

# Carroll Cloar

Born 1913, Earle, AR; died 1993 Memphis, TN.

Carroll Cloar was born on January 18, 1913, outside Earle, Arkansas. One of four children raised on a cotton farm, Cloar was not particularly close to either of his parents. He was fearful of his father, who he would later paint as a large and intimidating man. Cloar's mother told wild stories that would go on to influence his painting. Cloar went to high school in Earle, Arkansas, and won an art award from the James Lee Art Academy in Memphis that inspired him to pursue an art career.

In 1930, Cloar moved to Memphis to study English and Spanish at Southwestern University, and art at James Lee Art Academy. Cloar was uninterested with his studies, dropping both English and his art classes. After graduating with a degree in Spanish, he moved to New York in the hopes of becoming a cartoonist. He was unsuccessful finding steady work as an artist in the city but learned about painting at the Art Students League and discovered a talent for lithography. Following another move, this time to Mexico, Cloar began making nostalgic prints depicting his childhood in Arkansas. The Second World War temporarily interrupted his work (though he painted figures on bomber airplanes). After the war he signed with his first gallery.

In 1948, Life magazine published several of his autobiographical lithographic images titled "Backwoods Boyhood." The article was Cloar's first major recognition and spurred him to focus on depictions of his rural upbringing. Having moved back to Memphis in 1955, Cloar painted scenes, often in casein tempera and acrylic, inspired by memories, photographs, newspapers, memorabilia and American folklore, situated in dreamlike Southern landscapes. His career gained national acclaim, with works included in the collections of the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Museum of Modern Art, Brooks Museum of Art, and Library of Congress. In 1993, Cloar's painting Faculty and Honor Students, Lewis Schoolhouse was one of six paintings by American artists selected to commemorate the inauguration of President Clinton.



Cloar standing in front of studio wall, family photograph, n.d., UM Libraries

## EDUCATION

Memphis College of Art, Memphis  
Art Students League, New York  
Rhodes College, Memphis

## SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2025

*Carroll Cloar: The Flowers We Gathered*, Andrew Edlin Gallery, New York, NY

2023

*stories on paper*, David Lusk Gallery, Nashville

2014

*The Lithographs of Carroll Cloar*, Georgia Museum of Art, Athens, GA

2013

*Southern Raconteur*, David Lusk Gallery, Memphis

*The Crossroads of Memory: Carroll Cloar and the American South*, Memphis Brooks Museum of Art, traveling to Georgia Museum of Art, Athens and Arkansas Arts Center, Little Rock

In His Studio: Carroll Cloar, University of Memphis Art Museum, Memphis

*Crossing Place, The Carroll Cloar Drawing Collection*, Christian Brothers University, Memphis  
Carroll Cloar: Native Son, Crittenden County Collective, Mid-South Community College, West Memphis, AR

*Early and Rare: Selections from the Carroll & Pat Cloar Collection*, University of Memphis, Memphis, TN

2012

*Carroll Cloar Returns to Belmont University*, Nashville, TN

2011

*a rare group of previously unexhibited casein tempera paintings*, David Lusk Gallery, Memphis

2010

*Family History: Paintings and Works on paper 1939-1959*, David Lusk Gallery, Memphis

2005

*The Collector's Cloar*, Pine Bluff -The Arts & Science Center, Pine Bluff, AR  
*Recollection*, David Lusk Gallery, Memphis

2003

*carroll cloar: notable drawings from the 60's*, David Lusk Gallery, Memphis

2002

*Dreams and Scenes: A Collection of Paintings, Drawings and Lithographs*, Greenville Arts Council, Greenville, MS

2001

*Carroll Cloar: Beginning Points Revisited*, Arkansas State University, Jonesboro, AR  
*Crossroads: The Drawings of Carroll Cloar*, Christian Brothers University, Memphis

2000

*Works from the Estate*, David Lusk Gallery, Memphis

1994

Kurts Bingham Gallery, Memphis

1993

Memphis Brooks Museum of Art, Memphis 1991

1991

*Retrospective*, Memphis State University, Memphis  
Kurts Bingham Gallery, Memphis

1989

Schmidt Bingham Gallery, New York

1988

*Retrospective from Arkansas Collectors*, Arkansas Arts Center, Little Rock

1987

Schmidt Bingham Gallery, New York

1983

Tennessee State Museum, Nashville  
Forum Gallery, New York

1981

Forum Gallery, New York

1979

Forum Gallery, New York

1976

Memphis Brooks Museum of Art, Memphis

1973

*Carroll Cloar*, Kennedy Galleries, New York

1972

Memphis Brooks Museum of Art, Memphis

1968

State University of New York at Albany, Albany, NY  
Alan Gallery, New York

1967

M.H. DeYoung, Memorial Museum, San Francisco

1966

Alan Gallery, New York  
Memphis Brooks Museum of Art, Memphis

1963

Fort Worth Art Center, Fort Worth

1961

Arkansas Arts Center, Little Rock

1960

High Museum of Art, Atlanta

## SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2023

*Southern/Modern*, organized by The Mint Museum, Traveling Exhibition, Georgia Museum of Art, Athens, GA; Frist Art Museum, Nashville, TN; Dixon Gallery, Memphis, TN

2022

*Summer Stories*, David Lusk Gallery, Nashville

2015

*Summer Reading*, David Lusk Gallery, Memphis

*Game Day*, David Lusk Gallery, Memphis

2010

*Art by Choice Auction*, Mississippi Museum of Art, Jackson, MS

2006

*Katrina Benefit*, Lisa Kurts Gallery, Memphis

2004

*Jackson Summer Art Salon*, David Lusk Gallery, Jackson, MS Work selected for participation in the US Art in the Embassies Program, on loan to the US Embassy in Damascus, Syria

2002

*Art of the 20th Century*, New York

*A Century of Progress: Twentieth Century Painting in Tennessee*, Cheekwood Museum of Art, Nashville

1992

*Southern Genre*, Kurts Bingham Gallery, Memphis

*Selected Works 1935 - 1985*, Kurts Bingham Gallery, Memphis

1991

*Form, Fantasy, Function*, Kurts Bingham Gallery, Memphis

1987

*Collector's Choice*, Mississippi Museum of Art, Jackson, MS 1983-84

*Southern Artists*, Traveling Exhibition, Brooklyn Museum of Art, Brooklyn, NY; Whitney Museum of Art, New York, NY; Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, PA; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY

## PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Addison Gallery of American Art, Andover, MA

Arkansas Arts Center, Little Rock

Art Museum of Sunrise, Charleston, WV

Brooklyn Museum of Fine Art, Brooklyn

Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown, OH

Carroll Reese Museum, Johnson City, TN

Cheekwood Museum, Nashville

Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, AR

High Museum of Art, Atlanta

Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC Library of Congress, Washington, DC

Memphis Brooks Museum of Art, Memphis

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Mississippi Museum of Art, Jackson, MS

Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts, Montgomery, AL Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg, FL

Neuberger Museum, Purchase, NY

Newark Museum, Newark, NJ

Rockford Art Gallery, Rockford, IL

Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, MA

State University of New York, Albany, NY

Tennessee Fine Arts Center at Cheekwood, Nashville Tennessee State Museum, Nashville

Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, CT

Whitney Museum, New York

Williams College Museum of Art, Williamstown, MA