

The Art of Formation

A Review of Painter, Carre Harris

The painter Mark Rothko once declared to Seldom Rodman for his book, *Conversations with Artists*, (New York, 1957) that "the people who weep before my pictures are having the same religious experience I had when I painted them." By metaleptic reversal, the same can be said about the formational art of Carre Harris, whose painting *Vessels, Pots & Jars* (Acrylic and Graphite, 2002, 32 x 54) invokes the elegant and sublime movement of a primal scene of invention that is simultaneously cosmologic and quotidian. We gaze at the catastrophe of an imploding universe and the dark interior void of daily containers. Space is not an exegetical principal. It is an amalgam of reds, plums, turquoises, vivid blues and metallic coppers contained in and around six inexact circles, or spheres, roughing the periphery of the environment they are about to create. The formative is the essence: the resonant spaces and auric splendor of contour upon which we gaze and meditate and submit to an array of emotions for which tears are a pleasant release.

Unlike one of Carre Harris's favorite painters Mark Rothko, doom doesn't dovetail ecstasy. The burden of an abandoned spatial loneliness doesn't invoke the dread of invention. We are neither ghostly nor abandoned within the confines of broken relations or flattered by the embellished void of a post-consumer society without meaning. This is neither apocalyptic nor nihilistic art informed by the ever-present trends of casual disinterest. The spiritual integrity of this painting is without question and as Carre Harris says with the confident humility of an artist at the height of her powers, "Things move in and out of space. They move apart. They influence one another. Chaos and the beautiful come together and split apart and come together again." We hear the voice of experience. It is neither self-deprecating nor damned with faint praise. Grand philosophical and artistic gestures are replaced with the calming norms of graceful colloquia. For it is the daily life that we see in these painterly spheres: daily life seen through an eye that sees into the heart of things and sees how we behave. Carre Harris sees as if she had spent several days of her life with other people's eyes, as if she had been able to remove her own eyes like contact lenses and then, when enough of an other's experience was seen, could put her own eyes back in.

What do these evocative spheres contain? In the artists own words, "These six spheres are aligned by color. The orange one is a water-jug. The spilled water forms rings. The red one has an object in the middle that could either be a feather, a hand, a heart, a lady's pin, or all these things... a suggestion of these things. Another one is both organic and synthetic: a stem, a bulb, a giant flower and also electrical lines or fiber optic lines. One is a veiled woman. One is coiling like a snake. They are worlds forming." Which ever of these visual correlatives the viewer chooses to take, if any, suggestiveness is replete and the potential is nothing less than life giving.

As with any procreative act, Carre Harris had widely photographed *Vessels, Pots & Jars* and produced an arsenal of photographs which she is arranging as collage and

photomontage like a choreographer. One may even suggest that *Vessels, Pots & Jars* is the mothership, the great primeval Gaia, the archetypal womb from which Carre Harris will people a new imaginative world with her new/old creatures. One is also tempted to attribute to this painting Kabbalistic and Gnostic qualities, and one would not be incorrect but rather a bit too mimetic. This painting is more about the future than it is about the apt mysterious scenarios of the past. Carre Harris is rather more a happy futurist endowed with a classical sensibility than a re-inventor of suggestive prior scenarios.

To view Carre Harris's painting, please visit MesArt.com where this essay was initially published: http://www.mesart.com/art/Essays:An_Essay_in_the_Art_of_Formation