

October 9, 2025

A brush with... Suzanne Jackson—podcast

Suzanne Jackson talks to Ben Luke about her influences—from writers to musicians and, of course, other artists—and the cultural experiences that have shaped her life and work



Portrait of Suzanne Jackson
Steven Probert

Jackson, who was born in 1944 in St. Louis, Missouri, but grew up in San Francisco and Fairbanks, Alaska, has worked across drawing and painting, poetry, dance and theatre, to explore a strong and often spiritual connection between people and the natural world. With a fluid and poetic painting style, Suzanne has responded to the many different natural and social environments in which she has lived in the US, from San Francisco and Los Angeles, to Fairbanks, Alaska and Savannah, Georgia, to forge a distinctive take on the world and the communities that inhabit it. She taps into a broad range of artistic languages, including Native American and African American traditions, and exhibits a deep sensitivity to history and ecology while reflecting profoundly on her personal lived experience.



Suzanne Jackson, *Grandparents*, 1970
David Kaminsky

She has also been a gallery owner and public art administrator, with a keen sense of the role art can play in uniting and inspiring communities. Today, she makes installations formed by painted and sculptural forms that hang in the exhibition space, directly addressing subjects including the climate catastrophe.



Suzanne Jackson, *Crossing Ebenezer*, 2017
Timothy Doyon

She discusses the important moment where she first encountered the work of Barbara Chase Riboud, a profound encounter with Elizabeth Catlett and her admiration for Torkwase Dyson. She talks of her passion for the cartoons Archy and Mehitabel and Krazy Kat, and her love of Mississippi Delta Blues and jazz or as she calls it, African American classical music. Plus she gives insight into her life in the studio and answer our usual questions, including the ultimate, “what is art for?”

- *Suzanne Jackson: What is Love*, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, until 1 March 2026; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, 14 May-23 August 2026; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 26 September 2026-7 February 2027