

## **Susan Brandeis**

### **Artist's Statement**

Making a textile is a kind of magic. My early lessons with mother and grandmother taught me sewing, knitting, crocheting, embroidering, and quilting. Those Experiences planted the seeds that have grown into my passion for making textiles by hand and my understanding of the powerful combination of materials, techniques, skill, craft, imagination, and spirit.

I make textiles because I love the rhythm of repetition and pattern, complex color contrasts, textured relief surfaces, and the feel of the materials in my hand. I savor the slow meditation of making as an antidote to life's rush and bustle. I choose simple, natural materials for their honest liveliness. I avoid trends to search for an enduring aesthetic. While the ideas are mine, the work is not about me. I prefer images and concepts that transcend the personal to touch universal human themes. Fabric work has become as natural for me as breathing, and its expressions a "language" often more eloquent than speech.

For nearly three decades, I have used nature and natural phenomena as the subject matter for my work, developing dyeing, printing, piecing, weaving, and stitching techniques to construct complex relief surfaces. The works have evolved from grand views and generalized effects, to the power and uniqueness of more specific places and moments in nature; from exuberance and celebration, to elegance and poetry. Both my sources of inspiration and the images I make have become more intimate, heartfelt, quiet, and reflective.

I often use the contrast of panels in a single piece to allow the viewer multiple simultaneous glimpses: close views next to distant ones, views toward the horizon or from above—mimicking the way we see our surroundings. We look to the distance, we look at what is close to us, we turn, we change focus, our eyes more about because we cannot take in everything at once. I use multiple works in a series to speak more comprehensively about the experience of a special place. The works in this grouping were all inspired by Cape Perpetua on the coast of Oregon.

My approach allows me to work with a wide variety of textiles techniques and materials, including the use of digital printing which is the basis for this group of works. Each piece I make requires different technologies—many hand, some computer. It is the balance among them that makes my current working process satisfying—and still magical.