

IMAGINATION

Susan Cotter



Topographic Mythology

Japanese account book side-stitch binding, letterpress title pages. topographic maps with graphite drawings, watercolor and graphite on watercolor paper, binder's board, rice paper, assorted cords and beads including Utah jasper. Box and figures are basswood painted with acrylic, sealed with Dorland's wax

Artist's Statement

Children all have active imaginations. As grownups we learn to censor the imaginative impulse. External influences teach us to be embarrassed by "absurd" thoughts. For those with the urge to make art, imagination is stronger than those external influences, but even artists must learn to embrace whims, urges, surprising sparks of a new idea. Following an impulse wherever it may lead is what making art is all about. Your path might meander slowly or be like a super highway, straight and firm. It might take you into dark places, unearthly surreal places, startling and extraordinary places or even whacky, fun places. Trusting that process is the lifelong journey I have been on for over 60 years. I am still learning how.

Biography

Sue Cotter grew up in a family on the move from Montana to upstate New York to southern Idaho to Las Vegas, Nevada. The rootlessness of having no "hometown" instilled in her a deep interest in what connects a person to a place; what landscapes, structures, objects and stories define that connection.

Cotter began her art making career at an early age as a painter, but her interest in stories led her to the Artists' Books movement. After completing a BFA degree at the University of Nevada, Reno, she remained at UNR to study letterpress printing with Robert Blesse at the Black Rock Press. In 1990

she moved to southern Utah where she established Woodhenge Press.

In recent years extensive travels have led Cotter to create works that do not require printing presses and other cumbersome equipment – unique books created from unusual found objects, altered books, narrative assemblage and book collage.

Cotter has received numerous grants and awards including a Utah Artist Fellowship and a New Forms: Regional Initiative Grant from the Andy Warhol Foundation. Her work is in Special Collections libraries around the country as well as museums and private collections. She teaches workshops and exhibits extensively.

Cotter now lives in Parowan, Utah where she and her partner, landscape painter Spike Ress, have built their home and studios on one acre of high desert. They own a 1955 vintage Airstream trailer and wander wherever they can.

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