



Susan Jane Sykes

March 8, 1942 - April 7, 2024

Susan Sykes couldn't wait to paint. She started drawing and painting at age two, her first show was inside the boxwood hedge outside her house when she was 4, and she had her premier legitimate show at the legendary Martick's in Baltimore at 22. She studied and painted with Maryland's own Joe Sheppard and photorealist John Rummelhoff. After many adventures sailing and traveling the world (leaving a trail of broken hearts and sketches traded for food) she returned to NYC in 1972 with an Irish baby in her arms. Susan raised her girl Saoirse on her own in NYC (while it was still seedy as hell) as an advertising illustrator for 20+ years. She worked alongside the comic strip master Ken Bald, cultivated deep friendships with fellow artists, and even colored a comic book or two with her friend Jon Buscema. She knocked out storyboards, comps, and animatics for petulant and lunatic art directors until all hours of the night. Susan was every bit the consummate pro.

Susan's dreams were realized when she showed at her hero Ivan Karp's O.K. Harris Gallery in 1994 (followed by a cramped-yet-sophisticated party in her apartment where her dogs stole many, many of her d'oeuvres). She stayed with O.K. Harris until 2006. After that, she was represented by the indomitable Louis Meisel at his 57th gallery until 2014. Susan has shown at Sheppard Gallery, Craig Flinner Gallery, Robert Antresian Gallery, and Steven Scott Gallery, all in Baltimore. Susan made a splash in Florida: her work was shown alongside her idols Richard Estes and Robert Bechtle in the Vero Beach

Museum, and her irreverent Key West paintings are at Cocco and Salem Imagine Gallery. Throughout her life, her work has been shown and celebrated in national and international museums, competitions, magazine covers, and even in the NYC Hell's Angels clubhouse. Susan's defining purpose was art and she never stopped getting better.

If you've met Susan, you've likely not forgotten. She was charming, beautiful, biting funny, and the best guest at any party. Susan straddled the dichotomy of being a remarkably frugal snob—such is the life of starving artists with great taste. Always up for adventure, she had the best stories to tell—her sharp wit or wiles got her out of jackpot after jackpot. In contrast, Susan doted over and fiercely protected her daughter Saoirse, who she dearly loved all her life. Susan's unflappable confidence in Saoirse has become a loving and guiding voice for her (Susan often told Saoirse, "You're the best person I know").

Regardless of where she was, Susan was rarely without an animal companion—she even had a cat when she sailed. Her love for animals was essential, and she passed this infectious adoration to her daughter Saoirse. Her most recent dog Sammy (AKA Salvatore) is a screeching nightmare with a seahorse face and a baked potato body who is a testament of Susan's ability to love a wretched thing.

Tribute Wall

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“ We are deeply sorry for your loss ~ *Simplicity Cremation & Funeral Services*

A Memorial Tree was planted for Susan Jane Sykes - April 07, 2024 at 02:00 PM