



Cover Artist:
Susan Brearey

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By Don Cuerdon



<above> **LYDIA GORHAM '10, SALLY MANN '69, AND COVER ARTIST, SUSAN BREAREY, OUTSIDE SALLY'S HOUSE LAST MARCH.** <top> **ART TEACHER SUSAN BREAREY SKETCHES A HERD OF CAIRNGORM REINDEER IN SCOTLAND.**

Sue Brearey has been part of the Art Department faculty, off and on, since 1991. When she's on, she teaches drawing and painting, administers the Michael S. Currier Center gallery, and oversees the creation of each handcrafted diploma of the graduating class. When she's off, she shows her wildlife-inspired paintings in galleries around the world (including the first-ever Western show in China in 2007), teaches college and graduate students, and seeks out wilderness areas for inspiration. Her current project is a new body of work related to the visual effects of global climate change. Most recently, she was instrumental in getting world-renowned art photographer, Sally Mann '69, to show in our gallery, speak to the student body, and take on a March Work Term student. Although worthy of representation by the Gerald Peters Gallery in Santa Fe, New Mexico (where Sue hosted "boatloads of fun Putney alums" at her show last summer), Sue's work has never graced the cover of the Putney Post, so we've chosen to address that oversight in this issue. Here's what she has to say about her work and the fine art of teaching fine art:

While I was in France as an Evergreen College undergrad, we were the last group to see the Paleolithic animal paintings in the Lascaux caves.

I came out a different person. I was a French Lit major, although I had done some drawing classes. I came home very confused. My advisor said, "What if you take a semester in France painting with Parson's School of Design?" And that was it for me.

My love of wildlife comes from growing up on the coast of Maine and exploring tide pools. My eccentric French-Canadian grandmother started us drawing as little kids.

It [came from] hiking in the Northwest, too. You run into big critters. I like the fact that their habitat is true wilderness. They're aware of us long before we're aware of them. I like that moment of alertness before they flee. I draw them on site. I remember the shape and mess with it later.

You are your work. It's one of those things. Everything you do is a self-portrait. I always tell the kids that. It's your vision, it's your touch—it's who you are.

Art school has a tendency to be such an inward spiral. Putney is more of an outward spiral. While a graduate student in painting at the Rhode Island School of Design I found that it, though a wonderful experience, was "art about art about art about art." At Putney, we're always talking about the important things in the outer world.

That's why I've stayed. I've taught at enough colleges to know how good it is here. Putney is such a massive laboratory and there's so much to draw from visually. Beauty is what sparks most of what our students do, whether the image they create is beautiful or not.

We're exposing them to really good art with the gallery. I try to push the level of what we're showing so they're exposed to work we're not going to normally see in Putney, Vermont. We're like any

notable university gallery at this point. We're currently booked through 2014. The word is out. And we have this incredible alumni pool—people who are really doing it and started here.

When we opened the Currier Center and we did a show with 76 alumni artists, I was seven months pregnant. I went into premature labor from that. That was when I first made contact with Sally Mann. We started going back and forth, thanks to her old roommate Lisa Chase '69, about when she could do a show here. It went on for six years because she's so busy.

Lydia (Gorham'10, last issue's cover artist) came to me in the dorm one night last winter when I was about to email Sally about the show. Lydia asked me if I knew a photographer she could work for during March break. So I added a p.s. to my message. I said Lydia was a real sleeves-rolled-up, hands-in-the-muck, great kind of kid. She could shovel sh*t. She could do anything. Sally sounded amenable, so I put them in touch with each other.

Lydia saw what most people never see. She got to go in the darkroom. Lydia got to actually see her work in there. Sally doesn't let anybody do that.

Sally Mann has been asked to teach or speak at pretty every major institution around the world. Driving to the airport the next day she was saying, "What is it about Putney? It's such a magical place."