



Blue Heron Chapter of the Sumi-e Society of  
America

# Blue Heron News

*December 2019*

## Announcements

### Announcements for December Meeting

- Participation in the card exchange is encouraged during the meeting
- Location change to Church of the Ascension, Norfolk, for January meeting
- Book club is scheduled for Feb. 2, 2020 (see page 9 for details)
- Guest artist workshop is scheduled for Mar. 20-22, 2020
  - Registration starts Jan. 8, 2020 (see page 2 for details)

## 2019-20 Chapter Meetings

Date	Time	Location	Program
December 22, 2019	2-4 PM	Pretlow Library, Norfolk	Joe Nicholas, Composition in Chinese Brush Painting
January 19, 2020	2-4 PM	Church of the Ascension, Norfolk	Betty Oliver, "A New Book about Egypt"
February 8, 2020	10AM-1PM	Paul Street Gallery, Norfolk	Sumi-e Painting Exhibition
March 15, 2020	2-4 PM	Church of the Ascension, Norfolk	TBA

April 22, 2020	2-4 PM	Westminster Canterbury, Virginia Beach	Guest Artist "Demonstration",
May 17, 2020	2-4 PM	Church of the Ascension, Norfolk	Selection of Paintings for the 2021 Calendar and the Tea Party

## Guest Artist Workshop, March 20-22, 2020

### Featuring JOAN LOK

#### Gail Goodman

Joan Lok is an artist and educator committed to creating artwork as a passage to harmony and cultural diversity. Born in Hong Kong, she came to America in 1983 after winning an international cultural exchange scholarship. Her work has won many awards, and her masterful landscape



won the 2005 National Cherry Blossom Festival Art Contest. She is also very active in her community and has served as a Commissioner of the Maryland Governor's Commission on Asian Affairs. She teaches at the University of Maryland and operates her website, the Radiant Brush Gallery, [www.radiantbrush.com](http://www.radiantbrush.com). She is often asked how she finds time for her busy life and she responds, simply, "I don't sleep."

Registration for this workshop will open on Wednesday, *January 8, 2020* with space for 20 participants, and will close on February 28, 2020. I will keep a "wait list". Please make

your checks payable to: Blue Heron Chapter, SSA and mail to Gail Goodman, 7329 Ruthven Road, Norfolk, VA 23505.

The 2 ½ day workshop fee will be \$250 and includes a public demonstration by Joan on Sunday, March 22. Workshop hours are 9:30 am - 3:30 pm with a one-hour break for lunch which will be provided and included in the fee. Fees are not refundable unless someone from the wait list is available to fill the open spot.

The workshop will be held in the Penthouse at Westminster Canterbury, 3100 Shore Drive, Virginia Beach. Please arrive early so you are fully set up prior to 9:30 am.

Subject material has not been fully determined but may include poppy, cat, pelican, cherry blossom, or classic landscape.

Updates and reminders will follow.



## Inspirations and Acknowledgments\*

***“If your strokes are strong and confident, you can get away with (almost) anything!”*** Virginia Lloyd-Davies, from *Sumi-e Painting* book, (2019).

Thank you, *Norene Spencer*, for the September meeting program on Sumi-e principles and how to practice perfect strokes.



Thank you, *Pearl Windle*, for the October chapter meeting presentation. She covered the fish with ink, spread the fins and opened the mouth to teach members to make the perfect print on rice paper.



\* Blue Heron image is from <http://www.wetcanvas.com/Community/images/03-May-2005/21167-HeronWC500.jpg>

At the November meeting program, to learn about the recent painting trip to China, members moved through four stations. The travelers, *Mike Lane, Bill Larkin, Dianne Milner, and Cathy Peyton*, each shared their fascinating perspectives about the trip.

*Who wants to go to China next year?*



Thank you, *Gail Goodman*, for organizing a free-day workshop with Virginia Lloyd-Davies! Each day brought new insights into connections of Mind and a sumi-e painting and made the brush dance.



## Chapter President Bill Larkin Shares What He Learned in China

For me the highlights of the China trip were the lessons and the friendships. Everyone we met freely shared their wisdom, which made it quite easy to learn. The teachers were open with their knowledge and understanding, and so there was an easy give-and-take atmosphere in all of the lessons. Mr. Mo's lesson on how to paint bamboo, was both profound and accessible. He taught us technique and philosophy as a seamless whole.

I will always remember the cultural values of the Chinese people. There was an emphasis on sharing. Once we needed a ride, and our host called a friend to take us back to the hotel. The friend didn't know us, but his friend had asked, so he came, and was cheerful about it. We learned how important friendships are in China.

Although we were people from two totally different cultures, we came to understand each other. Frequently when we got together socially, one of our hosts would sing a song, and then we would be invited to sing a song for them. Many times, we were asked to converse in English. The Chinese people were intent on learning the ins-and-outs of our language. They were quite forgiving as I stumbled over Mandarin pronunciations. It was very easy to see how there could be future exchanges with people from our two countries.



## Close-Up with Sumi-e Painter

**Gail Goodman, Chair of the Educational/Scholarship Committee**

**2018-20**

### **Statistics:**

**Family:** I am the oldest of nine children. This required a lot of babysitting siblings, and helping with housework while growing up. My mother was very wise and supported any

adventures I attempted, like redecorating HER house, sewing, earning money by babysitting, and all attempts at showing responsibility. My husband and I have 2 children, a girl and a boy, and 2 grandchildren, both boys.

***Pets:*** We have 2 cats, Bette and Billie, but we have also had a Schnauzer dog, a cockatiel that lived 22 years, and a Siamese cat named Bubba. All of our pets' names always start with a "B" to include "Burt Bird".

***Occupation:*** I taught elementary school (3rd and 5th grade) until the children came along. I did not like to always have homework/lesson plans when I felt I needed to spend time with the family. Later, and for many years I was a hospital business office manager.

***Education:*** Some college, Elementary Education.

***Who inspires you?*** Joanna Gaines, Fixer Upper HGTV show, has so much energy, so much talent and great family values. Her hobbies extend over many subject areas, and she is exposing her children to all of them.

***If you could give your ten-year-old self one piece of advice, what would it be?*** Pinpoint your Passion....really think about what you are interested in and what captures your imagination and gets your brain going. Trust your gut because it is your life. Be willing to fail as this is a great life lesson.

***If you could invite three famous people living or dead to dinner, who would they be?*** Michelle Obama, Joanna Gaines and Gloria Vanderbilt

***How did you become a painter?*** In 1999 we moved to Norfolk, and in January 2000 I received a ValPak in the mail advertising Oriental Brush Painting at Titustown with Joan Grosch. I had always loved Oriental painting, it looked simple and easy, not requiring a lot of skill....and it was 10 weeks for \$50....It was good, fast and cheap. The rest is ***history***. I do not have any sort of art background.

***What words of wisdom can you share with someone who does sumi-e?*** Always paint with an open heart. It will show in your work...amazing that it happens like that.

***Favorite Painting Tool:*** The brush, I have several special one's: The Roosevelt Elk, the Tesshin Sassaki brush, and a new brush that Mike brought back for me from China.

***Comfort Food:*** Potatoes, fixed all ways

***Favorite Movie:*** Meet Joe Black

***Theme Song:*** "I'm Every Woman" by Chaka Kahn

***Favorite Thing to Do:*** I like to shop, in all towns, in all states, in all countries.

***Book You Would Recommend:*** *10 Things I Wish I'd known Before I Went Out in the World* by Maria Shriver. I give this book as a gift to all children graduating from high school, and then often reread it myself.

# Words from the Pros

## Joe Nicholas

In the last newsletter, I indicated that in this newsletter I would address the question of when a painting is ready for framing. I'm going to limit my discussion to "When is your painting done?" Whether or not it is ready for framing is up to you. Do you think enough of it to devote the time and effort/expense to have it framed?

Having said all that, "When is your painting done?" Richard Smith, in his book *ALLA PRIMA – Everything I Know About Painting*, would answer, "It is finished when you have said what you wish to say and when nothing added can make it better." The website Dream Tolle Perry Art indicates this about your painting: "When it delivers the emotion you felt, it makes you smile, it feels joy, it is finished." Many of us experience this when we are happy with our painting effort.

To me you are finished when, in your view, you have achieved what you set out to achieve in your painting (and hopefully done so in the aesthetic standards of our genre). There are an infinite variety of goals possible. Your goal was likely not to produce a sumi-e masterpiece. (Although you never know what might turn up.) More likely, it was a painting which hopefully would improve on the shortcomings you uncovered when you evaluated your last painting(s). Or maybe you have a statement to make and are doing so in a new technique. Whatever the goal/destination, as long as you have a specific one in mind you will know when you get there.

If you finish, but are not happy with the result, I'll close with another quote from Richard Smith: "The last question you must ask yourself before signing a work should be this – Does it look like what you want it to look like? If it doesn't, you must ask yourself if you **know** what you want it to look like – before you go back to find out what went wrong". I would welcome any feedback on this article, positive or negative, or any suggestions for new issues you would like to see addressed.

# Preparing Art for an Exhibit

## Norene Spencer

So, you've completed a painting you want to share with the public, now what? You would think this is a very simple task but there are quite a few rules that are standard to the art world and some specific to the Sumi-e world. I will address what I have experienced in exhibiting sumi-e paintings.

You decide to apply to participate in an exhibit. You will need to get the prospectus for that show. The prospectus includes all the pertinent information you will need, including

important dates, commission/s, and it will tell you what is expected of your submission. READ THE PROSPECTUS THOROUGHLY and FOLLOW IT! This is not the time to break the rules. If you do not follow what is outlined, you could be rejected for reasons not related to your painting ability.

Your painting must be *mounted, matted and framed*.

**Mounting:** Traditional mounting is wet mounting and the Sumi-e Society of America, Inc. states in their prospectus the painting must be wet mounted. As many of Blue Heron members know, dry mounting is also available. Dry mounting has become more acceptable in the past few years. I leave that choice up to you. Exception to mounting would be if your painting is on a shikishi board.

**Matting:** Within the past decade or so, most venues have placed requirements that matting be of a neutral/light color or white. There can be an inner mat of any color; but it should only show a fraction of an inch. The matt should be the same width on all sides. Many artists resist this, after all it is part of final display and a dark mat might be a better choice. I will not debate this issue; but I can tell you that especially if the show is a juried and judged show, follow what the prospectus states. The reason I have heard is that darker matts draw judges to that image and thereby give that painting an “unfair advantage”. Another comment is that similar color matts makes it easier for the exhibitor to hang the show as similar color matts give a more cohesive appearance. From my experience, there are few venues that will hang paints in a scroll format. To the best of my knowledge this is due to liability issues. Venues do not want to take on the responsibility for damage to a painting that is not under glass or plexi.

**Framing:** Some prospectus/s state metal frames, or prefer metal over wooden frames. The principle reason is metal frames are sturdier than wooden frames and thereby, yield less risk of damage when packing, unpacking and hanging. Frequently the prospectus will state that painting must have wire, not sawtooth hanging. Additionally, it may specify the wire should be taut and no more than a few inches from the top of the frame. First off sawtooth, is not a secure method for hanging your painting as there is the possibility of it easily being knocked off the nail/wall. This is a fairly universal requirement. The location of the wire will affect the way your painting hangs from the wall. Follow what the prospectus states.

The prospectus may also state if a painting should be under plexi or glass. Some venues require all entries be either plexi or glass. Frequently if the painting is over a specified size, it must be plexi, not glass. This is for ease of handling due to the weight of a large glass. As I’ve stated before, follow the prospectus! Also follow the timeline. If you cannot make it to the delivery time, find a friend to deliver your painting or pick them up. Avoid asking for special treatment from the exhibit chair or committee as they have enough to handle.

It takes a lot of work to hang an exhibit. Be respectful of the rules and the chairperson/committee. Often the folks who are involved in the show are volunteers.

# Blue Heron Book Club

**Mary Ann Matika**

**When:** Sunday, February 2, 2020, 2:00-4:00 PM

**Where:** Mary Ann Matika's Home  
5217 Lowery Downs  
Virginia Beach, VA 23464

Following Joe Nicholas's suggestion that good painters should understand the aesthetic components and standards of Chinese brushwork, join the first-ever book club and read chapters six and seven of

***Chinese Brushwork in Calligraphy and Painting*** by Kwo Da-Wei.

The following are excerpts from reviews of the book:

- "A volume of great value to the admirer of Chinese art that also contains much practical advice for the student." — *Library Journal*
- The author's shares his personal insights in such matters as line, form, space consciousness, and composition.
- Dr. Kwo has exhibited his paintings at museums and art galleries throughout the world and has taught Chinese brushwork extensively in colleges and universities in both China and the United States. For students of art, for painters and calligraphers — for anyone eager to approach Chinese art from a fresh and rewarding perspective — his book is must reading.

New and used copies of the book are available at Amazon for very reasonable prices. Order now to give yourself time to digest the book's thoughtful content.

Dessert and Chinese tea will be served as we meet to discuss what we learned from the book. If the book club is your "cup-of-tea," by January 26<sup>th</sup>, please email ([maryannmatika@gmail.com](mailto:maryannmatika@gmail.com)) or phone (757-469-0219) Mary Ann that you plan to attend.

# How to Make the Ink Pad Ready for Seals

Ting Mei

A box of ink pad is to be used as a ball as the right one in the picture below. For a video to watch, please scan the QR code with your smartphone. Or you can continue to read this article.



*Always push the ink pad to one direction at outside of the ball. And never insert the stick to the middle of ink pad and stir, else the moxa fiber will be broken if it is a good ink pad.*

To make the flat ink pad surface to a ball, use an ox bone stick or a bamboo stick. Starting at the edge of the ink pad, push the ink pad over

the middle. You should see the bottom of ink pad being oily and shiny. This is because the color and oil sunk to the bottom. What you are doing is turning the bottom of the ink pad to the top. Repeat along the entire edge.



Then, turn the flipped ink pad into a ball by applying the stick on the upper of ink pad horizontally to one direction as the picture below. If the color is not even, it means that the ink pad has not been flipped for a long while. Keep doing this step until the color is even.



## Photo Gallery:

- September Teacher-Student Exhibit



Joe Nicholas' students admiring their teacher's painting in Prime Plus Senior Center.

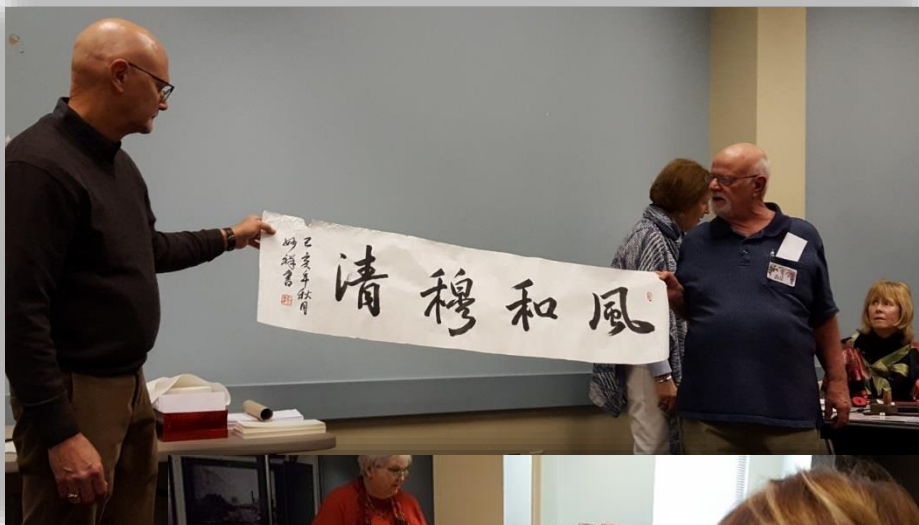
- Autumn Moon Children's Festival

*"The Autumn Moon Children's Festival proved to be another great opportunity for sharing East Asian brush painting. Bill Larkin, Mari Bennett, and Cathy Peyton demonstrated the use of the brush, ink, and paper using varied techniques and methods. The interaction with the community is exactly what our educational organization intended! With a joyful spirit and educational purpose, the Blue Heron Chapter has participated in this event for a decade." – Cathy Peyton.*



- November Meeting Presentation about China Trip





- Workshop with Virginia Lloyd-Davies

