

s c i e n t i a

LAUREN CARRERA

INVESTIGATIONS

Chalkboard Series

THE REVELATION

Everything That Rises Must Converge

June 3 - July 29, 2018



ArtReach Gallery

at First Congregational UCC

1126 SW Park Avenue

Portland, Oregon 97205

SCIENTIA

Scientia is the Latin word for **knowledge, learning**. From it derives our word ***science*** which is knowledge based on demonstrable and reproducible data.

Science shows us how to better understand the world, but it also reveals to us just how vast is the extent of what is still not known. (Rovelli, *Seven* 1)

In science we are exploring at the borders of our knowledge. (Rovelli, *Reality* 259)

ALCHEMY

Alchemy is the art of transformation.

To turn base metals into gold is the simplest expression of this aim, and at the physical level this involves chemical operations performed with laboratory equipment.

Mainstream alchemy is **a discipline involving physical, psychological and spiritual work**, and if any one of these elements is taken out of context and said to represent the alchemical tradition, then the wholeness and true quality of alchemy are lost. (Gilchrist 1)

Alchemy was practiced in ancient China, Greece, Arabic and Western societies and is associated with the discovery of a panacea and the preparation of an elixir of longevity.

KNOWING UNCERTAINTY

*I hope that there will always be an edge
between the known and the unknown
beyond which lies strangeness and unpredictability and life.*
(Lightman 124)

Our outer senses provide a regular way of experiencing. The world and its manifestations are there for us to touch, see, hear, taste, smell. And yet, we miss much. Our eyes cannot take in all that is; our ears cannot capture every sound.

Wanting to understand the still unknown--that which is beyond what our unaided senses tell us--we create instruments of one sort or another in order to investigate what more there is and how it is. We use scopes to see, microphones to hear. And we record our perceptions, that others might delight in them, that they might be remembered and studied and learned from.

Science is what we have named this process: the studying, exploring, searching of unknown objects and places and times out of the great curiosity that is a profoundly human wonder. It is a delight that “lies somewhere between boredom and confusion,” as MIT scientist Alan Lightman describes it (65).

Spirituality shares with science this inner sense of wonder; there is a common roaming about among what is known and unknown. And in the roaming and wondering, an unrecognized is--sometimes--revealed, an unknown discovered, a perception transformed, an uncertainty turned into understanding. We become differently aware.

Lauren Carrera investigates experiences in *between*, and seeks to make visible the evidence. Her *INVESTIGATIONS: Chalkboard Series* evokes the blackboards inspired by Louis Kahn for the scientists at Salk Institute. These blackboards were invitation for the scientists to make their searchings public. So it is that her paintings explore the processes of science and the ways the mind works in order to explore the unknown, to let go of what is not accurate any longer, and to discover something new.

Take note of what is there. She invites us: “Look at the objects--both what is drawn and what is obscured. Through it all, life exists and persists, the silver cord.” This adventure of human learning is seen as the substance of life itself. As we discover the wonders of science, the beauty of color and the

amazing realm where the known and unknown interact and seem to dance -- perhaps we can mark the discoveries along the edges of our own knowing. The possibilities are endless.

Carrera's installation, *THE REVELATION: Everything That Rises Must Converge*, continues her exploration of the known and unknown. Hand-made shoes and slippers are removed, as if to recognize the sacredness of the ground upon which plasticized books are closed and scattered. Perhaps this creation serves as a reminder of a personal experience some place where you were asked to stop, to consider: to enter or not, to be or not to be, to get involved or leave, to know or not know.

We have known books all our lives: they are part of us. Now the placement of the books invite questions. We recognize them as one way of sharing how uncertainties have been certified, figured into pages for learning and recollection, for our absorbing and enlightenment. Carrera's are white books: the poet William Carlos Williams affirmed that "no whiteness (lost) is so white as the memory of whiteness" (96). In her white books we find the promise of all knowing. But at their edge is a vast expansive strange and unpredictable still uncertainty.

And then there is the ladder, and the birds to welcome a would-be climber. Birds, who are acquainted with the sky, with all that is high, invite us up. What is the ladder's invitation as it rises towards what is, so far, beyond our edges and limits? The memory of white leads us to what is always more.

It is Lightman's hope that there will always be an edge. Lauren Carrera's art is as much an exploration as it is an affirmation of discovering that edge. The alchemists of the past trusted in transformation and their experiments led them to insights about matter and spirit. I recognize in Carrera an alchemist's commitment: a searching and combining that is full of experimentation and wonder, always with a readiness to see and discover. She wills herself, and us, on a path of uncertain knowing because she chooses to know uncertainty. It is both a material and spiritual path. It is life.

Sheldon Hurst, Curator

LAUREN CARRERA: A BIOGRAPHY

Educated as a classical painter, Carrera pursues her love of science and art employing encaustic, mixed media, assemblage, and oil painting along with conceptually-based installation art.

At Rutgers University, Carrera studied science, psychology, fine art and religion, and was mentored by Baltimore artist Dan Wittels. She furthered her education at Atlin Center for the Arts in British Columbia. Moving to San Diego to pursue a Ph.D., she ultimately left psychology for a career as a visual artist.

Carrera's abiding fascination with research, anthropology, science, things miniature and outsized, set design and early trips to the Natural History Museums in New York, Boston and Philadelphia have shaped her interest. From 2011 to 2014 Carrera mounted an exhibition of contemporary Natural History Museum" called Museo du Profundo Mundo, a 4500 square foot museum displaying eight galleries of original paintings and installations that explored the human relationship with the natural world and the environment. The Museo was free, and for three years helped to make San Diego's former Naval Training Center a destination for the art-going public.

Thematically, Carrera's paintings and installations address the complexity of narrative, posing questions of dualities and investigating paradoxes inherent in the natural and psychological landscape. As a second generation American and an adoptee, she examines the confusion of identities and cultures, the nexus between memory and forgetting, and between art and science. As a trained psychologist she explores dichotomies that arise from the scientific need to assemble, classify, use and display, the numinous space between reality and dreams, and the intersection between creation and destruction arising from our interaction with each other and the world around us.

Carrera has exhibited in numerous juried shows locally and nationally, and she has received a number of awards. She was the recipient of a fellowship at the Atlin Centre for the Arts in British Columbia. She was nominated in 2012 for the New Contemporaries in San Diego. Her paintings hang in residential and corporate collections in Portland, throughout the U.S., Canada and Mexico.



INVESTIGATIONS: Chalboard Series, Order of Disappearance



INVESTIGATIONS: Chalboard Series, The Philosopher's Stone

ARTIST'S COMMENTS #1

INVESTIGATIONS—Chalkboard Series

Mixed media on canvas

The human mind has an innate and extraordinary capacity for finding and seeking patterns, imagining patterns, and sometimes imposing those patterns on the world around us. The proto-Indo-European **skei** means to cut, split, divide. This is the root for the Latin **scientia** which becomes our word **science**. The human need to categorize, to create order out of perceived chaos, often leads us and science to separate the larger world into small parts, creating dichotomies and paradox, forgoing at times the simple beauty of the gestalt, the beauty of the unified whole.

While at work on this series, I drew inspiration from the works of Archimedes, the philosopher Teilhard de Chardin, the psychologist Carl Jung, and from the life and complex generativity of another complicated genius, the father of calculus, the author of the theory of universal gravitation, the first to understand the color spectrum--and some say the last great alchemist, Isaac Newton.

The paintings reflect, in part, a meditation on the meaning of alchemy and the unification of the whole through the artistic process... a way of bringing together the forces of unity out of separation... a coming together of the material and immaterial... the prosaic and the numinous... allowing a viewer to feel the presence of a larger awareness, where the alchemy of art might speak to the uniting of the mind to the heart.

ARTIST'S COMMENTS #2

THE REVELATION: Everything That Rises Must Converge

Found objects, plastic, steel, cardboard shoes, collage, gold-leaf

This installation shares its name with a Flannery O'Connor short story, and both derive from the teachings of the French paleontologist and theologian Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, whose conception of the *omega point* led him to this exhortation:

Remain true to yourself, but move ever upward
toward greater consciousness and greater love!
At the summit, you will find yourselves united
with all those who, from every direction, have
made the same ascent. For everything that rises
must converge.

THE REVELATION centers on a lifelong interest in holy spaces and places. My pursuit of and reverence for knowledge and an abiding interest in science and world religions inform this work. As a child, I read as retreat and sanctuary; as an adult, I find this an increasingly difficult quest, searching for time and space and place to read and think, uninterrupted. Indeed books, libraries and museums, as repositories of knowledge, are some of our culture's most holy places.

I invite the viewer to sit, take some time in this little sanctuary, and contemplate the many associations suggested in this installation.



THE REVELATION: Everything That Rises Must Converge



THE REVELATION: Everything That Rises Must Converge, detail

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CHECKLIST

PAINTINGS

INVESTIGATIONS: Chalkboard Series

1. *Order of Disappearance*, Mixed media w gold/canvas, 60 x 60
2. *The Constellation*, Mixed media w gold/canvas, 60 x 60
3. *Prima Facie*, Mixed media w gold/canvas, 60 x 60
4. *Balance*, Mixed media w gold/canvas, 60 x 60
5. *Q.E.D.* Mixed media w gold/canvas, 60 x 60
6. *Cerus*, Mixed media w gold/canvas, 60 x 60
7. *The Philosopher's Stone*, Mixed media w gold/canvas, 48 x 48
8. *Entwined*, Mixed media w gold/canvas, 48 x 48
9. *Momentum*, Mixed media w gold/canvas, 48 x 48
10. *Palimpsest*, Mixed media w gold/canvas, 48 x 48
11. *Equal and Opposite*, Mixed media w gold/canvas, 48 x 48
12. *Caduceus*, Mixed media w gold/canvas, 48 x 48
13. *Stardust Evolution*, Mixed media w gold/canvas, 48 x 48

INSTALLATION

THE REVELATION: Everything That Rises Must Converge

Found objects, plastic, steel, paper shoes, collage, gold leaf



THE REVELATION
Everything That Rises
Must Converge, detail



INVESTIGATIONS: Chalboard Series, Entwined