

## PRESS RELEASE (print)

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### **Souther Explores Relationships of Life to Art in New Book**

*Art and Inspiration* (scheduled for release September 2013) follows one woman's journey through the creative process, reflected upon as she gradually loses her eyesight to Macular Degeneration. The artist, Souther, who goes by a single name, has juxtaposed a memoir of her life with a lavishly illustrated art book. The book flickers with snippets of stories that are as compelling as her jewelry. Proceeds from the book are dedicated to research for treatment of macular degeneration.

The appeal reaches beyond the universe of those who admire sophisticated, wearable art. As the jewelry pieces surrender the stories of their inspiration, they illuminate her story. She offers fragmented insights of herself as a child, growing up amid the shifting mood swings of her mother, a talented, published poet stymied by bipolar disorder, a mother who would retreat into the depths of depression, lying on the couch chain smoking cigarettes for days.

A necklace titled *Dustmote*, glimmers like specks of dust in the light, which she finds an apt description for growing up with a bipolar parent. The benign neglect of her childhood spawned a spirited sense of independence as she grew up in Bozeman, Montana, learning to hunt and butcher game from her father and to tend the garden and family farm animals from her mother.

The faceted garnet beads crocheted into a necklace remind her of eating brilliant pomegranate seeds at Christmas and of the death of her younger sister. She contrasts the graceful antique glass drops and olive green pearls of another necklace to her own rebellious nature. Another necklace was inspired by thoughts of what she has learned in parenting her own son.

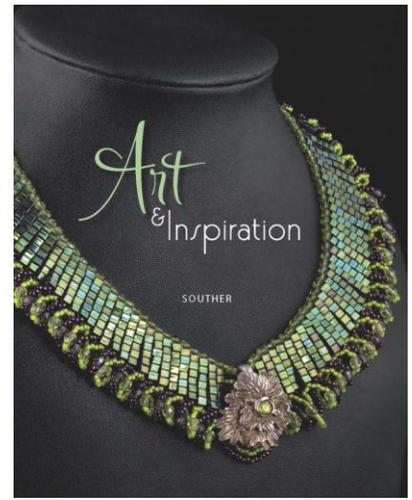
At 16, Souther left home and hitchhiked across the country. Years later, she audaciously chose a career as an architect, in part because no one thought she could do it. The crunch of project deadlines reminded her of the careening rollercoaster ride of living with her mother's mood swings.

Her book is about more than her art and her inspiration, and it is more than a memoir. The subtext involves "threading the needle blind," plunging ahead as she slowly loses her vision to age-related macular degeneration. Diagnosed in 2001, Souther remains driven by her artistic vision, even as her eyesight fails.

When a woman walks into a room wearing one of her necklaces, the jewelry makes its own statement. The interplay of intricate patterns and lush colors conjure distinct moods. The book's page-length stories do the same. Taken together, they offer insight into an artist's life.

If you are interested in additional information, scheduling an interview, a sample copy for reviewing "Art & Inspiration," please contact Souther, 406-661-3504 or visit the website: <http://www.thesouthergroup.com/publishing/art-and-inspiration.php>. Smyth sewn, hardbound, 112 page full color acid free paper, \$35. Souther is currently working on a pattern book for advanced beaders. Souther Group Publishing was created to facilitate a partnership between producer and author.

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## WHAT PEOPLE SAY ABOUT ART AND INSPIRATION:

"When Souther first contacted me about her eye disease and her work as a bead artist I was curious; what did she have in mind when she said she wanted to create a lasting legacy of her beadwork and raise money for Discovery Eye Foundation AMD research? This book is a true tribute to vision, from the photographs of her beautiful beaded designs, to the pictures she paints with her personal stories"

**Susan Lee DeRemer** *Vice President of Development The Discovery Eye Foundation*

Reading *Art & Inspiration* is an immersion into the art, craft and life of the artist Souther. The inspiration for each example of her jewelry has a corresponding incidence in her anecdotal biography. The text and illustrations are juxtaposed to aid in our understanding and appreciation of her art, craft and life. Read any page at any time and be yourself inspired.

**Ray Campeau**, *art instructor, owner and director of the Butte Phoenix art gallery*

In this unflinchingly honest, sometimes poetic, always perceptive memoir, we are privileged to see how an artist's life informs her art and, in turn, how her art informs her life. With Souther we travel a circuitous route full of twists and turns and tangles that lead to unexpected places and unforeseen events. It is an unorthodox journey, that is reflected in the eclectic choices of color, material and technique by which inspiration becomes art.

**Linda Peavy and Ursula Smith**, *Co-authors of: Pioneer Women, Women Who Change Things and Dreams into Bead*

"I'm an actor; what do I know or care about jewelry? But surprise! The photos in this book unexpectedly dazzled me. And when I read about the woman who designed them, I was beguiled even more. Souther is blessed with being able to fly in her dreams: a rare gift from God, which I'm sure will continue through her life. Buy this odd and fascinating book!"

**Orson Bean**, *Film, television and Broadway actor*



The Souther  
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### STORY ANGLES

- Growing up with bi-polar mother
- Beading techniques—threading the needle blind
- Art & Inspiration—what drives us to create
- Interplay between art & architecture
- Macular degeneration
- Career Changes

### Biography:

Souther had the good fortune of spending her early childhood at Minnesota Summerhill, a progressive school at Lake Minnetonka modeled on the famed British school built on the idea that children learn best when they are free from coercion. Her schooling came from a scholarship from the actor Orson Bean. Her mother, who suffered from bipolar disorder, would never have had the where-with-all to pay tuition, but she did want her daughter to grow and explore the world at her own pace.

Summerhill ended when her mother remarried and the family moved to Montana. Her little sister and best friend, Sharlane Adair, turned their days into stories. Together they took swimming lessons, rode their ponies and played with the new baby, Sarah. When Sharlane died suddenly at the age of 7, their mother's child-rearing philosophy of "feed 'em and leave 'em alone," turned to being pro-actively protective. By the time Souther turned 12, she was making her own clothes and was a fine cook. By age 14, she was hitchhiking across the country.

Charging through life at Break - neck speed, she worked various jobs, became a life model, married, and returned with her husband to Montana. By the time her first marriage ended, she knew she wanted to have a university degree.

She was accepted into the school of architecture at the University of Oregon in Eugene, had her son David, married his father and returned to Montana to work. In addition to her career as an artist, she is a consulting architect.