



## Onloaded: Carolyn Lavender / *Progression*

March 18 – April 10, 2016



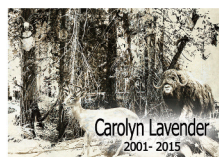
Photo credit: Randy Luckey

For the better part of the last three decades, I have been closely following the professional art career of Phoenix-based visual artist Carolyn Lavender. Through that lens, I have seen her art work change over the years. In *Progression*, this exhibition for Phoenix Institute of Contemporary Art (phICA), those changes are documented and showcased for the purpose of providing viewers with a platform for seeing, understanding, and enjoying how the work of an engaged and active artist morphs during a professional art career that has sustained momentum since 2001. I am particularly interested in engaging emerging to mid-career artists who have not had the advantage of experiencing changes in their work or who believe that the art they are making now is the best that they will ever produce and don't foresee technical and stylistic changes. What can appear to others to be static periods in art making can be periods of a fermenting type of growth and working through a series to completion. In Lavender's case, there was a major sea change in her work when she lassoed viewer and critical response with an exhibition at Modified Arts of gridded self-portraits that revealed personal examination (*Teacher*, 2003) and her reaction and frustration with the 2000 national election results. This work later spawned various series of direct eye contact, intimate self- and animal portraits which are featured in this exhibition and which are evident in one of the artist's most successful, acclaimed, and ongoing bodies of work, *The Woods*.

Of course there are many reasons why an artist's work changes during a career – life experiences, personal growth, and external influences. In Lavender's case, she has an unquenched curiosity for learning and her work is research-based and idea-driven. She has been an energetic and effective advocate for Phoenix arts and culture, her historical neighborhood, in politics, on behalf of animals, and for intelligent environmental practices and preservation all of which manifest in the artwork she produces. Her exemplary technical prowess in working with a variety of artmaking materials is dazzling, and in her work we celebrate the elegance of mark making and the line.

Carolyn earned a Master in Fine Arts (Painting) degree from Arizona State University and a Bachelor in Fine Arts (Drawing) and a Bachelor of Science (Education) from Northern Arizona University. She is an adjunct professor of art at Phoenix College, taught at ASU, and taught art for many years at Corona del Sol High School, Tempe. Carolyn has exhibited widely in museums and galleries including this year in *Drawing With Everything*, Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport Museum and *Connections to the Natural World*, LA Artcore Brewery Annex, Los Angeles. She has exhibited in the Arizona Biennial at the Tucson Museum of Art on multiple occasions, as well as at City College, San Diego, Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum, ASU Art Museum, and Tempe Center for the Arts. Lavender was a founding member of Eye Lounge artist space in Downtown Phoenix, and has been an energetic and effective advocate for Phoenix arts and culture, her historic neighborhood, in politics, on behalf of animals, and for intelligent environmental practices and preservation. Carolyn Lavender's artwork is well-represented in and sought after for private, corporate, and institutional collections in Arizona, the United States, Europe, and South America. She will participate in a group exhibition in São Paulo, Brazil in November, 2016.

Ted G. Decker  
March, 2016



This exhibition also marks the official launch of Carolyn Lavender's artist catalog "Carolyn Lavender 2001-2015". phICA will have books available for purchase on opening night, March 18th, during Art Detour March 19th and 20th, on April 1st, and also on the phICA website - <http://phica.org/shop>

Teacher, 2003, Graphite, gouache, acrylic on canvas, 45 x 50 in. Collection of Ted G. Decker