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Carol Cole, *Cast a Clear Light*, Weatherspoon Gallery, 2018, Greensboro, North Carolina

Mar 3, 2018 – Jun 17, 2018

The Gregory D. Ivy Gallery, The Weatherspoon Guild Gallery

Art has been my means of survival.

Carol Cole states this belief with conviction and demonstrates it with passion. For the past forty years, the artist has been creating and collecting work that affirms our human need for nurture, our shared vulnerabilities, and our potential for living generously. She calls this art humanist, and finds in it important antidotes to the universal ills of greed, neglect, and selfishness. *Cast a Clear Light* celebrates Cole's personal artistic journey, the unique vision with which she's built her collection, and the clarity of purpose that underlies them both.

As an artist, Cole's work is anchored in the convictions of 1960s and 70s feminism. In drawings and paintings, sculptures and mixed media, she has developed a body of work that uses a single female breast as an icon of nurture. In series with such evocative titles as *Bubble Blower*, *F.E.A.R.S.*, *Anti-Nothingness Image*, and *Resurrection of the Bubble Blower*, she morphs and transforms the breast from recognizable to abstract and back again. Through these many iterations, Cole uses the motif deliberately, systematically, and inventively to create images by turns poignant, witty, and irreverent.

In addition to making art, Cole is an avid and thoughtful collector—acquiring with both breadth and distinct focus. Her collection features works by internationally established artists such as Nancy Grossman, Lee Lozano, and Sam Durant; recognized southern regionalists including Mississippi artists Walter Anderson and Sabyna Sterrett; as well as emerging artists such as community activist Adrienne Outlaw and Appalachian humorist Rebecca Morgan. Linking the range of artworks is a shared attention to human vulnerability; as in her own work, the motif of the breast is often present, but not definitive. Rather, a fearless commitment addressing the human condition unites the range of work that Cole lives with in her home.

A native of the Deep South, Cole was born and raised in Mississippi and spent her early adulthood in Louisiana before moving to Greensboro, North Carolina in 1984. She relishes the region's artistic traditions and cites its literature as a critical touchstone. She is also, however, now deeply enmeshed in the New York art world—where she has exhibited, served on boards, collected, and curated. Rather than see these two realms of her life as distinct, she weds them together. Time and again she invites her New York colleagues to North Carolina and champions the South's artists and museums

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there. At the core of this connecting—as at the core of her collection and art making—is Cole’s belief that one needs to share with others freely and authentically of one’s life—joys and struggles, talents and resources, knowledge and curiosity.

In all that she does, Cole lives out playwright Tennessee Williams’s admonition: “Let us not deny all the dark things of the human heart, but let us try to cast a clear light on them in our work.”

Carol Cole: Cast a Clear Light is organized by the Weatherspoon Art Museum and co-curated by Dr. Emily Stamey, Weatherspoon Curator of Exhibitions and Paddy Johnson, Editor of Art F City, New York. The exhibition is dedicated by the artist to her husband, Seymour Levin.