

I HAVE LONGED TO MOVE AWAY

LAWRENCE CARROLL, WORKS 1985-2017

EDITED BY GIANNA A. MINA

This catalogue accompanies the monographic exhibition that Museo Vincenzo Vela, in Mendrisio-Ligornetto, has dedicated to the works of Lawrence Carroll (b. 1954). Born in Melbourne, Carroll moved to California with his family in 1958. Some twenty-five years later, in 1984 he moved once again, to New York, where he pursued his artistic development, having little concern for the fashions of the moment but a profound sense of personal commitment and dedication to the language and practice of painting. As he understands it, painting abuts on many other art forms: in his hands it becomes the slow stratification of colour, materials, and objects, in which the surface of the painting interacts with the surrounding environment, blurring the borders between painting, sculpture, and installation.

Moving from place to place, Carroll has always been most at home in the quiet of his studio, which provides him with the intimacy he requires to express himself. Here he explores duration as the fragility of time and space, placing memory at the heart of his poetics. Old remembrances emerge on the surface, overlying each other layer upon layer, like an accumulation of light, dust and matter in pale colour fields—tones as close to the colour of the canvas as possible. Inherently porous as the surface is, one can make out graphemes and underlying traces, while objects are applied directly onto it. The result is a poetics of rarefied references, narratives that gradually form and are at the same time swathed in a metaphysical atmosphere of suspension, a sort of “metaphysics of the quotidian”.

Designed like an autobiography installed in the rooms of the museum-house, the exhibition provides an overview of Carroll’s artistic development, from his earliest works to the present day, highlighting the subtle recurring themes as well as the fresh departures that have taken him on wholly new artistic journeys.

The catalogue offers the first ever overall assessment of the artist’s work as it has evolved during his life. The book is lavishly illustrated, and includes a full biography and comprehensive bibliography, as well as providing an engaging interview with the artist.

Roberto Borghi is a curator of contemporary art exhibitions and a cultural journalist.

Lara Conte is an art historian and teaches the History of Contemporary Art at the University of Insubria, Como.

Gianna A. Mina is an art historian, director of Museo Vincenzo Vela, and president of the Association of Swiss Museums.