

# *Illuminated Field Journal Workshops*

with Hannah Hinchman

*author of:*

*A Life in Hand: Creating the Illuminated Journal*

*A Trail Through Leaves: the Journal as a Path to Place*

*Little Things in a Big Country: an Artist and her Dog on the Rocky Mountain Front*

My workshops are designed to translate encounters with the natural world onto the pages of a field journal. I teach novices and experienced artists alike how to create fluid and beautiful pages, using both words and images, as records of discovery and immersion.

Venturing outdoors with a sketchbook is a quiet pursuit, one that asks for time and patience, the very qualities that allow us to observe the subtle workings of nature. It's all too easy to see our surroundings as backdrop, or as collection of random stuff. We may open field guides and feel overwhelmed by all we don't know. My workshops show that simply asking the question "What's going on?" will yield an abundance of replies from the landscape: it's a world of interrelated events out there, an unfolding drama.

In these journals students incorporate maps, diagrams, words and a variety of drawing techniques to capture the essence of events as they occur. Some pages are completed in the field, others are meant to compress lots of information for later study. Before field outings, we consult maps and satellite images, placing ourselves in the larger sphere of geology, watershed and habitat. Our journal pages benefit from a sketch-overview of the basic body plans of creatures - how frog compares to lizard, bee to dragonfly, warbler to woodpecker. We find out what to look for in order to see kinships among plants.

But beyond that we study what I like to call "unmeasurable phenomena"; natural processes that don't lend themselves to scientific inquiry - like light on water, shape-changing clouds, the particular whorls in a juniper trunk - and we use many methods to capture these fascinating designs. With every page, our working vocabulary of shapes and patterns increases. We build a framework of familiarity with the habits and ways of our non-human fellows.

**Artist, writer and naturalist Hannah Hinchman has been teaching field journal workshops across the country for 25 years. Her books are used as texts in several environmental studies programs.**

