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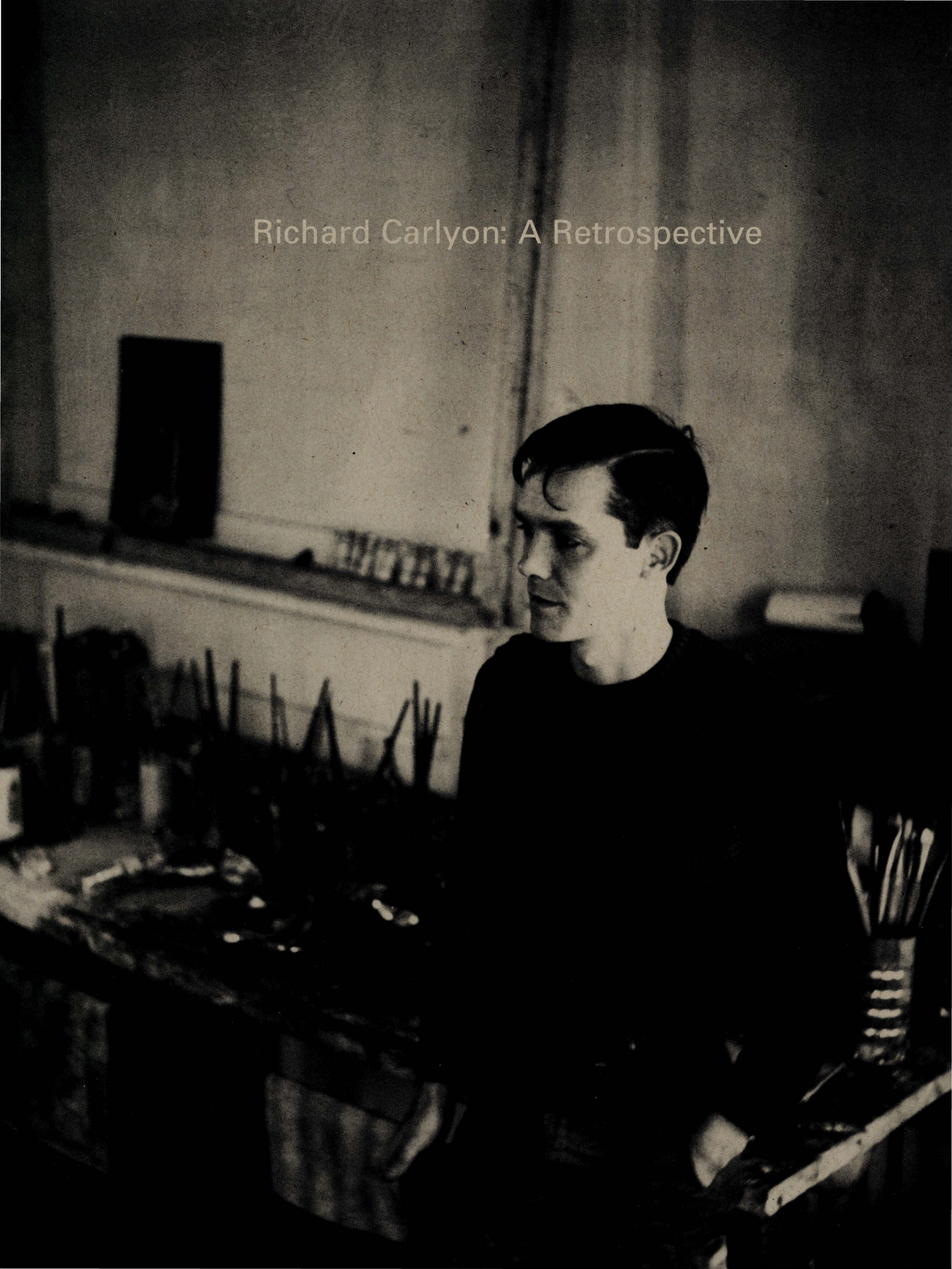


I like to think of myself as a person who pays attention to things. Some of the things I have been paying attention to for over fifty years would include the following: blank sheets of paper, blank billboards, plain flush doors, the backs of black and white photographs, skylights, outdoor movie screens, indoor movie screens, the margins around anything that is printed, flour-covered aprons, breakwalls, piers, sidewalks, stepping stones, clean blackboards, barren bulletin boards, tablecloths, sunglasses, plaster walls, gymnasium floors, empty swimming pools, graffiti, music notation, newly plowed fields, opaque window shades, close-up shots of Greta Garbo's face, platinum blonde hair, colorless maps in children's geography books, white sheets, beaches, the aisles in dark theaters, the spaces between things and the people I love.

When I am painting I like to think of myself as a painter who is paying attention to his painting; any other considerations are dismissed for being too fictional and abstract.



# Richard Carlyon: A Retrospective





This catalogue was published in conjunction  
with the multisite exhibition **Richard Carlyon:  
A Retrospective**, which opened on September  
11, 2009, and was organized by

Anderson Gallery  
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Virginia Commonwealth University  
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Richmond, VA 23284  
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1708 Gallery  
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[www.1708gallery.org](http://www.1708gallery.org)

Visual Arts Center of Richmond  
1812 West Main Street  
Richmond, VA 23220  
804 353 0094  
[www.visarts.org](http://www.visarts.org)

**Title Page:**

Richard Carlyon in his Richmond studio,  
1005 West Grace Street, Winter 1958–59.

**This Page:**

Richard Carlyon dancing with Lucinda Childs  
in Jewett Campbell's studio,  
second Bång Arts Festival,  
Richmond Professional Institute,  
21 April 1965.

Published by Anderson Gallery, VCU School of the Arts, in partnership with Reynolds Gallery, 1708 Gallery, and Visual Arts Center of Richmond.

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## Acknowledgments

When remembering Richard Carlyon, it is difficult to imagine anyone else who has had such a wide-ranging and lifelong impact on this community, creatively and educationally, except perhaps Theresa Pollak, founder of the VCU School of the Arts. Because of his sustained and influential presence, Carlyon emerges as an eminently worthy candidate among other individuals who might be cited as Pollak's successor. In an unpublished statement excerpted from a 2005 critique of a student's work, he articulated what must have been a guiding principle for his own endeavors: "One lives one's life in relation to an outside. This outside is in large measure what we are. Outside ourselves, we overlap with others... People are their environments as much as they are themselves." This is only one from a host of lessons that many of us have gleaned from his example and perspicacity.

The impressive list of more than one hundred individuals that appears on the facing page is a resounding tribute to Carlyon. We are deeply grateful to each of these contributors, for it is their generosity that has made this project possible. At a particularly crucial time, Altria Group stepped forward to become the lead sponsor, underwriting a substantial portion of the costs of producing this catalogue. We extend special thanks to Nancy Lund for her enthusiastic support and to Gordon Dixon, Scott Moore, Albert Lunsford, and Rob Pannell for their kind assistance. Richard Toscan, dean of the VCU School of the Arts, has been an essential source of encouragement and support, as has Alan Kirshner, chairman and CEO of Markel Corporation. We are indebted as well to the institutional and individual lenders also listed on the preceding page and thank them for allowing us to include their works in the exhibition.

The organization of this retrospective, on view simultaneously at four Richmond venues, depended on the ideas, insights, and eager participation of Beverly Reynolds at Reynolds Gallery, Brad Birchett and Gregg Carbo at 1708 Gallery, and Katherine Huntoon at the Visual Arts Center of Richmond (VACR). Each curator was responsible for conceiving a different thematic approach; when presented together, our hope was that these four installations would become complementary parts of a larger cohesive whole, imparting a much fuller picture of the breadth of Carlyon's artistic achievements.

Also playing important roles in the project's implementation were Tatjana Beylotte, director, 1708 Gallery; Julia Boyette, assistant director, Reynolds Gallery; Maggi Tinsley, marketing coordinator, VACR; Jayne Shaw, associate dean for development, VCU School of the Arts; Tim Bowring, who organized and moderated the artists' panel at 1708 Gallery; designer Dale VanMegroet, who contributed his time and talent to produce the exhibition invitation; and Rick Michaels at Main Art, who framed works for each venue with exceptional results. As always, the installation at the Anderson Gallery simply wouldn't have materialized without the input and hard work of Exhibition Manager Michael Lease and Gallery Coordinator Traci Flores.

Preparations for this retrospective began in January 2007. Over the next year and a half, thanks to Jenna Kowalke-Jones' perseverance and Nancy Millet's early contribution, an inventory was completed that documents nearly 2,000 paintings, drawings, collages, constructions, and videos made by Carlyon over half a century. Lending his assistance on numerous fronts, Jason Carlyon





undertook the photographic documentation of his father's studio so that it could be reassembled for this exhibition. Bev Reynolds, unstinting in her support through the years, graciously offered to host a benefit exhibition at the Reynolds Gallery in May 2008, with proceeds from sales donated to the project. We are also indebted to Sheila Gray, who from the start has tirelessly helped organize, pack, and move works.

We are immensely grateful to Howard Risatti, VCU emeritus professor in the Department of Art History and a close friend of the artist, for everything he has done on behalf of this retrospective. He has served as an invaluable advisor to the project from the beginning. While Carlyon's reputation as an influential teacher is legendary, his prolific activities as an artist have been less consistently visible and closely examined and deserve wider exposure. Dr. Risatti's in-depth essay illuminates a complex, multifaceted career and establishes a balance between these two spheres. Author Wesley Gibson has also previously written with great insight about Carlyon's work. His essay on the

artist's videos is a most welcome inclusion, and we thank him for tackling this assignment in the midst of a hectic teaching schedule.

A singular pleasure afforded by the project was the opportunity to work once again with John Malinoski, associate professor in the VCU Department of Graphic Design, who took on the job of designing this book as a personal commitment. He applied such inventiveness, intelligence, integrity, and precision to this challenge that the resulting design is itself an impeccable tribute to an esteemed colleague. We extend to him our sincere gratitude and boundless admiration. Thanks go also to Susan Higgins and Elizabeth Bolka of Worth Higgins & Associates for the special care they lavished on the printing of the catalogue; Jerry Bates of the VCU Graphics Lab for so readily addressing our prepress-production needs; Travis Fullerton for photographing the artworks reproduced here; and William Simeone, Sr. for his editorial help.

That Carlyon was an inspiration to so many, on so many different levels, becomes abundantly clear in the eloquent tributes appearing in this book by Chris Burnside, Emmet Gowin, Ray Kass, Elizabeth King, Bernard Martin, and Lester Van Winkle. Chris Burnside also enhanced this project immeasurably with the performance he created in honor of Carlyon, presented in conjunction with the exhibition by the VCU Department of Dance & Choreography. Choreographer Laura Schandelmeier, Carlyon's niece, opened the program with a dance inspired by one of her uncle's videos. We greatly appreciate the support of James Frazier, Dance Department chair, and Drs. Erica Mindes and Ken Zaslav, who generously underwrote the post-performance reception.

We have enlisted Eleanor Rufty Carlyon's help and consultation in countless ways throughout the development of this project. Her steady perspective and unceasing inspiration have been instrumental in keeping us on track. This book is dedicated to her.

Ashley Kistler  
Director  
Anderson Gallery  
VCU School of the Arts





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