

CAL POLY POMONA DOWNTOWN CENTER GALLERY



Marvelle Thompson (right) is a native Californian who received her Bachelor's Degree in Fine Art from Cal State San Bernardino. She has been working in elementary education for thirty years and has a Master's Degree in education. Marvelle has taught art to adults and children alike, and is a strong supporter of the visual and performing arts in the classroom. She has always made time for her own artistic voice to be expressed. Her art work is influenced by the beauty and magic in the cycles of nature and the feminine face of the Divine. Creating art brings balance to her life.

Born and raised in New York City, **Susan Kullmann** (left) has lived in Claremont, California for twenty-five years. She received her Bachelor's and Masters Degree from SUNY Stony Brook and her doctorate in history from Carnegie-Mellon University. She is currently a Research Scholar at UCLA's Center for the Study of Women, and managing managing director of DoctorGeek, a local Claremont web development, computer training, and consulting firm. She has twenty years experience in higher education, eight working in academic computing and sixteen in college teaching. Her career includes positions at Cal Poly Pomona as former Director of the Faculty Computing Support Center and instructor of online, hybrid, and traditional courses; at California State University, Long Beach as a history and women's studies instructor; and at Claremont McKenna College as an educational technologist. Working on *Blessed Are These Hands* has developed Susan's appreciation of how art can bring balance to one's life.

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“BLESSED ARE THESE HANDS”

A Photographic Collection by Susan Kullmann and Marvelle Thompson

Blessed Are These Hands is a collection of fifty-nine photographs depicting the hands of women “holding something they consider sacred, holy, and outward representation of their deepest selves.” The subjects range in age from four to eighty, family and friends who accepted an invitation to participate in the project.

Blessed Are These Hands combines my appreciation of capturing an instant with a photograph and my computer expertise with a long-term professional and personal interest in the history and contemporary meaning of women’s lives. I have enjoyed working with photographic images for most of my adult life, from black and white darkroom work to elaborate slide programs for high school and college students to extensive online web albums for academic programs, history lectures, vacations and reunions, even my son’s wedding.

In most cases, my photos spoke for themselves, sometimes given more meaning by accompanying lectures, music, or text on a website. The subjects of *Blessed Are These Hands* comments about their photo accompany the images, which personalizes and enhances each picture. Their remarks are as varied as what they hold in their hands. As a whole, the collection suggests the depth and range of American women’s spirituality in the early 21st century.

This collection began as Marvelle’s solstice vow, and the Goddess seems to guide our collaboration. From the beginning, we were in harmony about decisions ranging from which of the many photos shot of each woman’s hands we use in the collection to how to create the final photo to capture its essence.

We plan to publish *Blessed Are These Hands*. We hope to provide the opportunity for more women to participate in what we call “The Hands Project.”

--Susan Kullmann, 2005

Blessed Are These Hands is a vow to creatively capture the feminine face of the Holy and, in some small way, repay the debt I owe to ALL women: Women whose hands have embraced life and the constant battle for justice. I wanted to look at women through a different lens other than the lens used in modern advertising. I began to look to my circle of female family and friends as subjects who could reflect the Sacred.

The photographs echo the stages of a woman’s life: Maiden, Mother and Crone. The hands became mini-altars, cradling the sacred and sometimes the mundane. Sometimes the most sacred is often found in everyday objects.

Text adds another layer of voice, a harmony. My heart has been touched by the stories that were shared. They go deeper than the phrasing you will read and I feel privileged to be a keeper of those words.

The result is a gift of GRACE.

--Marvelle Thompson, 2005