
ALLISON DOHERTY

Mixed Media Artist



ALLISON DOHERTY was raised in rural upstate New York, where numerous ponds, meadows, and wooded areas defined her sense of space. As she grew older, rural environments acquired spiritual significance and held a “spirit of place” in her memory.

Most recently, Doherty has come to love the less populated rural areas of southern France. As an artist, she never fails to be nourished and stimulated by the Midi-Pyrénées and the Languedoc regions. Each visit offers fragments that might lend form

to a new composition. Images gleaned on fruitful walks furnish lasting impressions of beauty, isolation, and cultural heritage.

These wanderings have also sparked an ongoing fascination with the Cathar culture. Also known as the Albigensians, the Cathars were a medieval sect practicing in the Languedoc region of southern France—part of ancient Occitania—from the tenth to the fourteenth centuries. Threatened by their numbers, a bloody crusade against them was instigated by the Catholic Church, whose forces annihilated entire populations and villages. Catharism was eradicated in the early fourteenth century, but their memory lingers in stone and spirit. As Doherty struggles to comprehend the unquestioning faith that caused the Cathars to die so violently for their beliefs, her imagination is fueled by the tragic saga.

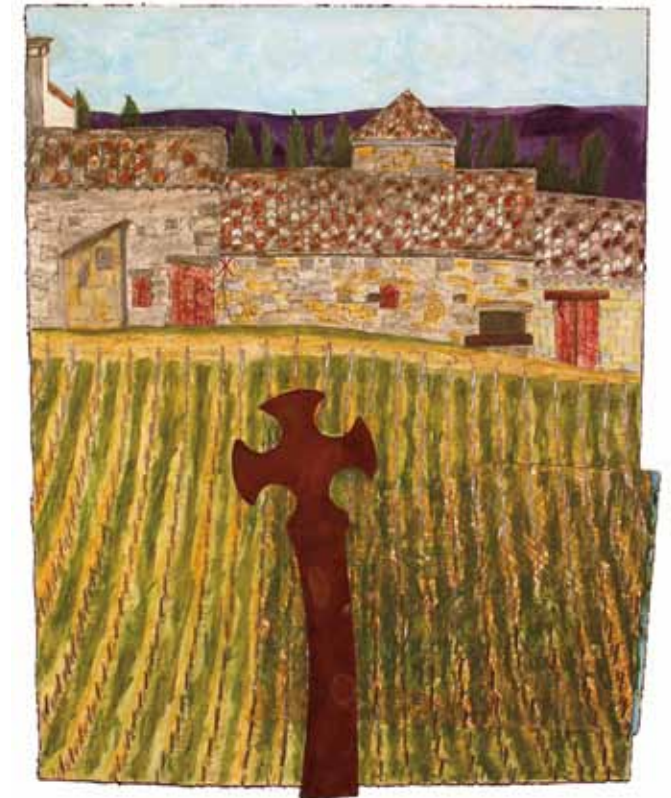
One particular fourteenth-century Occitan cross—crusted with centuries-old lichens, scarred by the elements, and forgotten by time—held silent testimony and raised the hair on the back of Doherty’s neck when she laid her hand on it. Much of Doherty’s work now includes her interpretation of this cultural icon.

PORTFOLIO

Inspired by France

I am inspired by interactions with historical, rural environments. This series—Inspired by France—reflects my time spent wandering the countryside of southern France. “The Barn Below” is the largest work in this series, and represents a place that I dreamed of buying. Surrounded by sunflowers and located outside of a medieval village, I noticed it while out for an early morning walk. I returned often, as though on a pilgrimage, attempting to see it from all angles to feel how it might be to live there. Attempts to contact the absent owner were futile, but the energy and spirit of the place stayed with me. Another piece in this series, “The Village Above,” looks up from this barn.

In hopes of echoing the souls of places I’ve experienced, elements within my work may be from additional sources of inspiration. Generally, I try to reflect “spirit of place” rather than specific locations or landmarks, although this was not the case with “Stone Barn and Vineyard,” which I spotted from the road. Both “Yellow House Near Canal” and “Wayfarers and Penitents Chapels Above the Gorge” merge invented with observed elements, while “Howling at God’s Fingers,” “Night of the Gargoyles,” and the “Cathar Dreamscape” series pay homage to the spirit of the Cathars using the motif of the Occitan cross.



Stone Barn and Vineyard, 2011. 21 x 26 inches (53.2 x 65.9 cm).
Pencil, aqua-crayon, collaged elements on Arches paper.

I create pieces by layering monotypes, drawings, paintings, and collage materials. Each piece takes weeks to develop and complete, as each of the layered pieces find their place in the composition. My landscapes often become fragmented and re-invented—like memories themselves—into a single composition to communicate a certain spirit, history, and/or mystery of place.



The Village Above, 2009. 35.5 x 25 inches (89.9 x 63.3 cm).
Aqua-crayon, pencil, printed and collaged elements on paper.



Wayfarers and Penitents Chapels Above the Gorge, 2011. 38 x 26 inches (96.3 x 65.9 cm).
Pencils, acrylic, watercolor, aqua-crayon, oil, charcoal, pastel, printed and collaged elements on Arches paper.



The Barn Below, 2011. 45 x 47 inches (114.0 x 119.1 cm).
Pencils, ink, acrylic, aqua-crayon, printed and collaged elements on Arches paper.



Yellow House Near Canal, 2008. 26 x 22 inches (65.9 x 55.7 cm).
Pencil, aqua-crayon, collaged elements on paper.



Cathbar Dreamscape II, 2011. 22 x 30 inches (55.7 x 76.0 cm).
Oil monotype with pastel and pencil on Arches paper.



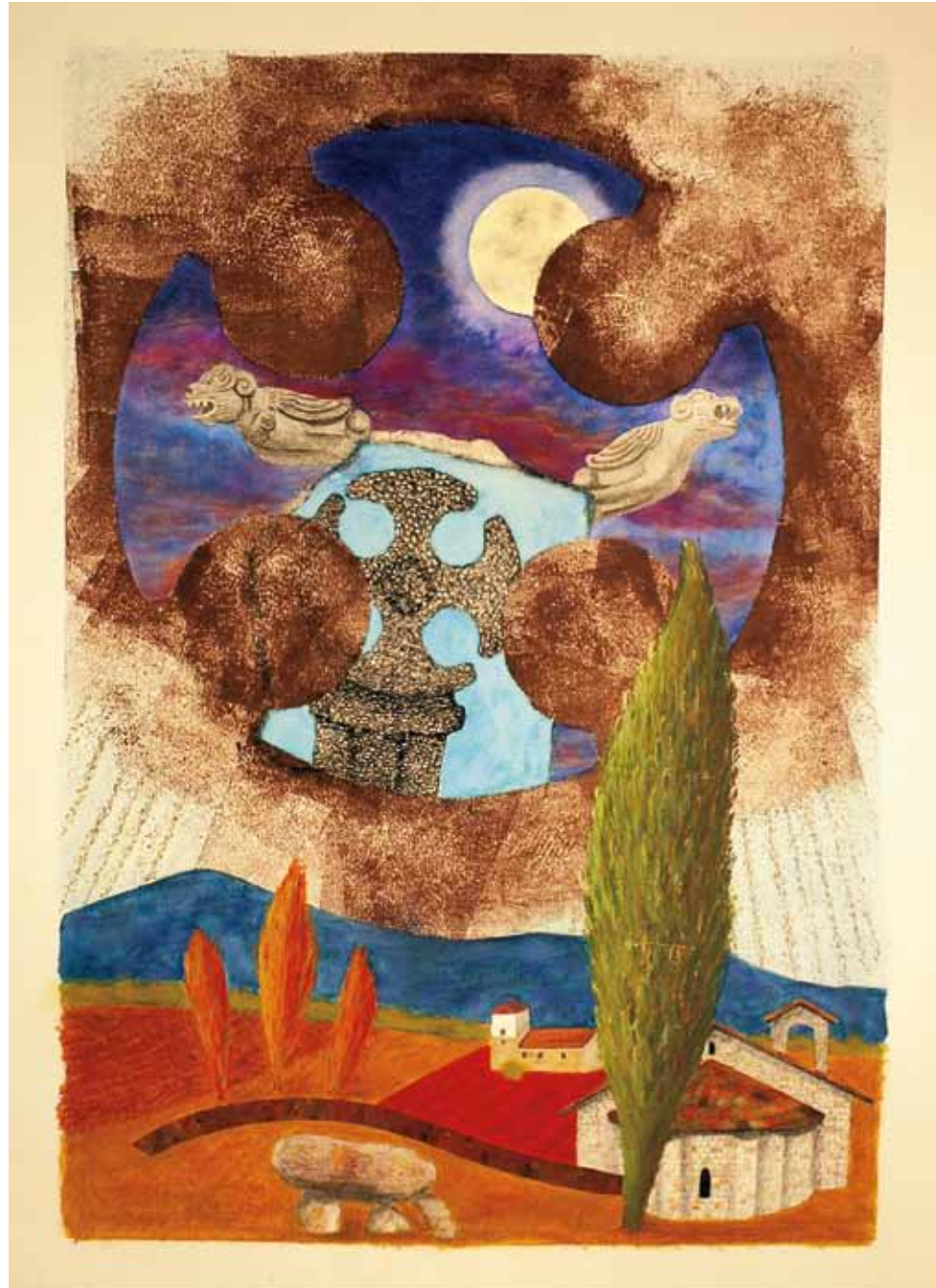
Cathbar Dreamscape V, 2011. 22 x 30 inches (55.7 x 76.0 cm).
Oil monotype with pastel on Arches paper.



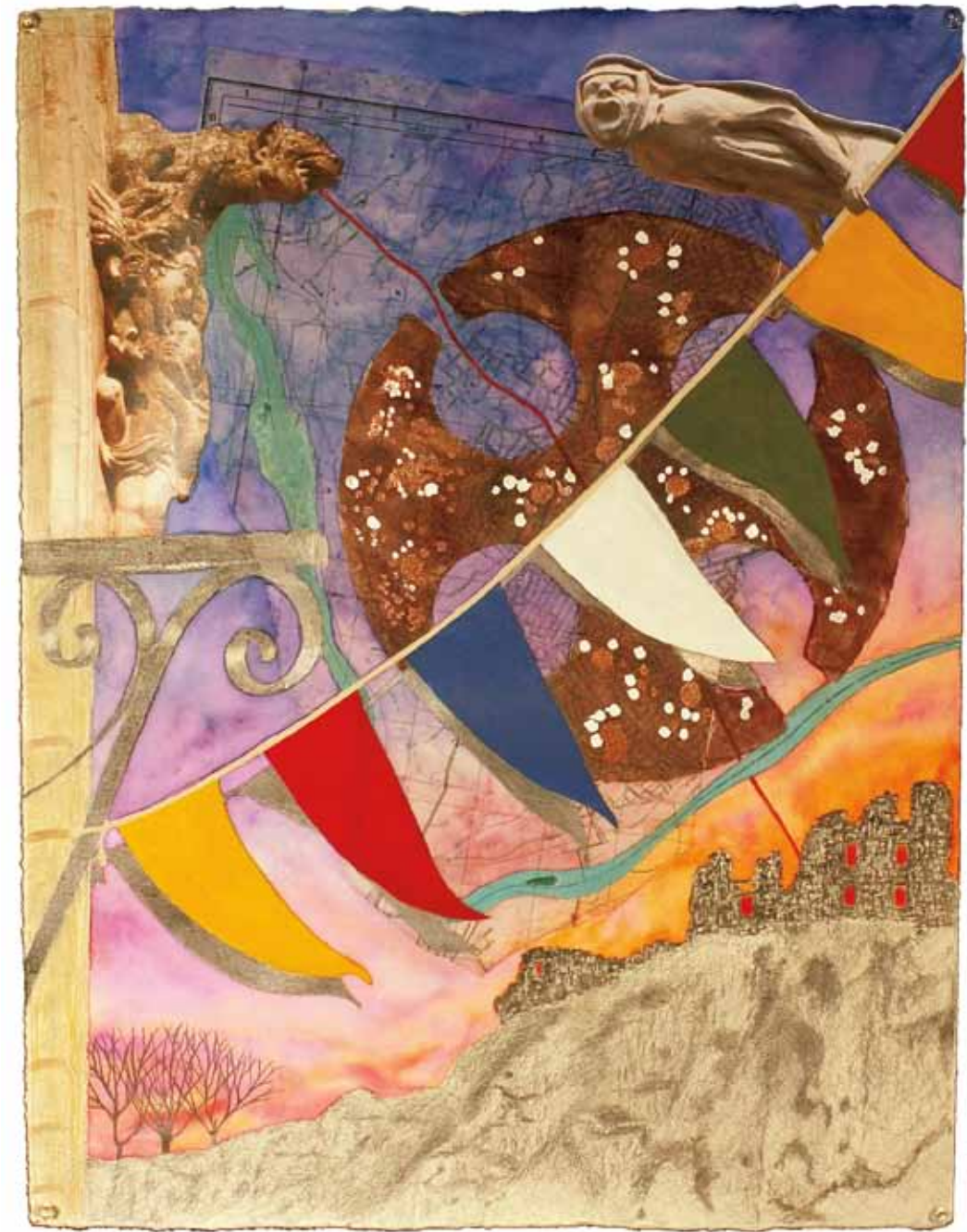
Cathbar Dreamscape III, 2011. 22 x 30 inches (55.7 x 76.0 cm).
Oil monotype with pastel and watercolor on Arches paper.



Cathbar Dreamscape IV, 2011. 22 x 30 inches (55.7 x 76.0 cm).
Oil monotype with pastel on Arches paper.



Howling Above God's Fingers, 2011. 22 x 30 inches (55.7 x 76.0 cm).
Pencils, pastel, charcoal, ink, watercolor, oil, printed and collaged elements on Arches paper.



Night of the Gargoyles, 2010. 20 x 26 inches (50.7 x 65.9 cm).
Pencils, ink, acrylic, embossing powder, collaged elements on Arches paper.



La Croix Des Cathars, 2005. 21 x 27 inches (53.2 x 68.4 cm).
Pencil, aqua-crayon, collaged elements on salvaged paper.



Cathar Dreamscape with Penitents Chapel, 2011. 26 x 34 inches (65.9 x 86.1 cm).
Oil monotype with pastel, watercolor and collaged elements on Arches paper.