

"The Askew Series" Memorial Exhibition for Barbara Kemp Cowlin

Royse Contemporary is privileged to present the unique and captivating Askew Series, a testament to the extraordinary life and work of Barbara Kemp Cowlin. This exhibition will showcase a diverse array of her last series of paintings, which she commenced in 2017 and continued until her untimely passing in late 2023. Royse has meticulously curated a selection of her work that vividly demonstrates her expressionistic and painterly style, masterfully interwoven with her poignant commentary and humor. The artist embarked on the Askew paintings as an exploration of color and design, venturing into the realm of abstraction. The paintings, initially inspired by architectural details, swiftly transformed into whimsical abstractions from Barbara's creative mind.

When asked about her Askew Series, she stated, "I make paintings with a skewed perspective, idiosyncratic colors and patterns, a sense of fun, and an underlying feeling of foreboding." She went on to elaborate that "Clashing colors, disruptive yet also strangely beautiful, challenge a reality that constantly shifts and changes. My aim is to capture these contradictions as I paint." She created 136 paintings, ranging in size from 10 inches x 10 inches to as large as 8 feet x 8 feet.

"I had the immense pleasure and honor of featuring several pieces from this series in various stages of its evolution in several exhibitions at Royse Contemporary," shared Owner/Curator Nicole Royse. She further added, "Her fervor for creation, the arts, and her community radiated in all her endeavors. She adored her studio; it was a source of daily joy, and she was prolific in her creations."

Barbara Kemp Cowlin lived and worked in Oracle, Arizona, a small mountain town between Phoenix and Tucson. She earned a BFA and an MA in Printmaking from Northern Arizona University. In 2023, Barbara Kemp Cowlin received the Arizona Commission on the Arts Research and Development Grant. She was awarded the prestigious Adolph and Esther Gottlieb Foundation Individual Artist Grant in 2019. Her work was featured in numerous exhibitions and one-person shows from coast to coast and is included in numerous collections, including the City of Phoenix Print Collection, University of Arizona Special Collections, Providence Medical Center, Kenyon College, First Bancorp Headquarters, Baylor University Medical Center, to name a few.

Barbara Kemp Cowlin passed away suddenly in September 2023 due to complications from cancer treatments. Royse Contemporary built a long-term relationship with Barbara, sharing that “ she was a genuine and kind spirit, with a beautiful soul and boundless energy. Her spirit and memory will live on through her artwork and incredible family. I remember and cherish the special exhibitions and moments we shared over the last several years working together at Royse Contemporary. She was a truly special woman who will be greatly missed.”

“The Askew Series” Memorial Exhibition for Barbara Kemp Cowlin will open to the public on Thursday, April 18, 2024, from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. We will host a reception celebrating the life and art of this incredible woman. This special exhibition will be displayed at Royse Contemporary through May 18, 2024.

Royse Contemporary is located in the Scottsdale Arts District at 7077 E. Main Street, Suite 6, Scottsdale, AZ 85251. Royse Contemporary is open Monday/Tuesday/Friday 9:00am-1:30pm, Thursday 6:00-9:00pm, Saturday 11:00am-5:00pm, and/or by appointment. For more information about Royse Contemporary, please visit roysecontemporary.com. Please direct all media inquiries to owner/curator Nicole Royse at Nicole@nicoleroyse.com.