

## CREATING *THE GARDEN*: A TIMELINE

“Art refers to the laws behind appearance,”

—Anne Truitt, *Yield*, journal entry April 14, 2001

“At this point I’m suspicious if a painting comes together too easily. I think, ‘Have I earned this work?’”

—Anne Sherwood Pundyk, “people making cool things”

Video, Sept. 2019



Anne Sherwood Pundyk, *The Garden*, artist's book, 8.5 x 8.5," 48 pages, Edition of 100, Soft Cover  
Published by Space Sisters Press, 2022, detail of front cover

## INTRODUCTION

My sister's traumatic injury in the fall of 2015 and its aftermath were the catalysts for creating my artist's book *The Garden*. The book's aesthetic grew from my practice as a painter. *The Garden's* images, stories and design evolved over the next seven years culminating in its 2022 publication. During this time I explored possibilities for each element as I worked to understand my family's transformation in the wake of my

sister's stroke by tunneling down the roots of our family tree. I sought out responses to the book at different stages by giving public readings and talking to other artists, writers, designers and publishers. Some engaged superficially or took me on detours. The most cherished helped light the way adding a skip to my step. I also found a good therapist and continue to speak with her each week. The metamorphosis of the form and content of *The Garden* mirrors the changes in my understanding of my family and how I see myself. I hope *The Garden* conveys the mystery of my parallel journeys.

### **Inside-Out Fairy Tales**

*The Garden* is stylistically reminiscent of American and British fairy tale books for children from the '30s and '40s — with some key changes. For example, traditional children's fables from this time feature illustrated stories conveying concrete moral lessons. "Fairy Tales have moral and spiritual values," according to Katherine Lee Bates, editor of *Once Upon a Time*, published in 1921. *The Garden* is different. While it presents a sequence of pictures and stories, the images are abstract. Also the short, fragment-like stories depict a less-than-certain universe. "The stuff you leave out is the most important. That space is where people think about things," observes contemporary actor/writer/director Pamela Adlon. Rather than preserving existing codes, my fables raise questions without necessarily giving the answers.

*The Garden's* visuals are variations of rhythmically overlapping geometric forms. The color palette for each image changes in tone and temperature shifting the mood from page to page. Furthermore, each image is placed *before* its partner story reversing the typical order for illustrations. Since they are seen ahead of the text and are non-representational, the images independently spark the reader's own subjective response.

For a conventional Smyth Sewn binding the sections of a book are stitched together using thread in a single neutral shade. Then the threads are trimmed and well hidden under its cover. In contrast, *The Garden* is bound with multi-colored threads that extend in an unruly fringe along its spine and appear throughout the book where its pages meet. My artist's book probes the nature of family bonds such as those determined by genetics and shared experiences. The Garden's traceable, wayward threads embody the essence of these connective forces, as I've now come to understand them.



in my work as a painter. One lesson, however, has served as a cautionary tale. As a young woman my grandmother studied fine art in New York City, yet she ultimately worked for hire as an illustrator. I associate my grandmother's submission to her editors' dictates — making figurative drawings in support of other people's story ideas — with a diminishment of her full expression of self.

In reaction to my grandmother's choice to limit herself to illustration, I have gravitated toward abstraction in my fine art work. Non-figuration circumvents the replication of the camera-like functions of the eye and brain behind representational techniques. Moreover, figurative images can be misleading, even propagandistic. They may mistakenly be seen as presenting the truth while actually serving to disguise it. Even before my sister's stroke changed our family, I was inclined to be skeptical. I wanted my grandmother to keep exploring her wild self. I wanted to spell out our family's unspoken secrets. Abstract painting gives me a way of authentically expressing myself through direct physical action.

### **Painting As Theatre of Agency**

A year before my sister's stroke I unexpectedly found a new way of making paintings. I faced an artworld hurdle; the owner of the gallery where I was installing my work didn't permit me to change the color of the walls. So I took matters into my own hands. I painted on the drop cloth canvas from my studio floor and used it as a wall covering for the show. It became my first unstretched painting. The versatility and responsiveness of unstretched canvas allowed me to redeploy painting's traditional components in new ways. Shifts and moments of revelation in my life have flowed into my paintings. Moreover, there has been a confluence between the evolution of my paintings and the refinement of the elements of *The Garden*. My discovery opened up expressive possibilities that continue to reveal themselves.

Using unstretched canvas has freed me to work from the inside out. Although making things is a physical undertaking, introspection drives my process. I'm not standing at an easel, making small gestures; this is a full body engagement. I start by choosing a color that reflects my current mood. After unfolding and spreading an oversize section of canvas on the floor I step onto the fabric to inhabit its charged, secure space. There I can safely delve into *my* wild self as I paint. I pour the paint onto the canvas and watch it soak into the fabric or flee across the surface in rivulets. As the fluid paint dries it forms tidelines or dense clouds. I can scan the canvas for passages that convey my



state of mind. Each painting reveals a non-verbal narrative much like a daily journal. As I alternate between action and reflection, my paintings chart my inner mindset.



Anne Sherwood Pundyk, *The Revolution Will Be Painted*, 2014, Acrylic, Latex and Colored Pencil on Canvas, 144 x 180 inches. This is my first painting on unstretched canvas.

### **From Painting to *The Garden and Back***

My first exhibition of paintings made working in this new way was called “The Revolution Will Be Painted,” in Bushwick, NY. It opened six months after my sister’s stroke. The show included six brightly colored, seven by eight foot abstract paintings. “The painting is both intuitive and remarkably self-aware. Against a field of organic forms depicting the rough and coruscating beauty of a solar event, the painter interjects — placing chevrons over organic shapes — saying to the universe ‘I’m here,’ and makes her marks affirming that presence,” wrote art critic Seph Rodney for *Hyperallergic* magazine. For each of these paintings I selected a cropped section of the stained canvas and tacked it to my studio wall. I used a straight edge level and colored pencils to place zig zag lightning bolt motifs amidst the organic pours on the canvas.

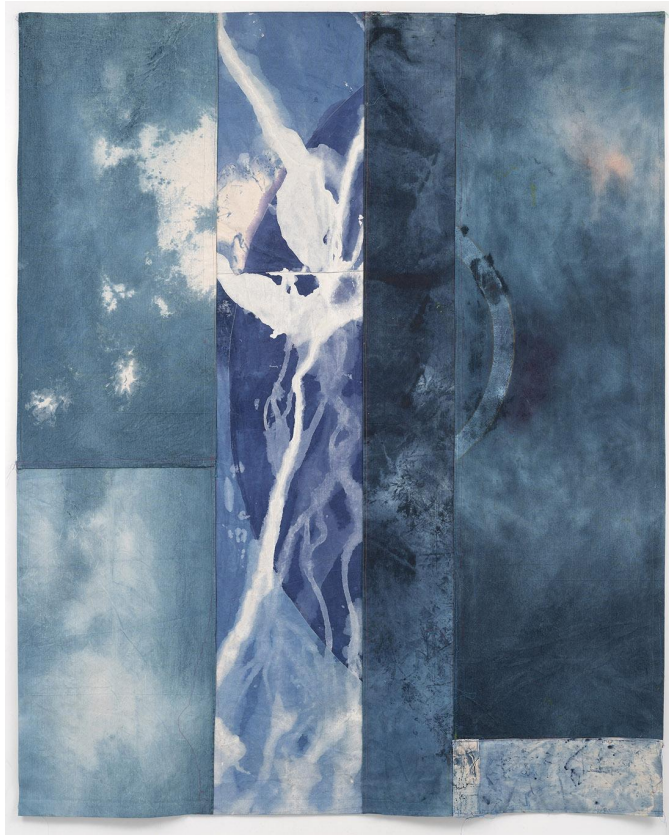
Originally I thought of this jagged pattern, which is featured in the images in *The Garden*, as an expression of assertion and agency. I tried to support my sister as she took on the many challenges of her recovery. I subsequently learned that the zig zag formation matched a physiological phenomenon that takes place in the brain. Grid cell neurons located in the entorhinal cortex enable us to build a cognitive map which creates an internal orientation system by firing in an identical configuration. This is our body's way of mapping new and challenging environments in order to move through the world safely.



Anne Sherwood Pundyk, *Reign*, 2015  
*Acrylic, Latex, Colored Pencil, and Stitching on Canvas, 83.5 x 90 inches*

Rifts had begun to form between members of my family regarding how to best care for Julia. I sought to understand the underpinnings for my rejection from this dialogue. One painting from the show, titled "Reign"( 2015), was different from the others. I poured a red rain-like screen down over its entire surface. Making the pour was cathartic. It was an expression of pure frustration and anger, but I knew it was also visually beautiful.

In contrast to this outburst of bright color, for several years after the show, my color palette quieted to one color: blue. Found in the vastness of the sky and the oceans, writer Rebecca Solnit observes, “The blue of distance comes with time, with the discovery of melancholy, of loss, the texture of longing, of the complexity of the terrain we traverse, and with the years of travel. If sorrow and beauty are all tied up together, then perhaps maturity brings with it ... an aesthetic sense that partially redeems the losses time brings and finds beauty in the faraway.” Indigo blue became a place to hold my sadness over losing contact with Julia.



Anne Sherwood Pundyk, *Astral 4 (Tattoo)*, 2018  
Acrylic, Latex, Colored Pencil and Stitching on Canvas, 94 x 76 inches

Using only blue highlighted the role of construction by cropping, composing and stitching the stained canvas panels in making paintings such as “Astral 4 (Tattoo) (2018). The size, shape and position of the individual pieces were determined by my response to the original gestures of poured paint. When sewn together they determined the painting’s outside scale and proportion. Each painting thus has its own anatomy. The canvas, seams, paint and thread feel akin to skin, tendons, blood, and nerves in



the human body. Leonardo DaVinci performed autopsies separating body tissue by type in his obsession to locate the soul. My paintings on unstretched canvas are inanimate objects, yet their presence is mutable, almost physically unsettling as if the painting can breathe. The loose threads binding the pages of *The Garden* similarly have a life of their own.



Anne Sherwood Pundyk, *The Seed Knows How To Wait*, 2021  
Acrylic, Latex, Colored Pencil and Stitching on Unstretched Canvas, 81 x 71 inches

Circular outlines from the work in the exhibition, “The Revolution Will Be Painted,” re-emerged in a ghost-like way in the later blue paintings and then more substantially in a subsequent body of work where my palette expanded back beyond blue to all the shades of the color wheel. I make the circles with a tack, a length of string, and colored pencils, in works such as “The Seed Knows How to Wait” (2021). Like Leonardo’s Vitruvian Man I circle my arms wide around me as I draw using the tools to convey scale as it relates to my own body. I paint the bands in solid shades between layers of poured paint. A trio of circles took prominence and the configuration appears in *The Garden’s* images. Sensitized by my exile from my family, the motif supported ideas I

was drawn to about belonging. The three interlocking rings have been used in different cultural contexts to indicate unity. The psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan selected the same configuration as a model for his representation of human subjectivity; each ring stands for a fundamental component of identity formation: the real, the symbolic and the imaginary.

In a role reversal, my most recent paintings from 2022 are inspired by a woven pattern I first used in *The Garden's* images. It appears as part of the color fields surrounding the zig zags and overlapping circles. I've scaled up this idea, creating a tool for applying veils of an open mesh to my paintings as in "Stringing" (2022). The effect brings to mind recent scientific research reported by Sally Adee revealing that each cell in our body—bones, skin, nerves, muscle—has a voltage, like a tiny battery. This electrical network is separate



Anne Sherwood Pundyk, *Stringing*, 2022

Acrylic, Latex, Colored Pencil on Cropped and Stitched Unstretched Canvas, 58 x 56 inches

from our genetic makeup, yet it directs how our bodies take physical form in the womb. It is the reason our brain can send signals to the rest of our body and why our body knows to heal itself from injury. Pulsing clouds of vibrant color reveal themselves as interwoven clusters of short, multi-hued dashes of paint pressed onto my canvas's surface. Highlighting the painting's structure, corners and edges of hemmed fabric panels are visible where they intersect, briefly disrupting the vibrating signals. The small lines skip over and under each other, running vertically and horizontally. They accumulate and disperse across the painting using kinetic energy to hold the space together.

The new work is regenerative in the same way I have found moments of understanding and acceptance after seven years of turmoil, although my family is still not reunited. *The Garden* traces my family's stories keeping an eye out for tell tale patterns. My abstract painting practice depends on a kinship of action and introspection correlating with physiological and philosophical phenomena. It gave me insights into how to create the visuals, original writing and the physical form of *The Garden* while making the referential framework of traditional children's literature — my early family language — my own.

## 2015

### **IMAGES: Preparatory Book Page Paintings on Paper**

The images in *The Garden* evolved from three different series of paintings on paper and finally from a related group of monotypes made on a press. In my studio I use works on paper to play with ideas on a small scale. For the first series in 2015, I made paintings on top of pages cut from a hardcover novel. The initial layer of white paint partly obscured the printed text. I then added more colors balancing organic pours and geometric motifs from my paintings.

### **TEXT: Writing is an Act of Telepathy**

Another way I have incorporated text into my artworks is by collaging printed quotes from books by writers I admire, such as Virginia Woolf and Jun'ichirō Tanizaki. For the short stories in *The Garden*, however, I challenged myself to find my own words. I wondered, "How can I place myself in the literary tradition?" Stephen King asks his



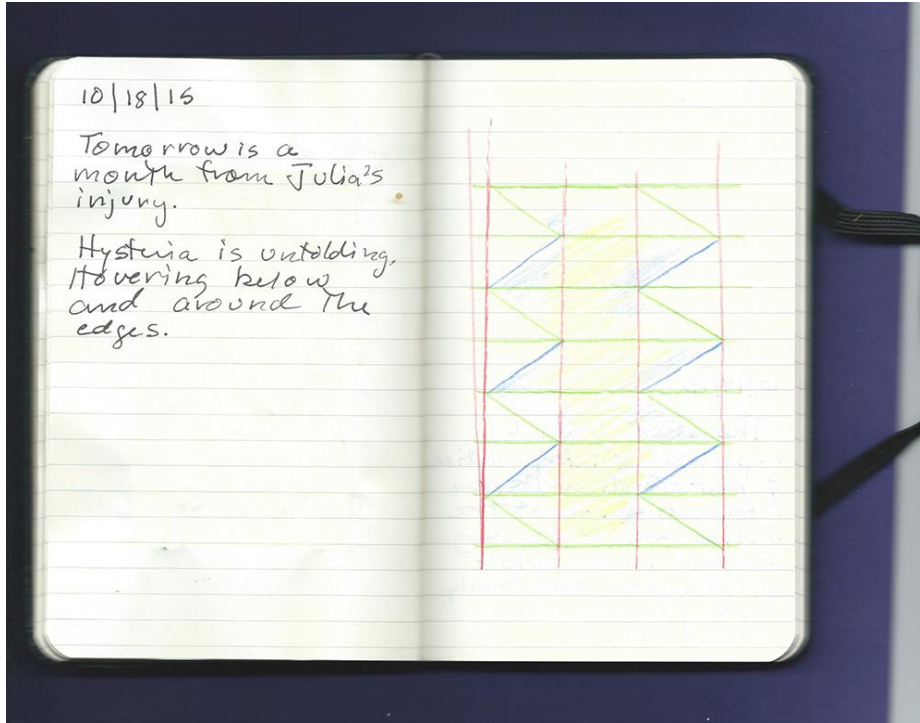
readers, “Do we see the same thing?...There will be necessary variations, but ...we are having a meeting of the minds.. .We’ve engaged in an act of telepathy.” Words render in the same way that abstract paintings do. They retain for the audience the option to input their own specific life experiences.



Anne Sherwood Pundyk, *Shade*, 2015,  
Acrylic, Latex, Watercolor, Colored Pencil on Book Page, 9 x 5.5 inches

I looked to my painting process for clues asking myself, “How do I connect with the materials and begin to make meaning there?” It starts with my initial impulse for a color selection or a way of pouring paint. In researching comparable first forays for writers I read that author and Nobel laureate Annie Ernaux has kept a diary since she was sixteen and this practice forms the basis of her writing. Furthermore, the philosopher Helene Cixous observes, “What I like most are the ... notebooks...the letters, the diaries. I’m always very struck by the moments when it all gets started.” I could look to my journal as a place to begin.





Anne Sherwood Pundyk, *Personal Journal Page*, October, 15, 2015

I have kept a diary since I was 10 years old. After my sister's injury I also wrote down details of her care that year in different hospitals and rehabilitation centers alongside related correspondence from other family members. These and my journal entries from 2015 and 2016 became the source material for my short stories in *The Garden*.

Initially I titled my stories, *Tales*, as a reference to the book, *First Fairy Tales*, published in 1946 featuring my grandmother's illustrations. The second version of the book in 2019 was titled, *Zombie Sisters*. The final published version is called *The Garden*.

## 2016

### **IMAGES: First Draft with Stitched Paper Paintings**

The images for the first draft of *Tales*, were a series of stitched paintings on paper. I stained a large piece of Arches paper with a Rorschach-like pour of paint using a single color. I segmented the paper using the dimensions of the single book page from the



Anne Sherwood Pundyk, *Sisters*, 2017

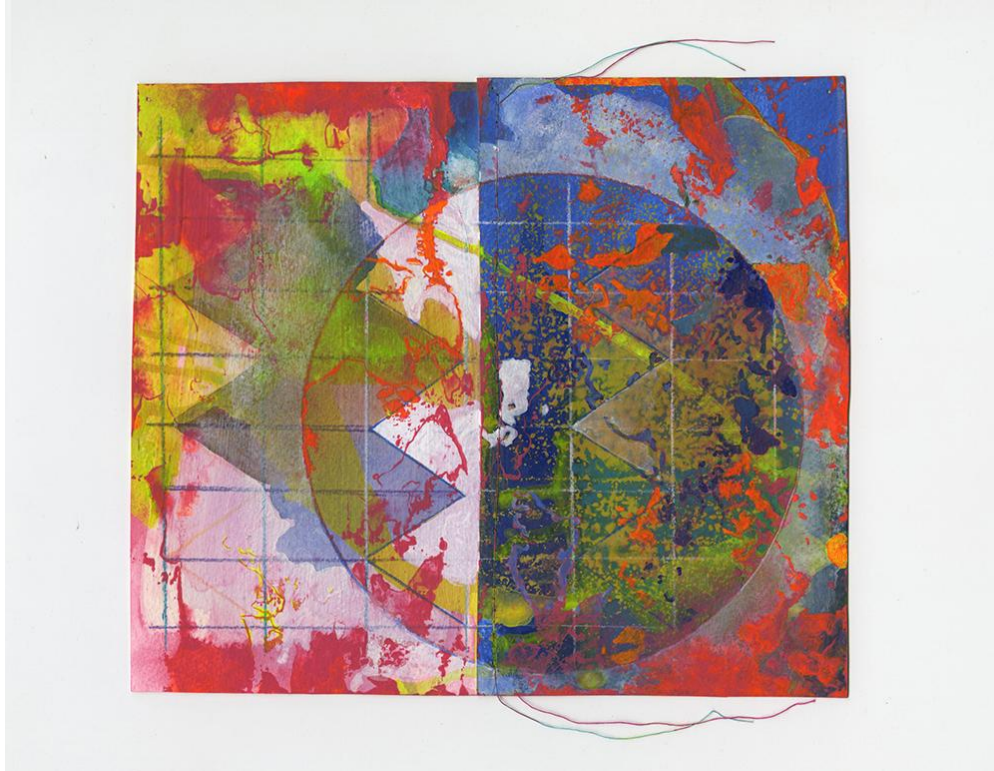
Acrylic, Latex, Gouache, Watercolor, Colored Pencil and Stitching on Paper, 9.25 x 10.75 inches

prior white washed works. Using a sewing machine, I stitched together pairs of the cut paper pages as if they were an open book. The shifts in the relationships with my family members reminded me of the way the traces of the paint from the pour appeared differently on each sewn pair of pages. They were like siblings who share the same genetic material, yet evolve in very different ways as the years go by.

**2017**

### **IMAGES: Digital Scanning Shows The Threads**

For the images in the first mock up of *Tales*, I scanned a selection of the stitched paintings on paper. For these digital reproductions, I composed the placement of the uncut threads extending beyond the seams.



Anne Sherwood Pundyk, *Sisters*, 2017, digital scan of painting

### **TEXT: Journal Entries to Stories**

Starting in 2017, I selected and adapted notes and entries from my personal journals from the prior two years that contained pinprick-like moments of recognition into short narratives. I was inspired by two writers and their short story collections, “Stories for the Years,” by Luigi Piranello, 1922-1937; and “The Complete Stories,” by Clarice Lispector, 1952 - 1979. Another book, “Women Who Run With The Wolves,” by Clarissa Pinkola Estés, gave me guidance on listening to my intuition. Eventually I had fifty written pieces of different lengths.

By October 2017, I narrowed down the total number of stories to eleven. They hint of secrets and truths, as they trace familial ties, tragedy, art, nature and a cathartic sense of sharing across eras. The world shimmers under a spell: spoken words are not acknowledged. Paintings play a part in wordlessly undermining the spell. A meadow in transition from field to forest becomes a floating home for reflection and meditation. The stories collectively seek to untangle tales of abandonment over three generations

as moments in the past are mirrored in the present. Sadness sows seeds for empathy and understanding and anger burns down to acceptance.

Two pieces form the core of *The Garden*. They take place on the same day. The first, called “Little Turtles” is about my mother’s mother. It begins with the phrase, “She could be queen, safe within her castle for the time being,” describing my grandmother, the artist, as she starts to draw. There is a solitary aspect to creating that isn’t so much that you need to be alone, but you need to give yourself permission to listen to your own voice. The second, “Adoption 1928” takes place as my father’s mother is about to give birth. She is in a home for unwed mothers. She is also alone, but she has been abandoned by her family and is about to give up her son.

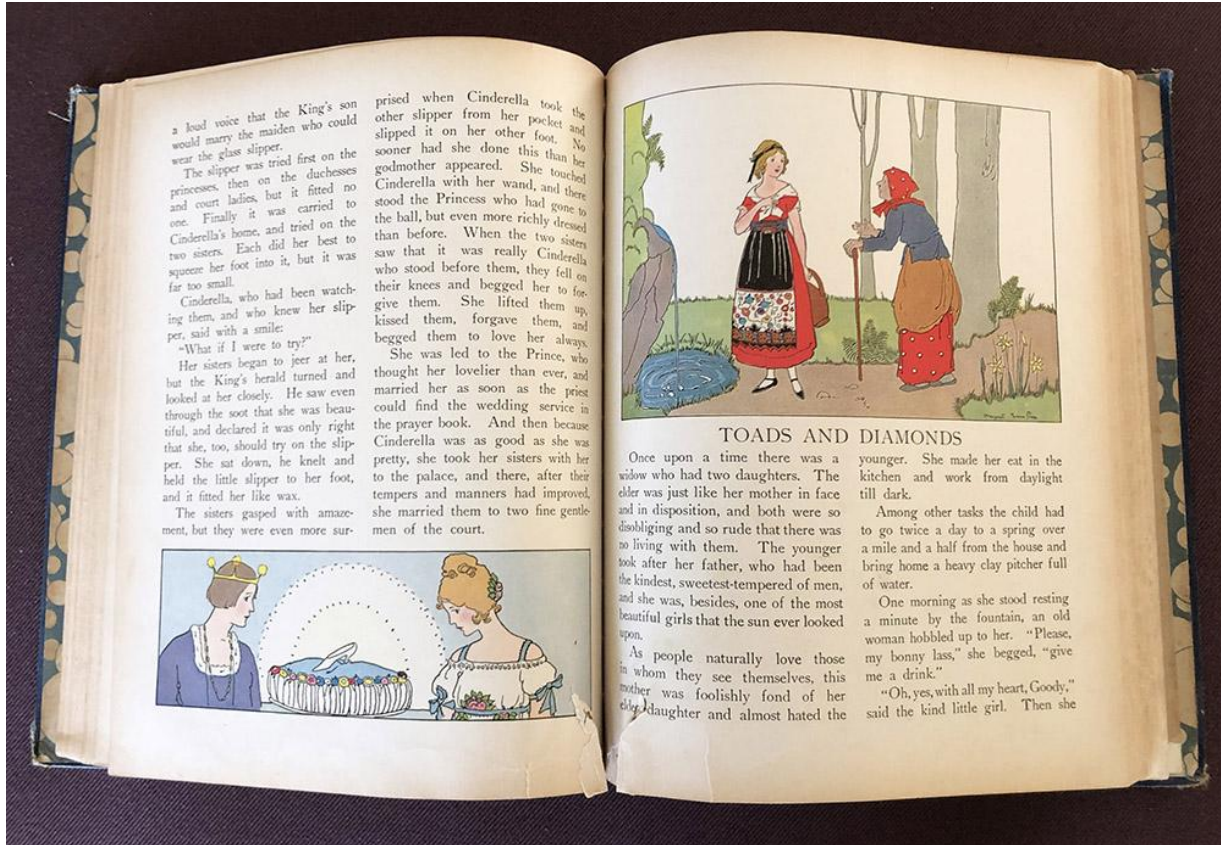
When I construct my large unstretched canvas paintings I combine panels stained at different times. They can be made weeks, months or even years apart. They have diverse qualities that together contribute to the direction I want to take for my next painting. I find after assembling the panels, that I need to go back and re-edit. The compositions could be tighter, more concise. What is exciting is to get close, and then know that it will be irrefutably stronger by going back in and rebuilding the piece. Likewise, bringing together and re-editing meaningful journal moments from weeks, months or years apart is an approach that can reveal an underlying larger truth.

### **DESIGN: Once Upon A Time**

As a model for the first design of *Tales*, I used a fairy tale book from the same time period as my grandmother’s illustrated books. It was given to my father by his adoptive father when he was 6 years old in 1932.

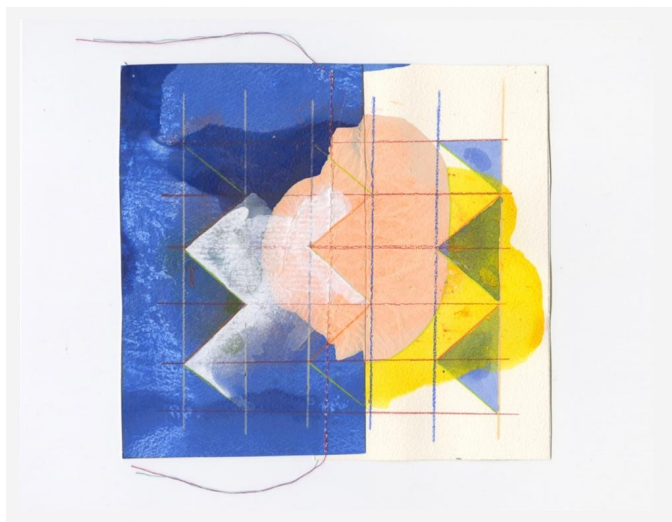
The book’s simple layout uses two columns of text alongside large, colorful illustrations.





*Once Upon A Time: A Book of Old-Time Fairy Tales*, Edited by Katherine Lee Bates, Illustrated by Margaret Evans Price, Published 1921, Rand McNally & Co., New York

I laid out the book alternating images and stories selecting pairs that resonate together.



Anne Sherwood Pundyk, *Tales*, two page spread, 2017

She could be queen, for the time being, safe within her castle. The full heat of the mid-June morning was an hour away. A breeze passed through the open window cooling the air. Occasionally a car rumbled by at the bottom of the hill. Her husband was dressing for the day in the next room. Outside the door the housekeeper was tending to their girls, one a toddler, the other an infant.

She was seated at a small worktable. Centered flat in front of her lay a thick rectangular sheet of white paper. She took careful inventory of her tools and supplies touching the small glass bottles of black ink and arranging the soft metal tubes of white gouache on the upper right corner of her table. Just below them she

straightened her blotting paper laid out next to her pens and extra nibs, sharpened pencils, pointed sable brushes and clean erasers. Feeling the pull of the paper she brushed her fingertips across its skin-like surface.

She had lightly drawn the outlines of three squares in a straight row. Above them she had written, "Peek, the Brownie." In smaller block print below each box she wrote the sequence of actions she would soon illustrate. First, "Peek saw a mother turtle lay her eggs. The turtle went away." Next, "Peek and the sun looked after the eggs. The mother turtle did not come back." Concluding, she wrote, "One day the eggs hatched. Little turtles came out of the eggs. The turtles ran away."

## **OUTREACH: Gallery Reading**

In December, I was invited by Jonathan Weiskopf to exhibit several of my stitched paintings on paper at his gallery, VSOP Projects in Greenport, NY. The first version of *Tales* was complete by the time of the show and I did a reading of the book in a small room in the gallery to an intimate group of about 25 people. I was inspired to continue working on the book based on the positive response from the audience.



*Tales* reading December 2017 at VSOP Projects, Greenport, NY. From the left: Jonathan Weiskopf, Jeff Pundyk, Anne Sherwood Pundyk

## **RESPONSE: Artists and Writers**

I sought feedback on *Tales* from Susan Bee, an artist who has made many artist's books. She thought the images and text should be merged in the same way she worked. Early readers of the stories, writer/filmmaker Mary Hanlon, author Dan Paisner, and cartoonist Jen Robinson were supportive and encouraged me to continue.

2018

**TEXT: Pen & Brush Writing Group**

I joined the Pen & Brush monthly writing group led by Carly Yeunger for a year to get critical response to my work from other writers. I was interested especially in the short fiction format called Flash Fiction. A member of the group, poet Arlene Metrick gave me notes on my stories that were especially helpful. An experience similar to mine with her family helped her understand my intentions.

**DESIGN: Tutorial**

In March I met several times with writer/graphic designer Dylan Grief to explore other options for the design of the book. He showed me how to use the program InDesign. I was curious to learn about the different approaches to book design and began a period of experimentation with a range of possibilities for the elements of *Tales*.

**OUTREACH: Performance and Video**

In July, I showed a large blue painting and performed a reading of *Tales* at a group show of International feminist artists called EMINENT DOMAIN in Chelsea, NY. Wearing



*Tales* Performance July 2018 at EMINENT DOMAIN group exhibition, Chelsea, NY. Anne Sherwood Pundyk with the audience.



a large blue stained canvas cape for my performance at the opening, I walked through the center of the gallery, then stopped and read several stories to the audience. My performance was featured in *artcritical*'s "The List" and covered in *Art 511 Magazine*.

**artcritical**  
the online magazine of art and ideas

THE LIST | MAGAZINE | THE REVIEW PANEL

WEEK AT A GLANCE | ALL SHOWS | TALKS/EVENTS | MAP | MY LIST

Thursday, Jul 12  
Friday, Jul 13  
Saturday, Jul 14  
Sunday, Jul 15  
Monday, Jul 16  
Tuesday, Jul 17  
Wednesday, Jul 18

## Openings

**Pierogi**  
Les Fleurs du Mal (Group) ⓘ

**Arsenal Contemporary**  
A Kiss Under The Tail ⓘ

**Lesley Heller Gallery**  
Picnic: An Exhibition of Gallery Artists ⓘ

**Spencer Brownstone Gallery**  
Inclinations curated by Jae Cho ⓘ

**David Zwirner (533 W 19)**  
Unbecoming: Yale MFA Photography 2018 Thesis Show ⓘ

**Garth Greenan Gallery**  
Mark Greenwold, Ralph Humphrey, Roy McMakin: Three Gallery  
Artists: Mark Greenwold, Ralph Humphrey, and Roy McMakin ⓘ

**Bruce Silverstein Gallery (20th Street)**  
We Are the Subject: Lisette Model, Diane Arbus and Rosalind Fox Solomon ⓘ

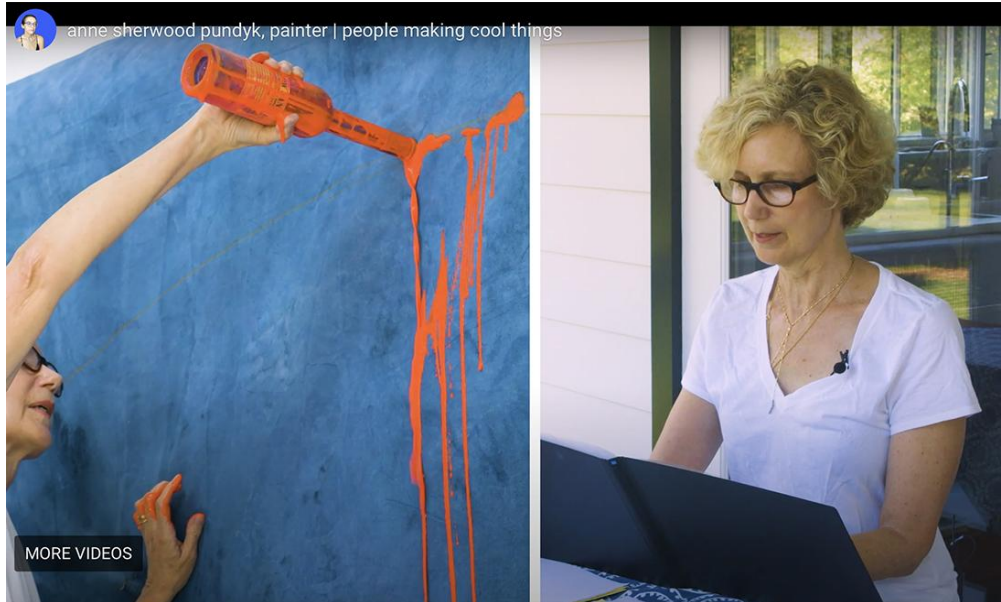
**Praxis International Art**  
Carina Lopez Winschel, Isabel Pena: CARINA LOPEZ WINSCHHEL & ISABEL PEÑA ⓘ

**School of Visual Arts (133/141 W 21)**

**Eminent Domain at Former Robert Miller Gallery space**  
3-day flash feminist art exhibit features over 90 artists from around the world., organized by ART511 MAG in partnership with Alexandra Arts. 6-8PM, featuring a performance by Anne Sherwood Pundyk titled "Tales." Cloaked in an epic, indigo stained canvas, Pundyk will spin stories of survival and loss. Afterparty tonight, 8-10PM. Saturday, 1pm, panel discussion moderated by Katie Cercone, curator of the exhibition, titled "Women in the Arts- Sisterhood & Sustainability."  
Jul 12 to Jul 14

*artcritical*, "The List" announcement for *Tales* Performance at EMINENT DOMAIN, July, 2018.

Videographer Molly Mary O'Brien was interested in the way my painting process connected with my writing for *Tales*. She filmed the EMINENT DOMAIN performance and edited the footage with an interview in my studio. The video was completed in 2019 and is available on Molly's YouTube channel, "anne sherwood pundyk, painter | people making cool things."



Video still from “anne sherwood pundyk, painter | people making cool things,” by Molly Mary O’Brien, September 2019.

2019

### **IMAGES: Second Draft with Stitched Indigo Paintings**

I switched the multicolored paintings from the first draft of *Tales* to new blue paintings on paper for the second draft of the book.



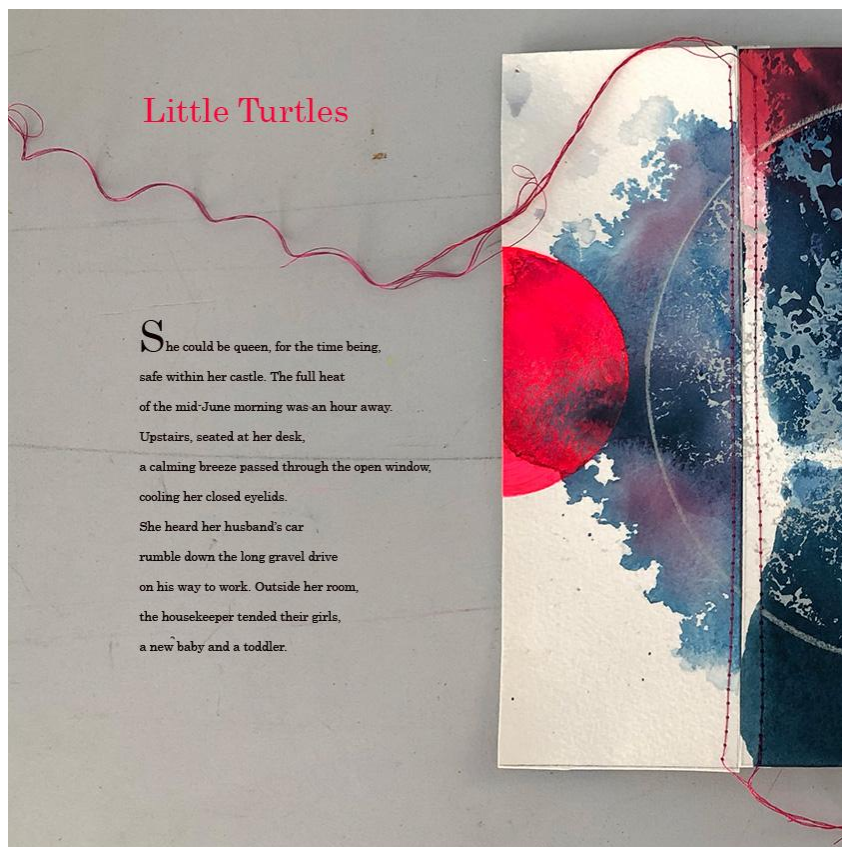
Anne Sherwood Pundyk, *Just Then*, 2019  
*Acrylic, Latex, Colored Pencil and Stitching on Paper, 17 x 18 inches*

## TEXT: Thematic Chapters

I retitled the second draft of the book *Zombie Sisters*. I reordered and grouped the stories into thematic chapters.

## DESIGN: Merging Text and Image

Since talking to Susan Bee about the design of my artist's book late in 2017, I spent over a year creating two different layouts breaking up the text and merging it with new stitched paintings on paper. I placed the sections of text in and around the painted pours and shapes and used a physical length of thread as a unifying visual motif. Ultimately, the merged formats lacked unity. The association with an earlier era of children's literature I was looking for was also lost.



Anne Sherwood Pundyk, *Zombie Sisters*, page from first redesign, 2019



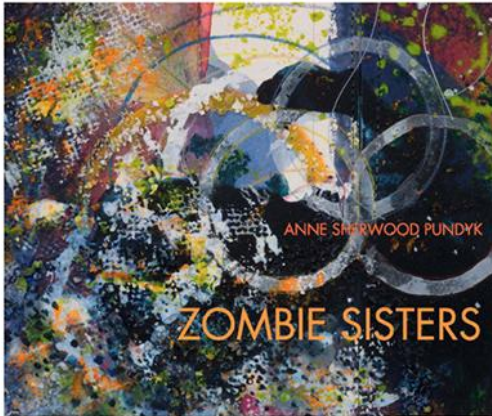
Anne Sherwood Pundyk, *Zombie Sisters*, page from second redesign, 2019

2020

### EXCERPT PUBLICATION: The Hoosac Institute Journal

Three stories from the last redesign in 2019 of *Zombie Sisters*, were published in The Hoosac Institute Journal in February 2020. Artist/ Publisher Jenny Perlin, explains, “The Hoosac Institute is a curated platform for text and image focusing on pieces that don’t fit conventional disciplinary narratives.” I had met with Jenny the year before when she was a resident at Pioneer Works in Red Hook, Brooklyn.





#### **Zombie Sisters An Excerpt**

*Zombie Sisters* is a book of short stories paired with paintings on paper. I wrote the stories and made the paintings over the last three years in the aftermath of a sibling's traumatic injury. These two creative enterprises are intertwined. My sister's physical trauma reverberates psychically through my immediate family. I have distilled subsequent meditations and recollections into stories organized thematically into the book's four chapters. Simultaneously, I have developed works on paper composed of stains, blots, and rivulets in deep pure tones of indigo blue accented with warm flashes of yellow, orange and red. These paintings are composed by cropping and editing the free-form shapes. I recombine selected passages by stitching them together while introducing circles and arcs in paint and colored pencil. Two intertwining threads, one red, one blue—the colors often used to depict veins and arteries—lead the reader from page to page, from written word to painted composition. Chapter Two, reproduced here, operates as a bird's eye view of fundamental family relationships by imagining a few solitary moments in a morning of my mother's mother and my father's mother at the very beginning of my parents' lives in June 1928.

#### Notes on the artwork:

##### Cover

*Dark Matter*, 2018, Acrylic, Latex, Water Color, Gouache, Egg Shells, Colored Pencil and Stitching on Paper, 9.25 x 9.5 inches

##### Midwesterners

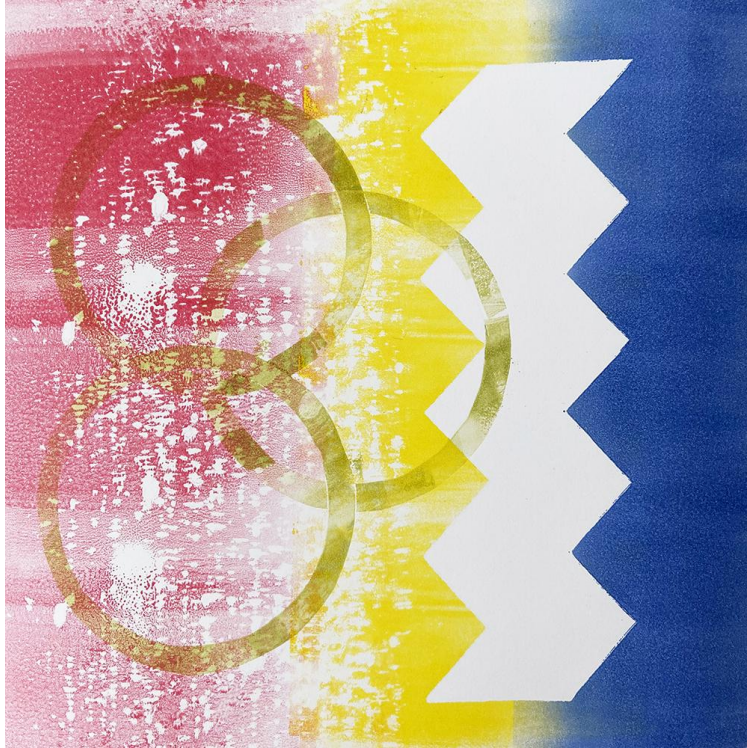
*Shore*, 2019, Acrylic, Latex, Pencil and Stitching on Cut Paper, 14.5 x 18 inches

*The Hoosac Institute Journal number 4, Anne Sherwood Pundyk, Zombie Sisters Excerpt, February 2020*

## **IMAGES: Monotypes Created on a Press during the Pandemic**

In March 2020, just as the COVID-19 pandemic set in, artist Wendy Prelwitz invited me to use her fine art press in Peconic, NY. I made five new monotypes incorporating my geometric motifs. I didn't see the possibilities right away, but several months later in December I mocked up a complete redesign of the book using the prints and retitled the book, *The Garden*.

When the world closed down my uninterrupted time in the studio lengthened. I began to play and experiment in new ways. My color palette and compositional approach expanded and I explored choreography related to my paintings.



Anne Sherwood Pundyk, untitled, 2020, monotype with Akua soy-based ink on Arnhem paper, 10 x 10 inches



Anne Sherwood Pundyk studio view with preliminary mock up of The Garden using monotype images, December 2020

During this time, I returned to *The Garden*, with a new perspective on the original layout separating image and text reminiscent of children's literature from the early 1900's. The monotypes resonated with possibilities. Because the images were prints, rather than paintings, they felt more aligned to reproduction on a printed page. They also lent themselves to manipulation through photoshop. I could experiment with color and compositional changes with more ease than was possible with the stitched paintings on paper.

## **RESEARCH: The History of Artists Books**

As I recommitted to my original design of *The Garden*, I wanted to confirm my direction by looking to the history of artist's books. My friend, art supporter and collector, Colleen Murphy suggested I attend a zoom lecture in April by Tony White, Florence and Herbert Irving Associate Chief Librarian at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. It was called, "A (Very) Short History of Artists' Books, and Some Specimens." This lecture helped me understand the evolution of the format of artist's books. Tony also recommended a reference paper with artist's books terms and definitions by Duncan Chappell called, "Typologizing the Artist's Book," from 2003 as a good resource. I realized my own artist's book making had spanned over 30 years driven by a do-it-yourself approach. I have used tools and materials on hand to make unique books, small editions, books as performances, installations and clothing. I have also used print-on-demand technology incorporating content from my painting, writing, and video work.

## **RESPONSE: Looking For a Publisher**

I gave a draft copy of the book to art critic Seph Rodney in February who said it was "spare, haunting and poetic." His comments and the publication of the excerpt of *Zombie Sisters* in The Hoosac Institute Journal early in 2020 gave momentum to my search for a publisher. My new monotypes were up on my studio wall as I began looking for the right publisher, which ultimately took a year.

In January I compiled a list of publishers of artist's books, including Space Sisters Press. I went back to artist Susan Bee with the redesign I had made based on her recommendations and she suggested Hang Loose Press. Author Siri Hustvedt read a draft of my book that spring and described it as, "beautiful and moving," however she said was not familiar with publishers of artist's books. Graphic novelist Paul Karasik



praised the book but said I should look for an agent. Art critic Barry Schwabsky suggested I get a grant to publish the book instead of using a publisher. That summer, I reached out to Corina Reynolds, Executive Director of the Center for Book Arts, about publishing with Small Editions. She said she was no longer involved with the press so I approached them directly, but ultimately didn't pursue working together.

## 2021

### **PUBLICATION: Collaboration with Space Sisters Press and How to Fund the book**

After emailing Space Sisters Press about publishing my book, I was delighted to get a positive response. My search for a publisher thus ended early in 2021. Space Sisters Press is run by graphic designer Gretchen Kraus, and editor and writer Emily Devoe. They describe themselves as “an artist-centric publisher, collaborating with contemporary artists, musicians, and poets on projects that look beyond the boundaries of a typical book.” They offer design, production, and editing services. In March I had a virtual studio visit with Emily and Gretchen to get acquainted. Based on our conversation, they sent me a proposal for their services.

The last hurdle was understanding how to pay for the publishing, designing and distributing the book. I spoke with friend and literary agent Cynthia Cannell, in April, who recommended that I understand the terms of the relationship. Martha Wilson, the American feminist performance artist and the founding director of Franklin Furnace Archive, helped me decide how to move forward. In May she advised,

“Dear Anne,

HaHa! In 1975, when I started out in the art and publishing biz at Harry N. Abrams, the company used to pay its authors. Nowadays, even regular publishers ask authors who are not Michelle Obama to provide a "subvention" to cover their printing and editorial costs. In the early days of Franklin Furnace, there was one grant available to artists who wanted to publish their artists' books; but even in those days, I used to advise artists to get a grant for their painting, and then to spend it on publishing their work. Distribution is key. I would focus on what their distribution plans are before you pay their fee!

All best wishes,

Martha”

I had sold several paintings from a recent show and used the funds to make the book.

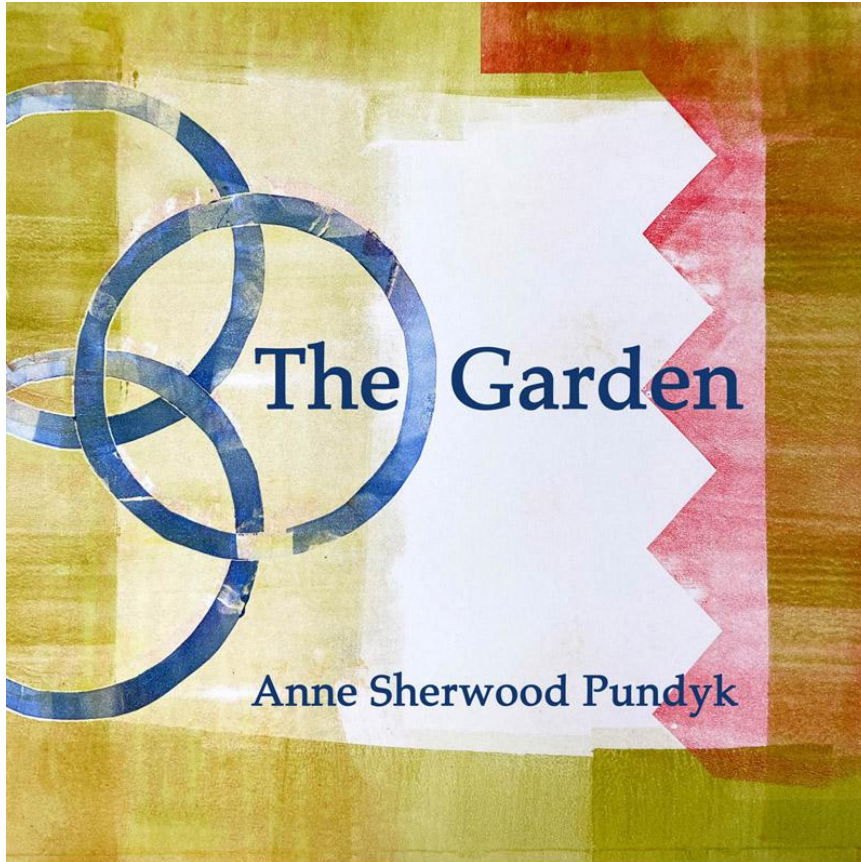
### **TEXT: Elizabeth Strout's Writing Broke the Spell**

As I was working on the final phase of editing the text with Emily I read *My Name is Lucy Barton*, by Elizabeth Strout, 2016. The narrator of the short, concise novel is rejected by her family for escaping the pain and trauma they experienced together. Despite this, she loves her mother, who is unable to express love back to her daughter. This book gave me the courage to embrace the direction and ultimate form of "The Garden." I felt confident, finally, in my writing and ready to finalize the editing.

### **DESIGN: Space Sisters Press Practical Innovations**

The starting point for the final design were my five original monotype images. We began with my initial idea to connect the design to children's literature from my grandmother's era. I emailed Gretchen in May:

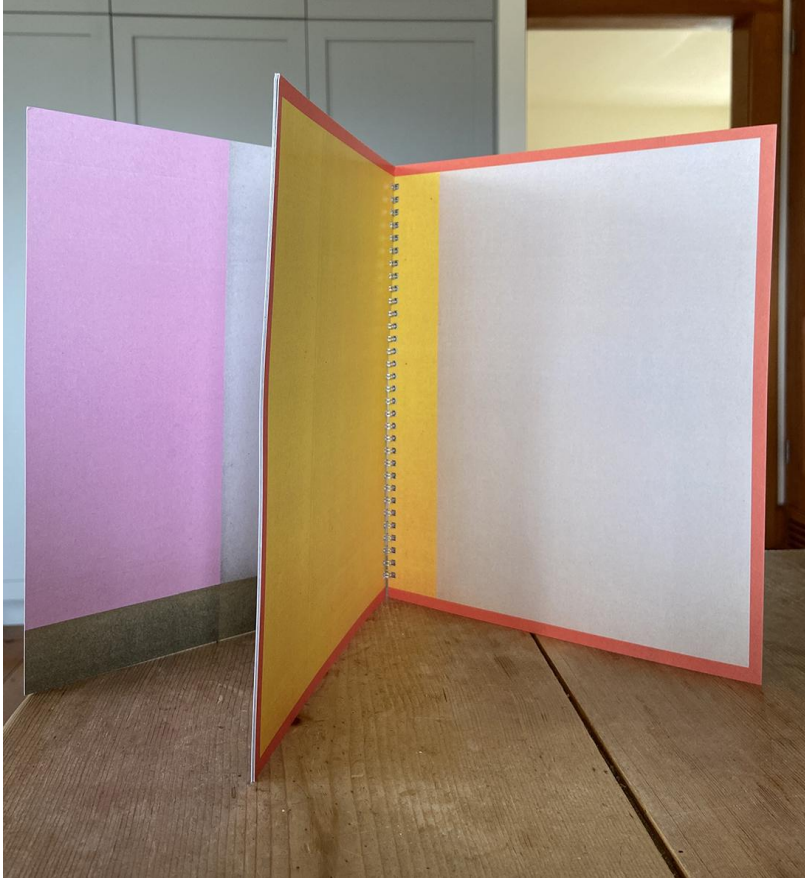
"I was looking through our collection of children's books, which includes some my parents had, to find a possible direction for the look and feel of *The Garden*. The simplicity, directness, and clarity of a copy from probably the late '40s, *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* is a good model. *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* is not embellished. It has a hard cover, covered with mat paper. I am not sure of the binding technique; it looks like stitching perforates the 60 pages. The book's pages are a coated stock, but I think mat would be better for *The Garden*. I am attaching photos of this book and *The Garden* mock up I made. The mock up is 8.5 x 8.5 inches which feels like a good size. *The Garden* has 24 pages (maybe one or two more for credits, etc.) The cover has a color image, and there are 11 color images alongside the 11 one-page stories."



*The Garden* cover mock up from monotype print, December 2022

As a reference, Space Sisters Press sent me copies of all of the books Emily and Gretchen had designed and published. I especially liked “Spiral” by Jenny Monick. It is a simple, spiral bound book on heavy brown cover stock. Each page is composed of straight edge minimal color compositions. It conveyed the power of abstract image in book form I was looking for.

The decision to use Smyth Sewn binding evolved from my dialogue about design with Space Sisters Press. The monotypes did not have the stitching the way my paintings did, but I wanted thread to remain as an element in a tactile way. The threads show the truth of how things are made, how we are held together, and how we connect to others.



*Jenny Monick, Spiral*, artist's book, 11.5 x 9.5,"14 pages, Edition of 250, by First published in 2019, Co-published by RITE Editions and Space Sisters Press

In the fall I met several times with Gretchen and Emily in person and the final design of the book gradually took shape. Gretchen researched the practical considerations such as size, paper type, and number of pages. In its final form *The Garden* expanded to 48 pages. I was able to Photoshop digital images of the monotypes to expand the number of images in the book. Ultimately, by improvising with the compositions, I discovered the mirror image double page spread solution we used. This created a more complete and vivid experience for the viewer and reinforced the nature of family relationships depicted in the writing.

In November Gretchen got final printing quotes from GHP Press in Connecticut. In December I selected the six colors for the binding threads.





Anne Sherwood Pundyk, *The Garden*, artist's book, 8.5 x 8.5," 48 pages, Edition of 100, Soft Cover, Published by Space Sisters Press, 2022, detail of pages 5 and 6

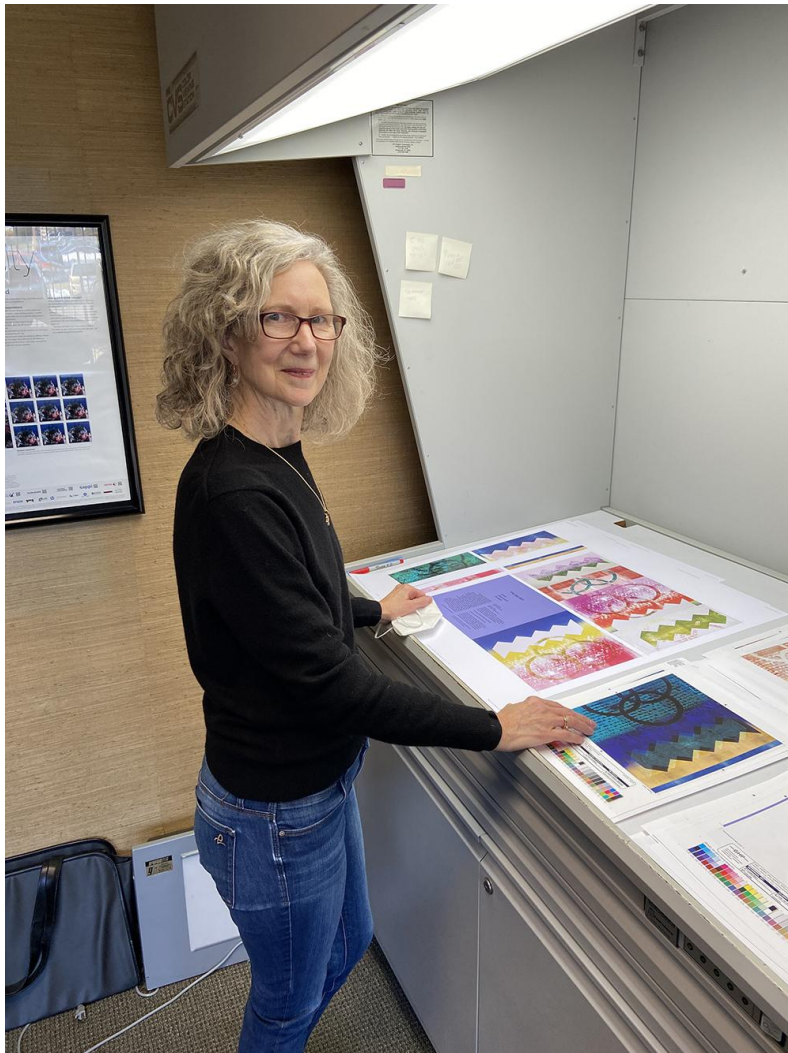


Anne Sherwood Pundyk, *The Garden*, artist's book, 8.5 x 8.5," 48 pages, Edition of 100, Soft Cover, Published by Space Sisters Press, 2022, detail of pages 26 and 27

2022

## PUBLICATION

I reviewed the final design and approved the color proof in January. *The Garden* was printed that month at GHP Media with Fred Hoxsie and Cheryl Vincent in West Haven, CT, and bound at Bassil Bookbinding Co. with Eli Bassil, in Hackensack, NJ.



Anne Sherwood Pundyk at GHP Media press check, West Haven, CT, January 2022





Smyth Sewn binding machine with colored threads selected for *The Garden* at Bassil Bookbinding, Co., Hackensack, NJ, January 2022.

*The Garden* was officially published in a limited edition of 100 signed copies.





Anne Sherwood Pundyk, *The Garden*, artist's book, 8.5 x 8.5," 48 pages, Edition of 100, Soft Cover, Published by Space Sisters Press, 2022, detail of front cover



Anne Sherwood Pundyk, *The Garden*, artist's book, 8.5 x 8.5," 48 pages, Edition of 100, Soft Cover, Published by Space Sisters Press, 2022, detail of inside cover and page 1

## OUTREACH: Launch at Exhibition, Artists Talk, Acquisitions, and NYABF Signing

**Launch: The Works Museum, Newark, OH, February 5 through April 2, 2022.**

Fittingly, *The Garden* was first launched as part of an exhibition centered around my grandmother's lifework called, "Permission to Create: The Legacy of Mary Sherwood Wright Jones." The exhibition included my work along with paintings by my grandmother, work by my cousin Michael Kennedy and my daughter, Phoebe Pundyk. The exhibition traces, "... the impact of nationally known, Licking County artist Mary Sherwood Wright Jones (1892-1985.) Widely recognized for her children's illustrations, her fine artworks are featured here for the first time. Her legacy spans generations. By following her early passion for drawing, Jones set an example for her children, grandchildren, and her great-grandchildren."

The works director Janice LoRaso along with her staff supported the launch, carried *The Garden* in the museum's gift shop and proposed its acquisition by their partner institution, Denison University.

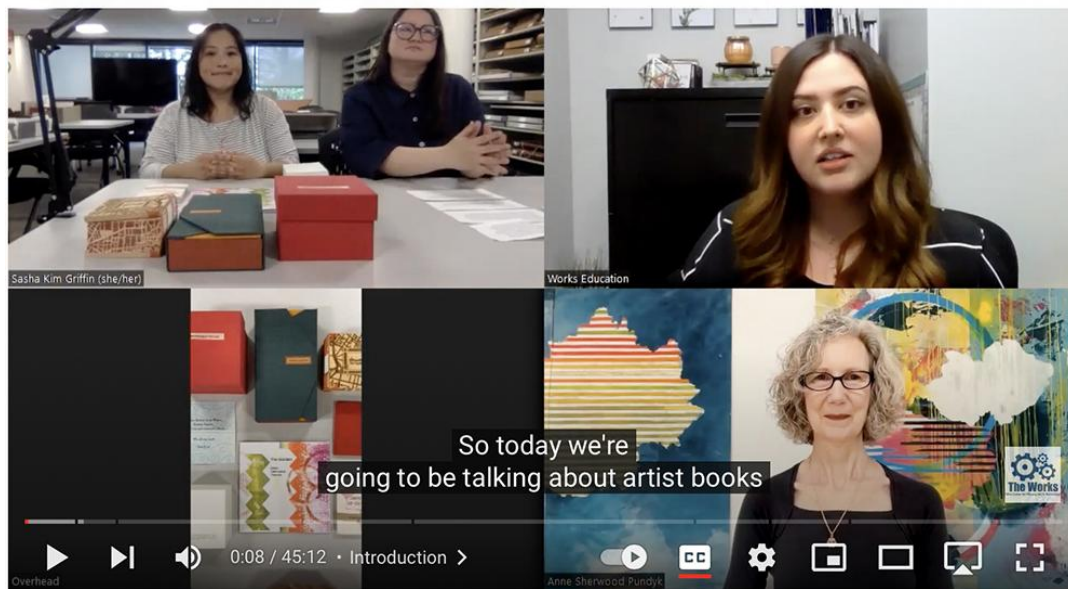


*The Garden* launched at The Works Museum, Newark, OH, February 2022 as part of the exhibition "Permission to Create: The Legacy of Mary Sherwood Wright Jones." Installation view.

*artcritical* published an essay I wrote for the exhibition:

“...like many families I suppose, ours is not without challenges that cloud the legacy we are celebrating. My oldest sister Julia, who kept safe the enchanted, protective circle my grandmother first drew around me, suffered a traumatic injury in 2015. Our family was split in its aftermath, making honest exploration of family history fraught at best...In one very direct way, my grandmother’s illustration work has had a renewed influence on me. I have been working on my artist’s book, *The Garden*, launched at this show, since Julia’s injury...I am using my grandmother’s format. Her audience was young children, her iconography bright; I tell a darker, more complex tale. That too, is part of her legacy.

### **Virtual Artist’s Book Talk with Denison University, Granville OH, May 9, 2022**



Video still from the virtual conversation “The Artist’s Book: A Work of Art” hosted by Celena Gilmore Director of Development at The Works, with Anne Sherwood Pundyk Denison University’s Archives & Special Collections Librarian Sasha Kim Griffin, and Denison University’s Fine Arts Librarian, Stephanie Kays, May 2022.

Celena Gilmore, Director of Development at The Works, hosted a virtual conversation, “The Artist’s Book: A Work of Art” in May:

“Artist Anne Sherwood Pundyk, Denison University’s Archives & Special Collections Librarian Sasha Kim Griffin, and Denison University’s Fine Arts



Librarian, Stephanie Kays, in a discussion on the preservation and varying formats of artists' books. Artists' books are works of art that are often interactive and sculptural. Artists challenge the traditional book format in order to create a one-of-a-kind object inspired by a myriad of techniques and incorporate an array of materials to tell compelling stories of the human heart. During this event, participants will be able to view various artists' books in Denison University's permanent collection, including Anne Sherwood Pundyk's recently published book, *The Garden*."

A video of the conversation is available on YouTube.

### **Book signing Space Sisters Press Booth, NYABF, New York, NY, October 16, 2022**

At Printed Matter's Artist's Book Fair, Space Sisters Press hosted a signing of *The Garden* at their booth. *The Garden* is distributed through Printed Matter, New York, NY.



Space Sisters Press booth at Printed Matter's New York Artist's Book Fair, October, 2022 with, from the left, Emily Devoe, Gretchen Kraus, Anne Sherwood Pundyk and Leeza Meksin.



## Acquisitions

*The Garden* was acquired in 2022 by the special collections of Baylor University, Waco, TX; Denison University, Granville, OH; The New School, New York, NY; The University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT; and The University of California Irvine, Irvine, CA.



Anne Sherwood Pundyk and Sha Towers, Associate Dean of Research and Engagement and Librarian, Baylor University, Waco, TX, March 2022.

## CONCLUSION

Traditional children's literature evokes for me a time of innocence. The last story in *The Garden* harkens to an Eden-like place where people respectfully share ideas in a Conversation Garden. I associate the shapes generated, colors used, and techniques for structuring *The Garden* with my experience processing the divisive aftermath of my sister's stroke; I am looking for the garden.



Anne Sherwood Pundyk, *The Garden*, artist's book, 8.5 x 8.5," 48 pages, Edition of 100, Soft Cover, Published by Space Sisters Press, 2022, detail of pages 2 and 3



Anne Sherwood Pundyk, *The Garden*, artist's book, 8.5 x 8.5," 48 pages, Edition of 100, Soft Cover, Published by Space Sisters Press, 2022, detail of pages 4 and 5

I challenged myself to learn how to write fiction for the book. I drew from my experience creating meaning in my paintings. I read the stories of writers I admired. Finally, I got feedback from other writers. I found a way to create space in the writing, opening it to others.

My artist's book's sequential format speaks to the idea of progression over time, an early lesson from my grandmother's multi-panel illustrations. The viewer can experience the shifts of mood and changes of apprehension as they turn each page. The feeling goes back and forth between light and dark using warm and cool colors. The compositional narrative of the order of images moves from disruption to symmetry and resolves with a final reordering in the last story, "The Garden."



Anne Sherwood Pundyk, *The Garden*, artist's book, 8.5 x 8.5," 48 pages, Edition of 100, Soft Cover, Published by Space Sisters Press, 2022, detail of pages 38 and 39

This progression is modeled on my own experience of moving from anger and disorientation, mourning to questioning, curiosity and compassion, to new levels of understanding.





Anne Sherwood Pundyk, *The Garden*, artist's book, 8.5 x 8.5," 48 pages, Edition of 100, Soft Cover, Published by Space Sisters Press, 2022, detail of pages 21 and 22



Anne Sherwood Pundyk, *The Garden*, artist's book, 8.5 x 8.5," 48 pages, Edition of 100, Soft Cover, Published by Space Sisters Press, 2022, detail of pages 17 and 18





Anne Sherwood Pundyk, *The Garden*, artist's book, 8.5 x 8.5," 48 pages, Edition of 100, Soft Cover, Published by Space Sisters Press, 2022, detail of pages 30 and 31



Anne Sherwood Pundyk, *The Garden*, artist's book, 8.5 x 8.5," 48 pages, Edition of 100, Soft Cover, Published by Space Sisters Press, 2022, detail of pages 39 and 40

*The Garden's* final eponymous story evokes a state of emotional equanimity, “Everyone in the garden would watch the idea-seeds take flight from the tips of their tongues out into the air...People could reflect on the ideas and, if they wanted to, they could comment when they were ready. Others would listen without interrupting. The idea-seeds would land and take root, growing into beautiful intertwining stems and leaves, bearing flowers and fruits of strange and wonderful shapes and colors.” In my current painting, discrete elements have likewise merged into shifting electric fields of nuanced color suggesting connectivity and resilience.



Anne Sherwood Pundyk, *The Garden*, artist's book, 8.5 x 8.5," 48 pages, Edition of 100, Soft Cover, Published by Space Sisters Press, 2022, detail of back cover

I want to thank my family Jeff, Phoebe, and Evan, who have supported my work on *The Garden* in countless ways. I also want to thank Space Sisters Press. Working with Emily and Gretchen has been a most gratifying collaboration. I dedicated *The Garden* to my sister, Julia. I am grateful I can now speak with her periodically over the phone.

— Anne Sherwood Pundyk, April 2023

**END**