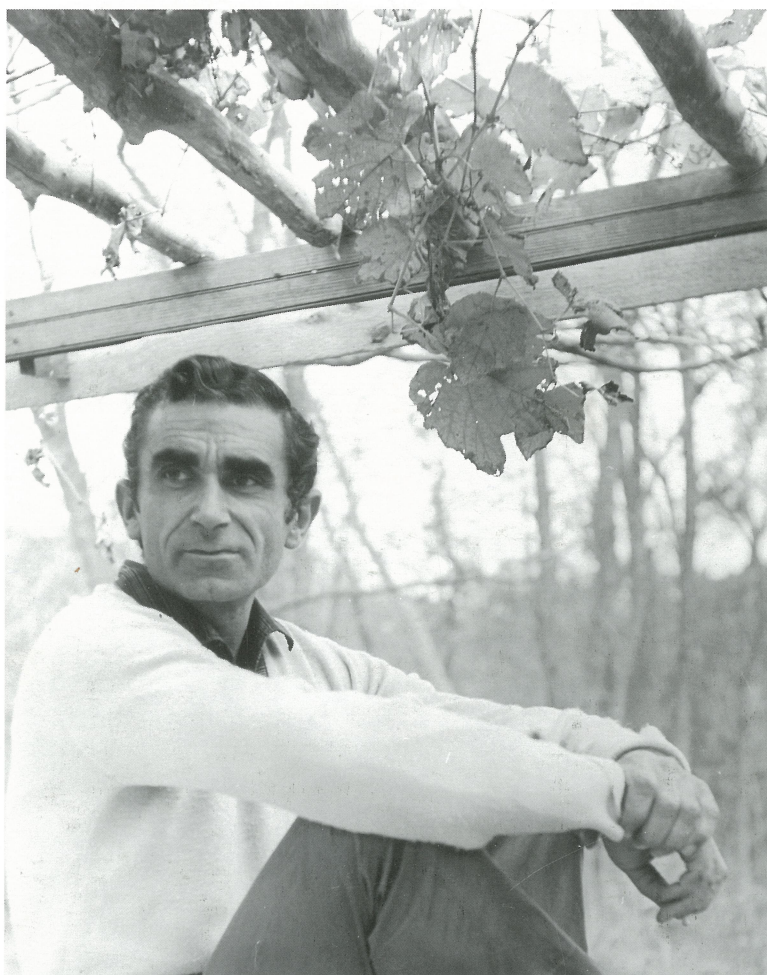


M

NICOLAS CARONE

The East Hampton Years



Paintings from the 1950s

Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center

Cover: Nicolas Carone, Springs, 1957

NICOLAS CARONE

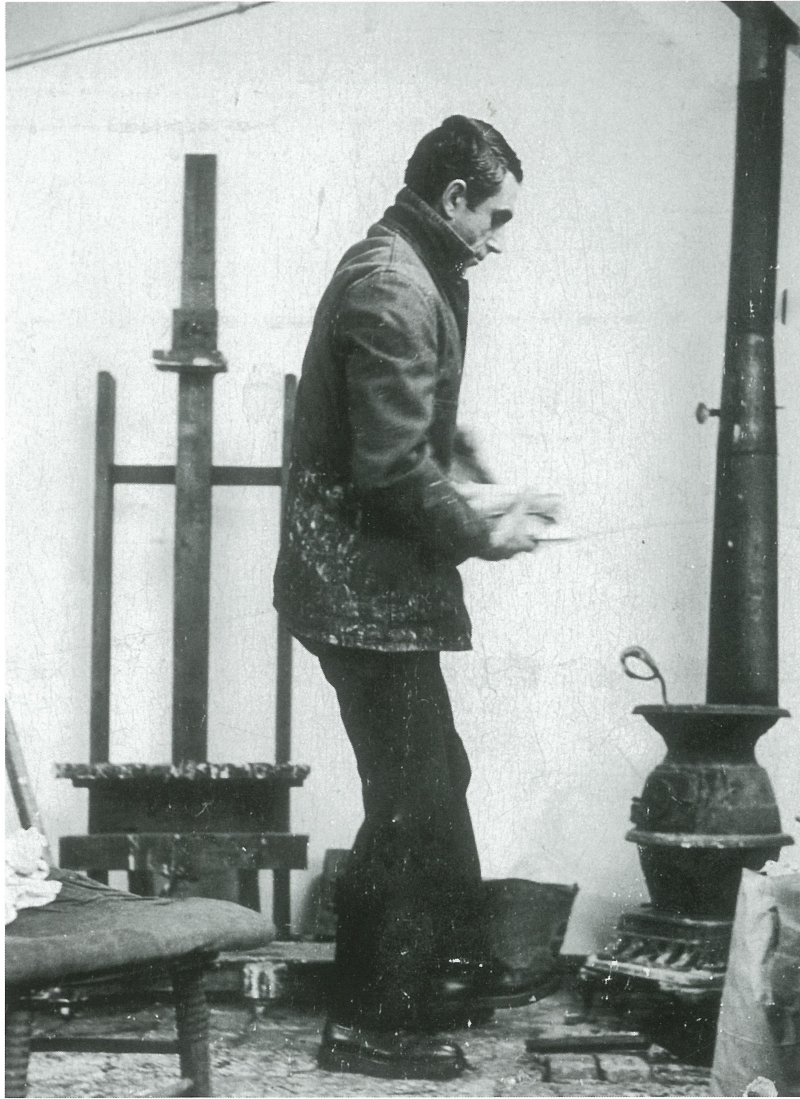
The East Hampton Years

Paintings from the 1950s

May 2 – July 27, 2013

Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center

830 Fireplace Road, East Hampton, New York



Nicolas Carone in Springs Studio, 1955

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION Helen Harrison	Page 5
FOREWORD Dore Ashton	7
ILLUSTRATIONS	8 – 25
RECOLLECTIONS Cile Downs	27
BIOGRAPHY	33
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	37

INTRODUCTION

In 1954, when Nicolas Carone bought a house on Three Mile Harbor Road in East Hampton, after renting nearby the previous year, he joined an ever widening circle of artists who had been revitalizing the region's art colony since the end of World War II. Led by Jackson Pollock and Lee Krasner, who moved to Springs in 1945, the community extended from Wainscott to Montauk and included Conrad Marca-Relli, Robert Motherwell, Ibram Lassaw, John Little, Joan Mitchell, Costantino Nivola, Julian Levi, Elizabeth Parker, Wilfrid Zogbaum, John Ferren and Alfonso Ossorio, as well as artist couples Willem and Elaine de Kooning, Balcomb and Gertrude Greene, James Brooks and Charlotte Park, and Perle Fine and Maurice Berezov. Not all were full-time residents like Pollock and Krasner, who encouraged their friends to buy property in the neighborhood and sometimes acted as unofficial real estate agents, as they did for Carone and his family.

In conversation with Jeffrey Potter, who interviewed Carone for his 1985 book, *To a Violent Grave: An Oral Biography of Jackson Pollock*, the artist recalled that it was Marca-Relli, Pollock's next-door neighbor, who introduced them. Five years Pollock's junior, Carone had been working in Italy during the 1940s and had returned to New York in 1951, just as the New American Painting was gaining international recognition. Evidently Pollock found something in Carone's work that struck a responsive chord, and his encouragement meant a great deal to the younger artist. Both of them were painting from the inside out, so to speak—absorbing and translating intangible phenomena into abstract compositions. Carone told Potter that when Pollock critiqued his paintings, “he judged by the unconscious imagery, not by three-dimensional form, reading the pictures in the Jungian sense. It wasn't so much verbal as an intense communication of the moment, an empathy.”

Pollock's insights into Carone's abstractions were all the more meaningful because both artists' working method depended on impulsive psychic energy. Often the impulse was a reaction to physical and emotional stimuli that unlocked the unconscious, as Carone explained in a 1968 interview for the Archives of American Art. He described his compositions as “some sort of environment,” developed spontaneously. “I just start out automatically, you see, ...and then it grows.” “In other words,” he

continued, “there is this dialogue going on between an inner and outer world.” During the 1950s, when he was living and working in Springs while managing the Stable Gallery in Manhattan, the outer world of his immediate experience was divided between city and country. The tension of this urban-rural dichotomy is reflected in the dynamic movement, rendered in earthy tonalities, that characterizes Carone’s paintings of that decade. The small selection in this exhibition illustrates how the artist reconciled that dichotomy by allowing it to resolve itself in his imagery.

I am grateful to Joan Washburn and Brian Washburn of the Washburn Gallery, which represents the Carone estate, to curator Lisa Chalif and registrar William Titus of the Heckscher Museum, and to the artist’s sons Christian and Claude Carone and nephew Marc DeRossi, Executor. The exhibition and catalogue would not have been possible without their cooperation and generous contributions.

Dore Ashton’s analysis of Carone’s singular role in the development of the New York School is also sincerely appreciated.

Helen A. Harrison
Eugene V. and Clare E. Thaw Director
Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center
830 Fireplace Road, East Hampton, NY
631-324-4929, www.pkhouse.org



FOREWORD BY DORE ASHTON

During the 1950s there was a *lingua franca* in New York, and Nicolas Carone was a master speaker. At that time a number of young painters and sculptors convened at what was known as “The Club” and engaged in raucous discussions about what they were about. Out of these informal meetings the lineaments of a new generation’s movement emerged.

The formal aspects of that studio language were loosely defined as “abstract expressionism,” although very few of its practitioners would have submitted to any confining label. One of its most energetic representatives was Nicolas Carone. He encouraged Eleanor Ward, a woman who appeared unheralded amongst the artists, to open a gallery in a former stable on West 58th Street, where the aroma of leather and hay still lingered. Carone was Ward’s guide to the contemporary art scene. Often comfortably installed at the Stable Gallery entrance, he was for many visitors a helpful kibitzer. At the same time he was working in his own studio, often in a tonal register from black to white that distinguished his work from that of others of his generation, who had taken their cues from such celebrated abstract expressionists as Willem de Kooning and Franz Kline.

Like many of his colleagues, Carone never thought of himself as a “non-objective” painter. He did not hesitate to acknowledge certain experiences with light and shadow, both in his urban studio and in the fields and waters of Springs in East Hampton. In the works of this period—often oils on paper—Carone, more than any others of his generation, worked in a grisaille that often suggested moody skies and cloud-shadowed waters.

Carone’s preoccupation with shadows endows his paintings with the kind of visual ambiguity that was highly appreciated during the 1950s and won him a special place in the frequent group exhibitions of the period, such as the famous Ninth Street Show in 1951. Moreover, his willingness to shepherd his fellow painters into what would become landmark exhibitions, the annual group shows at the Stable Gallery, gave him traction for his own paintings in the ever-widening audience for abstract art.

Carone was one of the most knowledgeable artists of his generation. Yet for all his loyalty to the older generation, Carone remained true to his own experiences, and his paintings of the 1950s resound with his responses to seaside vistas and the volatile weather conditions he encountered on eastern Long Island. One can as easily receive these paintings as skylscapes or landscapes as one can think of them as pure abstractions.

Untitled, c. 1952, oil on paper mounted on panel, 18 x 22 in.



Untitled, c. 1955, oil on paper mounted on panel, 18 x 22 in.



Untitled, c. 1954, oil on paper mounted on panel, 13 x 21 ¼ in.



Untitled, c. 1958, oil on masonite, 19 x 26 in.
Collection of The Heckscher Museum of Art, Huntington, New York



Escape Plan, c. 1958, oil on canvas, 40 x 58 in.



Shadow Retreat, c. 1958, oil on board, 25 ½ x 31 in.



Untitled, c. 1959, oil on paper mounted on board, 23 7/8 x 34 in.

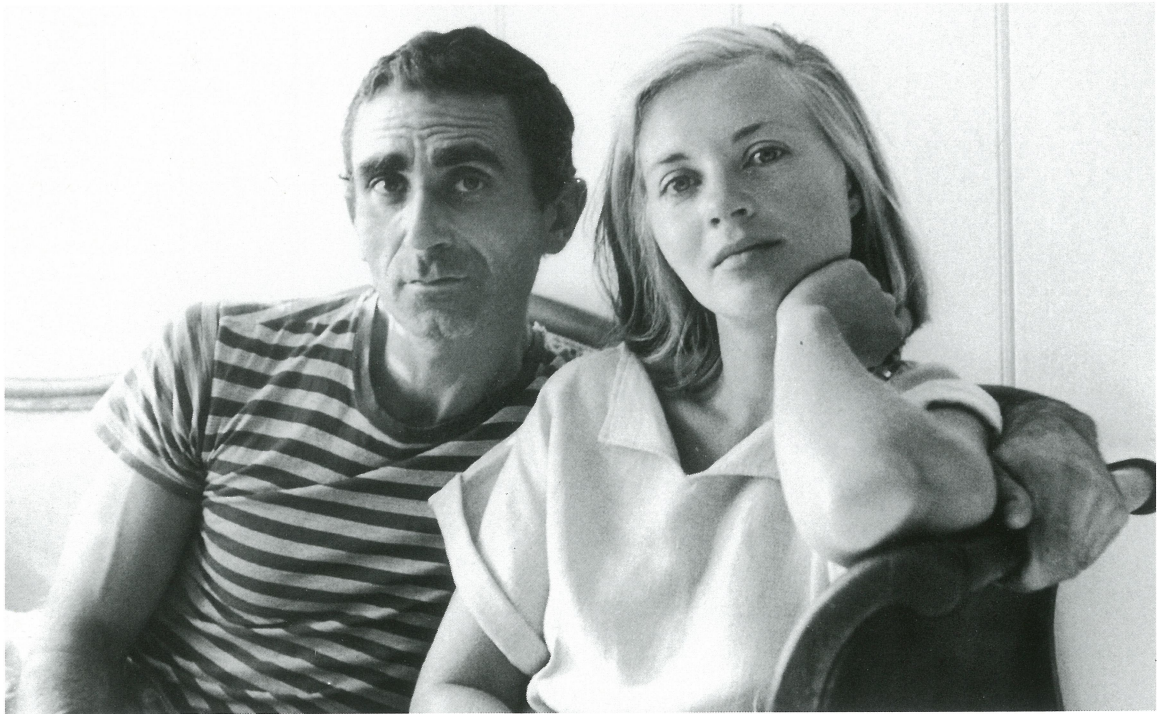


Untitled, c. 1955, oil on paper mounted on panel, 21 ¼ x 13 in.



Ear of Earth, c. 1960, oil on canvas, 48 x 60 in.





Nicolas and Adele Carone, East Hampton, 1957

RECOLLECTIONS: CILE DOWNS

When Sheridan and I arrived in 1954, East Hampton was a cheap place to live in, and that was fortunate for artists. The natural environment was so rich that you could sustain yourself by fishing, clamming, scalloping, shooting wild fowl, or working in a boat yard. Even at that, no one thought you had to do it all of the time in order to make a living. For us living out there meant living off the land, maybe to supplement a part-time job. But what most of the artists really needed was to do their work, hoping it would sell.

Back then, artists had time on their hands. There was no television and most couldn't afford to drive places, so they learned a great variety of crafts. The Italians were unique - Carone, Marca-Relli, Nivola, Cavallon, among others - in that their inherent aesthetic sense wasn't confined to their studios. It overflowed into their entire lives and they seemed to work on their houses all of the time; some even made utilitarian objects like cooking implements. Except for Marca-Relli, who was a "black and white" guy, they painted their houses in stunning colors - floors yellow, doors blue, etc. In that spirit, Nick's wife, Adele, stencilled part of their house in early-American style and that stencilling survives today. It wasn't surprising that Nick had an amazing Jaguar standing in his yard - the most decorative thing you ever saw. I always felt that it sat there like a beautiful art exhibit outdoors.

We rented Zogbaum's house from 1954-56 before building our own, and prior to our arrival, that house had a history of artists getting together in the front yard to play softball. People dropped in and visited in those days, and because there weren't so many artists to know, you tended to meet everyone rather soon. Consequently, there was a great deal of cooking going on in all of those households. Lee Krasner was an especially great cook, known for her pot roasts and Thanksgiving dinners. Most artists, including the Pollocks, grew gardens, so Lee canned their own little peaches and made dill pickles from their own cucumbers; in her pantry there was a crock with pickles soaking in it. Early one morning, she got up, went down into the kitchen and there was a house guest eating pickles! So Lee said, "If you were hungry, why didn't you wake me up?" He replied, "Well, I found these pickles..."



Nicolas Carone and Enrico Donati, Springs, 1957



*Nicolas Carone and John Little, Springs, 1957**



Nicolas Carone with the Marca-Rellis, East Hampton, 1954

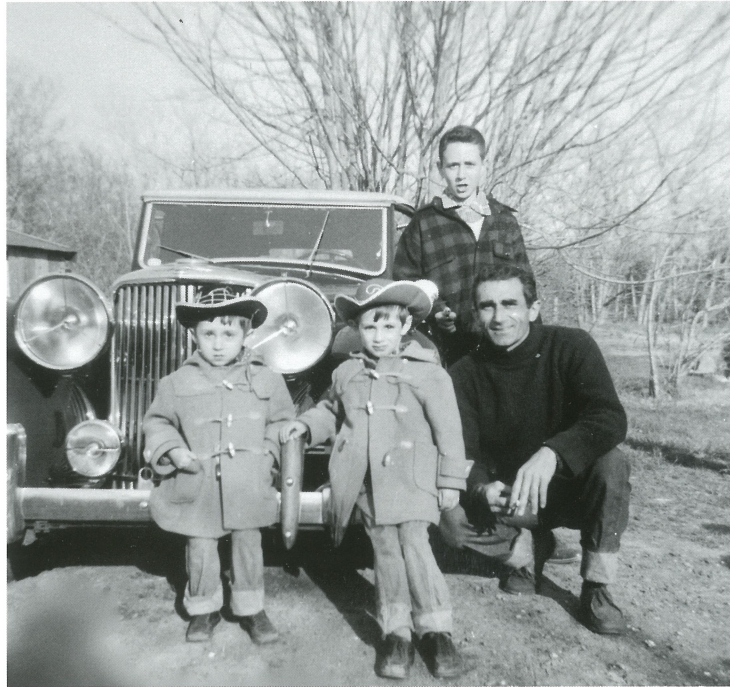
** Courtesy Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona
© 1991 Hans Namuth*

Sometimes, the artists gathered in Lee and Jackson's house for dinner, where everyone would spend the evening eating, drinking, smoking, and talking. People conversed then - for hours at a time - but not necessarily about art. They didn't get together in a social setting to talk about painting or sculpture, because they were doing it all of the time. So, the conversation often turned to gossip, often about their friends. "Did anyone hear from Clyfford Still? How is he?" Usually, "No." "How's Rothko doing?" "He's depressed."

Adele, compared to most of the wives, was exceptionally enterprising. I remember I told some people how she had just been tarring the roof, and somebody's girlfriend, said "Grr! I hate to hear about a paragon woman like that, who tars the roof!" Fact is, Adele did everything, even things you might expect Nick to do; she put in a brick terrace, as well as planting the flowers beside it. Nick worked in his studio.

In sunny weather, we might go off with Nick and Adele to a beach at the end of Napeague Lane, where you could walk a short distance along the shoreline and be completely out of civilization. There was a place where there was a break in the dunes, and if you went in there and built a fire, it would never blow out because it was protected from wind by the surrounding dunes. One summer, when we were there with the Carones and Charlotte and Jim Brooks, Charlotte got up from a blanket to go change into her bathing suit. Adele said, "Wait a minute, Charlotte, Nick will hold the towel for you." Nick had a fit and pretended to beat up on Adele, saying, "You are a temptress, a temptress!" They were a gorgeous couple guilelessly playing in the sunlight. When Charlotte returned and sat down, Nick put out his hand and held Charlotte's foot in it, saying to Adele, "Look at this. Look at this little foot. Look at the shape," simply wanting Adele to admire the form of Charlotte's foot. There was an innocence in his eagerness for Adele to appreciate what he saw, and no one took it the wrong way.

If Nick saw something that he perceived as beautiful, he was filled with direct, great enthusiasm. He would even go to extremes about it - without pretense - in that he didn't cover up what he was feeling or thinking. Although I never witnessed it, I later felt that he must have been a brilliant teacher - an inspiration not just because of his intelligence, but through his caring generosity. While most of his contemporaries were meager in bestowing praise on another's work,



Claude, Christian, David and Nicolas with his 1948 Mark IV Jaguar



Adele, Nicolas, Christian, and Claude Carone, 1956

he would look around and praise things freely. The few times that I heard him express an opinion, it was inspiring because he gave so much. You can imagine what that must have meant to students, to have someone react so wholeheartedly to something they had struggled to create. I think Nick instinctively lived that secret of teaching.

Nick was a truth-teller. He was so passionate about painting. I had never seen anyone speak with that degree of intensity before: his talking about painting was a complete, felt experience. You were immediately captivated and could not doubt the authenticity of his feeling. It prompted Pollock to tell him, "If you can paint with the intensity in your eyes, you will be really good." And, that's how Nick did paint.

Adele once told me that he was shaping up for a show and said, "This show will make me or break me." When I heard that, my heart sank because I thought, "He should not get so invested in one show. If things don't go well, he's going to be crushed." As it turned out, his luck was abominable when it came to shows, because his work was never appreciated on its own merits. All of those artists were visiting each other's studios and borrowing from one other, but the chasm between critics and artists was so huge that critics got everything wrong when it came to Nick's work. To criticize Carone for being influenced by one or another artist was ridiculous: all of them influenced each other then. Nick's East Hampton paintings are full of tension and that is what painting was at the time and that's what all the painters believed in. Those works had anxiety built in, generated by the act of painting itself, which pulled the artists into the unknown. They were all in that together, but Nick had his own way of doing it.

From a conversation with Edvard Lieber and Joan Washburn on March 15, 2013

Cile Downs currently lives in East Hampton. In 1962, Adele Bishop (Carone) and Cile Downs (Lord) became partners in a custom stenciling business, produced a stencil kit, and wrote "The Art of Stenciling" (Viking, 1976) which became a standard reference for many years. Adele Bishop died in 1996 and Nicolas Carone died in 2010, leaving their two sons, Christian and Claude Carone.

NICOLAS CARONE

Born: June 4, 1917 in New York City, NY

Died: July 15, 2010, Hudson, NY

EDUCATION

- 1928-1931 Leonardo da Vinci School of Art
- 1937-1938 Art Students League, New York
- 1939-1942 The National Academy of Design, New York
- 1945-1946 Hans Hoffman School of Fine Arts, New York
- 1947-1951 American Academy in Rome

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

- Baltimore Museum of Art
- Getai Group, Japan
- Heckscher Museum of Art, Huntington
- High Museum of Art, Atlanta
- Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC
- Kalamazoo Institute of Arts Museum
- Lowe Art Museum, Coral Gables
- The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
- Museum of Art Fort Lauderdale
- Norton Museum of Art, Palm Beach
- Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, Waltham
- Sheldon Museum of Art, University of Nebraska, Lincoln
- Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC
- Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York
- Syracuse University Art Galleries
- Tate Modern, London
- Union Carbide Corporation, Danbury
- The University of New Mexico, Albuquerque
- Walker Art Center, Minneapolis
- Weatherspoon Museum of Art, University of North Carolina, Greensboro
- Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 1949 Cortile Galleria, Rome
- 1951 Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, Rome
- 1952 Frumkin Gallery, Chicago
- 1954 Stable Gallery, New York, also 1956
- 1958 Stadler Gallery, Paris
- 1958 Staempfli Gallery, New York, also, 1959, 1962
- 1978 Carone Gallery, Fort Lauderdale, also 1993
- 2003 Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown
- 2005 Lohin Geduld Gallery, New York, also 2007
- 2008 Washburn Gallery, New York, also 2009, 2010, 2012, 2013
- 2013 Pollock Krasner House and Study Center, East Hampton

MAJOR GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 1948 Modern Museum, Rome
Rome Quadriennale
- 1951 Ninth Street Show, New York
- 1953-1958 Stable Gallery Annuals
- 1957 Whitney Museum of American Art, New York , "Annual"
- 1958 Brussels Universal and international Exhibition, Brussels World Fair
Traveled to: Tate Gallery, London
World House, New York
- XXVIIIth Venice Biennale, "American Artists Paint the City"
- 1959 Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., "Fulbright Painters"
- 1961 Walker Art Center, Minneapolis "60 American Painters, 1960"
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York
"American Abstract Expressionists and Imagists"
Krannert Art Museum, University of Illinois, Urbana
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York "Annual"
- 1962 The Art Institute of Chicago, "65th American Exhibition"
Museum of Modern Art, Sao Paulo, "American Abstract Artist"
- 1963-1964 Museum of Modern Art, New York, "Hans Hoffman and His Students"
- 1964 Internationale Der Zeichnung, Zurich
- 1968 Whitney Museum of American Art, New York
"Seventy Years of American Art"
- 1969 Getai Group, Japan
- 1969 Institute of International Education, New York, "Artists Abroad"
- 1970 Brandeis University Museum, Waltham
- 1973 University of Austin "Ciba-Geigy Collection Exhibition"
- 1990 Guild Hall Museum, East Hampton
"East Hampton Avant-Garde, A Salute to the Signa Gallery"
- 1994 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
"American Choice, Muriel Kallis Steinberg Newman Collection"
- 1999 Corcoran Gallery of Fine Arts, Washington, DC
Lowe Art Museum, Coral Gables
National Academy of Design, New York
National Institute of Arts and Letters, New York
Tate Modern, London
- 2006 Chiesa-Museo di San Francesco, Corciano, Italy
"Artisti 'stranieri' in Umbria"
- 2006 American Academy Invitational Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture,
American Academy of Painting and Sculpture, New York
- 2007 Oklahoma City Museum of Art
"Breaking the Mold: Selections from the Washington Gallery of
Modern Art, 1961-1968"
P.S.1. Contemporary Art Center, Long Island City, New York
"Orpheus Selection: In Search of Darkness "

AWARDS

1941	Prix de Rome
1949	Fulbright Fellowship (Rome)
1955	William N. Copley Award
1956	National Council of the Arts
1964	Longview Foundation
1966	National Council on the Arts Grant
1970	Creative Arts Public Service Program
1971	New York State Council on the Arts Grant
2005	Andrew Carnegie Prize, National Academy Museum
2007	Inglis Griswold Nelson Prize for Painting, National Academy Museum
2009	Lee Krasner Award for lifetime achievement

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Brandeis University, Waltham
Columbia University, New York
The Cooper Union School, New York
Cornell University, Ithaca
International School of Art, Umbria, Italy, Founder and Director
Maryland Institute of Art, Baltimore
The National Academy of Design, New York
The New York Studio School, Founding faculty member
Skowhegan Art School, Maine
WPA, Worcester War Memorial Mural, 1938-1941, Assistant to Leon Kroll
Yale University, New Haven

SELELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Panero, James, "Gallery Chronicle," *The New Criterion*, June 2, 2009
Esplund, Lance, "A Virtuoso With Line," *The Wall Street Journal*, May 16, 2009
Goodrich, John, "Nicolas Carone: Abstraction/Figuration," *CityArts*, May 2009
Warner, Emily, "Nicolas Carone: Paintings from 2008-09," *The Brooklyn Rail*, March 2009
Hirsch, Faye, "Nicolas Carone, Washburn," *Art in America*, September 2008
Yau, John, "Nicolas Carone Recent Paintings," *The Brooklyn Rail*, June 2008
Tinterow, Gary, Lisa Mintz Messinger, Nan Rosenthal, "Abstract Expressionism and Other Modern Works,"
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2007
Lebowitz, Cathy "Nicolas Carone at Lohin Geduld Gallery," *Art in America*, October 2007
Micchelli, Thomas "Nicolas Carone, Sculpture," *The Brooklyn Rail*, June 2007
Ramm, David "Nicolas Carone, Artist," *Current Biography*, Volume 67, Number 7, July 2006
Kramer, Hilton. "Nicolas Carone Shows He's Still Unsurpassed On the Female Nude,"
The New York Observer, November 28, 2005
Longhi, Tomassio. Review, *The Brooklyn Rail*, November, 2005
Esplund, Lance. "Can't-Miss Shows You Might Not Catch," *The Sun*, November 17, 2005
Mullarkey, Maureen, "Paint It With Black," *The Sun*, July 21, 2005

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY (Continued)

- Stein, Linda, "Re-examining Abstract Art - Part 1," *The New York Art World*, May 2003
- Potter, Jeffrey, "To a Violent Grave: An Oral Biography of Jackson Pollock," Pushcart Press, 1985
- Monroe, Gerald, "Teaching Drawing: The Personal Approach of Nicolas Carone," May-June 1981
- Lewis, Flora. "Two Paris Shows a la Pollock," *The New York Times*, October 3, 1979
Art & Architecture, January 1960
- Burrows, Carlyle. "Six are Abstract and all Unalike," *New York Herald Tribune*,
Sunday, November 12, 1959
- Ashton, Dore. "Art: 'The American Style' in Painting/Exhibition At Staempfli of
Works by Carone," *The New York Times*
- Ashton, Dore. "Art: Large Abstractions/Carone at Stable," *The New York Times*, November 5, 1957
Art & Architecture, June 1956
- Burrows, Carlyle. "Tradition and Novelty in Art Shows," *New York Herald Tribune*, April 22, 1956
Art News, 1953
- Preston, Stuart, "New Shows in a Wide Range," 1953
- Jewell, Edward Alden. "Academy and Independents Approach" *The New York Times*, April 12, 1942
"Model who Paints wins Rome Prize," *The New York Times*, Tuesday May 6, 1941



Nicolas and Tiber, Springs 1957

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The exhibition and catalogue, *Nicolas Carone, The East Hampton Years, Paintings from the 1950s* would not have been possible without the efforts of many, including:

Dore Ashton

Christian Carone and Claude Carone

Estate of Nicolas Carone (Marc DeRossi, Executor)

Cile Downs

Helen A. Harrison, Eugene V. and Clare E. Thaw Director,
Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center

The Heckscher Museum of Art, Huntington, NY

Edvard Lieber

Hans Namuth Estate, Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona

Washburn Gallery

Joan Washburn and Brian Washburn
Kara Gillam and Matthew Langland

*This catalogue is made possible by a grant
from the Estate of Nicolas Carone
to the Stony Brook Foundation, State University of New York*

*Works in the exhibition are on loan from the
Washburn Gallery, 20 West 57th Street, New York*

*Catalogue design by Washburn Gallery
Printed by Monarch Graphics, Inc.*



Former Carone House, Three Mile Harbor Road, Springs, New York, (Photo Christian Carone, 2012)



Nicolas Carone at Jackson Pollock's grave, Green River Cemetery

*Courtesy Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona
© 1991, Hans Namuth Estate*