

March 30, 2017 | By Dolores Davies

UC San Diego Alumna Joyce Cutler-Shaw Honored for Major Contributions to the Library

Internationally acclaimed multimedia artist, Joyce Cutler-Shaw, a member of the University of California San Diego's inaugural MFA (Master of Fine Arts) class of 1972, has received the UC San Diego Library's Geisel Citation award for Library Philanthropy. Cutler-Shaw is the first alumna to receive the Library's annual Geisel Citation, which is presented to active and stalwart supporters, who have made significant contributions to the growth and success of the Library.



Joyce Cutler Shaw pictured "In the Garden of Wild Birds and Grasses," Walk-In Book, San Diego Central Library, 2015.

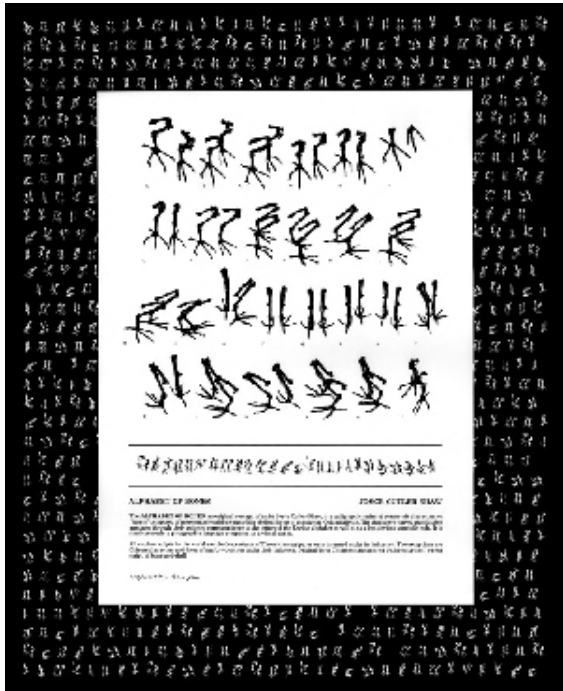
"Over the years, Joyce Cutler-Shaw has been an avid supporter and an active participant in the life of the UC San Diego Library," said Brian E. C. Schottlaender, The Audrey Geisel University Librarian at UC San Diego. "Her amazing and distinctive works of art have appeared in numerous Library exhibitions and artistic collaborations. Most recently, Joyce made a generous gift to the Library to establish the Joyce Cutler-Shaw Archive in our Special Collections & Archives. We are pleased to award this citation to Joyce in honor of her legacy of support and as an inspiration to others in the pursuit of knowledge, creativity, and transformational discovery."



Survival Ice Sculpture, Messages from the World, UN Plaza, New York, 1982.

Her artist books, public art installations, and other artistic creations have ranged from carved, melting "ice words" such as "SURVIVAL," and the large iconic "HE" and "SHE" metal works, to reflective light sculptures and intricate pen and ink drawings of the human form and the natural world. In 1995, Cutler-Shaw became the first American artist to serve as an artist-in-residence at a university medical school, when she was offered the post at UC San Diego's School of Medicine. During that time, she spent countless hours studying and drawing cadavers, and

produced a mixed-media, interdisciplinary work called “The Anatomy Lesson,” reflecting her continuing interest in the body as the matrix for the human condition.



Alphabet of Bones Poster, 1988.

Visitors to Geisel Library rarely fail to notice the artist’s *Alphabet of Bones*, an intriguing and boldly original art installation, featured on the easterly wall (and the soffit above) in the Special Collections & Archives’ exhibition area in Geisel Library’s West Wing. In conceiving this unusual calligraphic work, Cutler-Shaw was inspired by the hollow bones of birds—pigeons, specifically—resulting in a series of anatomically correct “drawings,” depicting an “alphabet of bones.” While many artists would leave it at that, Cutler-Shaw went on to digitize the alphabet’s 26 double characters, render it translatable into both English and symbolic code, and then, she copyrighted it. Creating—in effect— her own personal font or typeface.

“The Library’s Special Collections & Archives have long been the repository for my work, and also hold the collections of many artists and writers I admire,” said Cutler-Shaw, “So I’m very pleased to make this gift, and

very happy to know that my archive of artistic works will be preserved in perpetuity at the Library of my alma mater, UC San Diego, a place and an institution I truly value.”

In addition to the establishment of her archive—which comprises her original writings and drawings, correspondence, project proposals, photographs and slides, and audio and video recordings—Cutler-Shaw donated funds to support and enhance awareness of and access to the visual and performing arts collections at the university. The Library plans to present the Geisel Citation award to the artist at a private event later this spring.

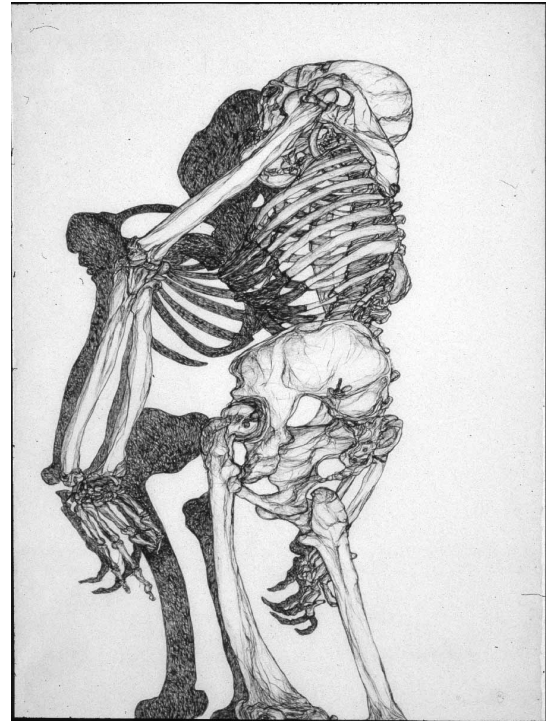
Last year, Cutler-Shaw’s work was on display in “Artists & Language: Celebrating 50 Years of UC San Diego’s Visual Arts,” an exhibition of original works of art, artists’ books and unique archival pieces from UC San Diego Library’s Special Collections. In addition to her artist books, she has been commissioned by a number of San Diego public libraries to create site specific art installations. Her diverse body of work is explored in *She is Fierce: the Art of Joyce Cutler-Shaw*, an award-winning video produced in 2016 by UCSD-TV: Her artist books and other creative works have been exhibited at the San Diego Central Library, the Athenaeum Music & Arts Library, the Oceanside Museum of Art, the Center for Photography and the Moving Image (NYC), NYU Library, and Durango Arts Center. In the fall of 2017, the UC San Diego Library and the Athenaeum Music & Arts Library will mount complementary exhibitions of Cutler-Shaw’s work.

While the UC San Diego Library's Special Collections & Archives is the single largest repository of Cutler-Shaw's work, her expansive and diverse body of work is also represented in both museum and library collections throughout the world, including the Museum of Modern Art (New York), the Albertina Museum (Austria), the Klingspore Museum (Germany), the Tyler Museum (The Netherlands), the Getty Museum (Los Angeles), and the National Museum of Women in the Arts (Washington, D.C.).

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"Skeletons and Shadows" drawings, Oceanside Museum, 2015.

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