

# Santa Ysabel Art Gallery

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SANTA YSABEL, CA . . .

## **JANE CULP EXHIBIT “SUSPECT TERRAIN” AT SANTA YSABEL ART GALLERY**

At Santa Ysabel Art Gallery, October 8 through November 13, 2016 will be a one person show, *Suspect Terrain: Paintings from Southern California and the Eastern Sierra*. The exhibit will feature the work (mainly oil with some watercolor and charcoal) of contemporary California painter Jane Culp. Opening Reception for *Suspect Terrain* is Saturday, October 8, 4 - 7 pm. Admission is free. The public is invited.

Jane Culp is an artist who paints the wilderness. She is known throughout the country for her evocative on-site western landscapes in oil, charcoal, and watercolor. In this exhibit at Santa Ysabel Art Gallery, Culp will show pieces painted in the Southern California low and high desert, and work that she has done as a Resident Artist in and around Joshua Tree and Yosemite National Parks. One of the Yosemite Park paintings in this exhibit was included in the Yosemite section (in a chapter featuring Culp) of the book Art in the National Parks, published in 2013 by Fresco Fine Arts. Jane Culp has had solo shows at the Bowery Gallery and at The Painting Center in New York City, in addition to a recent exhibit at John Davis Gallery in Hudson, New York. The Palm Springs Art Museum exhibited her work as part of a desert thematic show several years ago.

Culp is a rock person. Rocks , cliffs, mountains, and boulders are her main subject matter. She lives and has her studio in Anza, California, home of some very fine and paintable rocks, cliffs, and boulders. She became familiar with this rugged high desert area during a several decades long involvement as a painter with the Dorland Mountain Arts Colony, a nearby artist's retreat. In 2004 Dorland, as she knew it, burned to the ground and moved Culp to purchase land in Anza, building a studio to work in, and then a straw bale cabin to live in. She says “The Anza land looked like a

national park in its sheer beauty and Dorland had been my landscape painting refuge for nearly 20 years.” (A hopeful note about Dorland. It has been rebuilding since that 2004 fire and is accepting creatives as resident artists again.) Jane Culp also lives part of the time in Borrego Springs.

“I am overwhelmed with the feelings of awe and amazement for the western desert landscape”, Jane Culp says, “where raw sculpted earth is pounded with intense unforgiving daylight, and where immense spaces attach to an ever present horizon line of sight which sports caricatures of stubby balancing vegetation. An infinite black bowl of starry night offers an antidote to this tortured taught skin of landscape.” The exhibit *Suspect Terrain* takes its name from a 1983 John McPhee book titled *In Suspect Terrain*. The implication being, Culp says, “is that nature is always more than it seems, it is suspect in that it requires detective work to see the particular story about how it is made, and that the unbelievable can be physically actual”.

Painting on-site is not easy. Nature does not always sit quietly for her portraits. Wall Street Journal arts writer Lance Esplund wrote this in July, 2010 in regard to a then current show of Jane Culp’s called *Wilderness Work* at the Bowery Gallery: “When working outside in the desert, with its overpowering winds and relentless sun’, the landscape painter writes, ‘I strap my easel to my legs.... When I work in watercolor, it is held to the ground with either my knees or my feet’. Yet despite her struggle with the elements, Ms. Culp arrives in these expressive oils, charcoals and watercolors at a place of structural clarity and composure – while making palpable the rush she feels interacting with nature. Her pictures’ restless skies and stepped sharply carved mountain peaks retain the vastness, monumentality and naturalism of their subjects. Yet ultimately she is painting not the landscape but the thrill of engagement.”

Note: There is an excellent interview with Jane Culp by San Diego blogger and painter Larry Groff posted on his blog *Painting Perceptions*, dated August 28, 2015.

Santa Ysabel Art Gallery is located at 30352 Highway 78 at Highway 79 in Santa Ysabel, seven miles below Julian. Admission to the gallery is free. Gallery hours are Thursday through Monday, 11AM - 5 PM, and by appointment. Closed Tuesday and Wednesday. For more information call 760.765.1676.