

PAINTING SPACE IN NEW MEXICO

In 1976, I moved from New York City to the Jemez Mountains of northern New Mexico, where I began painting landscapes, working on site in an area with cliffs and rocks that could be prototypes for Mars. I also included the sun and moon in some of these paintings.

Intrigued by astronomical images, I began painting space using photographs in 1983. I was initially assisted by Drs. Marcus Price and Michael Zeilik of the University of New Mexico and other scientists and who provided me with images, information and reference materials. I also became an active member of the International Association of Astronomical Artists.

In 1986, I attended a IAAA workshop at the Johnson Space Center in Houston. This included meeting NASA astronauts, trying on their spacesuits, using hardware, photographing and sketching equipment and other relevant activities. I remain in contact with astronomical artists, photographers, and scientists.

My space paintings are a synthesis of inner as well as outer space. I approach painting in a contemplative manner and have studied and practiced Zen and Tibetan meditative and artistic traditions for over thirty years. I work in oil on canvas using as inspiration cutting edge photographic images from space which continue to amaze me.

My color choice is intuitive and I include metallics, irridescent and micro glass beads in paintings that reference photographs. Surface texture and scale are two important aspects of my spacescapes. Many of these images I use are the classics while others are more obscure. They may be digital or on traditional film and some are simulated by computer.

I have exhibited in numerous international exhibitions, including the Basel Art Fair and in Moscow before the Berlin wall was removed. One painting was shown live on German television projected from the MIR satellite. My museum one person show at the American Museum of Natural History/Hayden Planetarium in New York City that traveled to the Space Center in Alamogordo, New Mexico was well received.

Finally, living in a small, rural New Mexico village with no street lights, I find unlimited inspiration in the night sky.

Judy Asbury
Jemez Pueblo, 2007