



**No Spuds On The Plateau:  
One Person's Opinion**

What I know about Ross Coates might be put on the head of a pin, along with a few dancing angels and maybe a dash of mischief. There are some incongruous images floating around my head. These include Ross' studio full of works in progress, or ideas in various points of development. I have an image of Ross wearing a kilt and playing the bagpipes for just about any "special" occasion. But this image is in my mind; I've seen Ross sitting on the couch with bagpipes beside him, and never heard him make a sound, only the stories where bagpipes were involved.

Here are a few things I know about Ross. He is an artist, a collector (art, folk art, books, music... probably other things that I don't know about), and an assembler. He not only assembles art, but words, and most importantly, people. His reach is far beyond the studio, which is only one place where the ideas germinate. He has relationships with artists, writers, and oh so many others in this world. In collaboration with his wife, Marilyn Lysohir, he produces *High Ground*, an annual magazine and labor of love. The original

idea behind *High Ground* was to demonstrate that creativity can be found anywhere... you only need to open your eyes to see it. The magazine highlights artists and writers from the plateau (Idaho, eastern Washington, Montana, eastern Oregon); they also write about their own projects and collaborations with people in other parts of the world.

This is a world made smaller by Ross. He seems to travel it with the greatest of ease. And the friends he accumulates from these trips, become a network of people who often share some odd synchronism. Ross also welcomes travelers into his life. "Art for Health" was in response to a visiting art historian and critic, Marina Kulikova from Russia who needed treatment for breast cancer. Ross and Marilyn organized an art collection from local and Russian artists in payment to the hospitals in Moscow (Idaho) and Lewiston.

It is easy to tell that Ross Coates makes his life his art and his art his life. There is certainly no separation between the two.

**Alberta Mayo**  
Curator  
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**Frontispiece**  
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