



“Clatter Chat”
from “Kaffee Klatch” Series
14 x 14”
Cold Wax Medium and Oils
Carol Mell, 2023

The “Kaffee Klatch” paintings emerged as the pandemic waned. They speak of reunion, comfort and “normalcy.”

All four are painted on hardboard panels with cold wax medium and oils. I wanted to explore a red-green complimentary palette with phthalo emerald, quinacrodone red and snatches of yellow and orange. Value contrast and stroke direction created a rhythmic composition of interlocking shapes. Both marks and lines are organic, whimsical and expressive. Thematic cohesion is reinforced by placing a vessel and door in each painting. Vessels, to me, represent structures that contain our life’s essence: the body, time and circumstances. Towards the end of the pandemic I struggled with the question of when it was safe to go out and be with others again. Doors protect us but also invite us to explore the outside world.

I begin my paintings with little else but a limited palette for guidance or cohesion. I work on all four together with a playful approach until shapes and figures start to tell a story. Only after I’ve figured out the values, shapes, colors and marks does the full story take shape in my mind, sometimes after the paintings are finished.

I ended up with a 1950’s kitchen color scheme and imagined stories of women coming together over a drink to catch up on each others lives. There will be gossip, some of it mean, but there will also be relief, support, friendship and connection. There is just so much to talk about these days.

Carol Mell grew up in wild Oregon where she played in a natural world of imagination; when trees, sturgeon, squirrels and whales spoke. In a twist of fate, she earned a BFA in Dance from The Juilliard School. Her creative journey through writing and photography now extends into the

realm of beeswax and oils. From her free and intuitive painting sessions characters of help, healing and danger spring to life. Using an “inside-out” process her figures tell stories and accompany the painter on her own life journey. With her close relationship with nature, she exhorts her fans, collectors and friends to “Follow the Dirt Road in Your Soul.”