

# Joyce Cutler-Shaw



## ARTIST'S STATEMENT

My works are multi-media, including drawings, installations, public projects and artists books. Drawing is at the heart of my work – drawing as a way of knowing, as a mode of inquiry, as a visual language. Language images and word as image have informed my works from the onset; such as word sculptures, from large iconic SHE and HE in metal; to the word SURVIVAL carved of ice, as a melting word poem for public sites; to *Namepoems* using the repetition of a first name as image. A signature, written in cursive, is a form of self-portrait.

My *Alphabet of Bones* is an original calligraphy inspired by the hollow bones of birds. Its 26 double characters have been digitalized and can be translated into the English alphabet as well as a symbolic code. It is my own copyrighted font or typeface.

Artists books are integral to my works at every level, from proposal pieces and visual documents of installations and public works, to limited editions and unique book objects. My subjects are human identity and the natural world. My themes are evolution, survival and transformation: from reptile into bird, from mammal to human, and from human, perhaps, to humane.

Suggested as preface to Bio –

# Joyce Cutler-Shaw



## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Joyce Cutler-Shaw is an artist of intermedia, including drawings, installations, public commissions and artists books. Drawing is her primary language, from two dimensional pen and ink works on paper, to their sculptural translations. Her *Alphabet of Bones* is an original calligraphy inspired by the hollow bones of birds. It has been digitalized and is her own copyrighted font, or typeface. *The Alphabet of Bones* has been widely published and is central to her many artists books, including *The Three Cages*, which was chosen in competition for publication by the Center for the Book Arts in New York.

Her artworks since 1972 include two and three dimensional language images for private and public sites such as the word sculptures for her United Nations Plaza installation project, *Waters of the Nations/Messages from the World*. Her fifteen-year project, *The Messenger Cycle* (1975-90), was widely exhibited and published. Her current project, *The Anatomy Lesson* (1990-Present) is its sequel. She is the first visual artist to be appointed Artist-In-Residence, as a Visiting Scholar (1992-Present), by the School of Medicine at the University of California San Diego, and the first nationally, to have such a medical school residency for an independent fine art project. It is titled *The Anatomy Lesson*, a contemporary re-vision of a traditional theme. She approaches the body as the matrix of the human condition. Her subjects are human identity and the natural world. Her themes are evolution and survival: from reptile into bird, from mammal to human, and from human, perhaps, to humane.

Her public commissions since 1999, include the Mission Valley Branch Library in San Diego, as design team artist with Wheeler, Wimer, Blackman & Associates, Architects (1998-2002). She received a San Diego American Institute of Architects design award for her eight column *Sycamore Leaf Canopy*, one of her three permanent library installations. The project was commissioned by The City of San Diego Library Department, and The City of San Diego Commission for Arts and Culture. A current commission is for artwork for a modern addition to the original East Carnegie Library in San Jose, California.

She has exhibited internationally since 1972. Her works are presented in both museum and library special collections including New York's Museum of Modern art, The 42<sup>nd</sup> Street Library, the Albertina Museum in Austria, The Teylers Museum in the Netherlands, the Wellcome Institute in London, the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington, D.C., and in California, at the Getty Museum Library, The University of California San Diego and The Athenaeum Music and Arts Library in La Jolla.