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Visual Arts Catherine Courtenaye, Bozeman. Catherine Courtenaye was born in Madrid, Spain, and grew up around the world as the daughter of a diplomat. She earned an MFA in painting from the University of Iowa, and lives in Bozeman.

A recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts Individual Artist Award, she has had numerous solo exhibitions nationally, and her work is included in the permanent collections of the Boise Art Museum, Crocker Art Museum, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, the Oakland Museum of California and the Tucson Museum of Art.

She's taught as a guest artist at Montana State University, San Jose State University, and California College of the Arts, among others, and has been the subject of publications, in tandem with exhibits at the Boise Art Museum and Stremmel Gallery in Reno, and featured in Big Sky Magazine.

Her paintings include fragments of 19th century handwriting embedded beneath layers, including naturalistic studies of birds of the American West, pen-and-ink drawings, aerial landscapes, and maps. "My own gestures are in a kind of conversation with the shape of imprinted text and scribbling," she writes.

Through the years, she has sought new ways to highlight "the strange beauty and expressiveness of the ordinary handwriting of our ancestors."

In the process, she's developed a technique that employs photo silkscreen to transfer facsimiles of handwriting above and below fields of color. "I believe I've found a way to conjure the passage of time abstractly – by employing layers, translucency, and revealing what lies beneath the surface," she says.

Panel members praised her "compelling approach" to using language and communication in her work, and the depth and ingenuity of her recent body of work, which combines birds and language "in a fluid and meaningful way."

"These new works are an exciting departure from her previous work," notes a panelist. "She maintains her focus on script and written communication, while including visual elements that speak about space, structure and distance."

"She is successful in her creation of translucent surfaces, layering and abstraction in her works, where the shapes and lines, not the word itself, creates the composition."



Specimens (with Ibis), 2015, oil on canvas, 44 x 68 inches