



LOS ANGELES
Carol Es: "Exodus"
at Shulamit Gallery

When one enters Carol Es' new exhibition "Exodus" it takes a moment to realize that this is the body of work of an artist who had a lost childhood and faced several other adversities in her life. For wouldn't one then rather expect to see bleak and disconcerting images, such as, let's say, in the works of Louise Bourgeois or Alina Szapocznikow? But instead, Es' oeuvre, bathed in color, is surprisingly positive and playful, revealing her sense of humor and inventiveness. Perhaps it's true what Freud once said about artists being able to heal themselves, for one gets the impression that Es has found the light at the end of the tunnel instead of being stranded in it.

The exhibition features the Los Angeles artist's new body of work, embracing mixed-media collages and a series of paintings titled *Abstracted Desert Landscapes*, based on her 10-day self-discovery trip near Joshua Tree National Park in 2014. Hence, Es' works need to be understood as a whole and a presentation of her self (inner life), taken into a new environment. Her collages, arranged like rocks stacked on each other, are partly made of vibrant fabric, hinting towards her robbed childhood, where her father made her work as a pattern cutter. Then, there are images, unveiling other aspects of her life, like depression or failed relationships, drawn directly on the wall, while others are hanging next to it. Sometimes they're linked together by strings, causing a sense of place, depth, and interweave. Furthermore, one experiences Es' reflection on her past, future, and her somewhat

successful attempt to be present. This is suggested by the display of her *Kabbalah Tree of Life* watercolors, her images of space shuttles, and her landscape paintings, enclosed by a drawn contour of a mountain. Another engaging facet of the show is an installation in the gallery's back room, a (kind of) reproduction of Es' artist residency in Joshua Tree. It invites the viewer to sit down on one of the camping chairs inside a tent to watch Es' video on a 1960s-style TV set, explaining her undertaking in the desert. And although her video discloses her personal struggle, something both melancholy and secret, she does it in such humorous and creative manner by employing cartoon features that it puts a smile on one's face.

—SIMONE KUSSATZ

"ROUND HOUSE," 2015, **Carol Es**
MIXED MEDIA ON PANEL, 36" x 36"
PHOTO: COURTESY SHULAMIT GALLERY