



Blue Heron Chapter of the Sumi-e Society of
America

Blue Heron News

September 2019

Message from the President Bill Larkin

As we head into a new year, the word that comes to my mind is opportunity. Each of us is facing opportunities to improve our painting, present it to the public, and have some fun. We have a treasure trove of fine teachers and are poised to present what we are learning and producing.

I look forward to seeing everyone at the meetings, as well as at exhibits and classes, in the coming months, and seeing and hearing about what everyone is doing.

Thanks,
Bill

Announcements

Announcements for the September Meeting

- The 2020 color calendar with paintings from Joe Nicholas will be sold for \$10.00.
- Sumi-e painting supplies donated by Maggie McGeorge will be auctioned.
- Lynette Corley will be collecting orders for Oriental Arts Supply items.
- The \$20 membership dues should be paid at the meeting.



2019-20 Chapter Meetings

Date	Time	Location	Program
September 15, 2019	2-4 PM	Pretlow Library, Norfolk	Norene Spencer, "Sumi-e Distinctive Principles"
October 20, 2019	2-4 PM	Pretlow Library, Norfolk	Mary Ann Matika, "Sumi-e Challenge"
November 24, 2019	2-4 PM	Pretlow Library, Norfolk	Pearl Windle, "Fish Prints"
December 22, 2019	2-4 PM	Pretlow Library, Norfolk	Joe Nicholas, TBA
January 19, 2020	2-4 PM	Church of the Ascension, Norfolk	Betty Oliver, "A New Book Publication"
February 19, 2020	10AM-1PM	Paul Street Gallery, Norfolk	Sumi-e Painting Exhibition
March 15, 2020	2-4 PM	Church of the Ascension, Norfolk	TBA
April 19, 2020	2-4 PM	Westminster Canterbury, Virginia Beach	Guest Artist "Demonstration", TBA
May 17, 2020	2-4 PM	Church of the Ascension, Norfolk	Selection of Paintings for the 2021 Calendar and the Tea Party

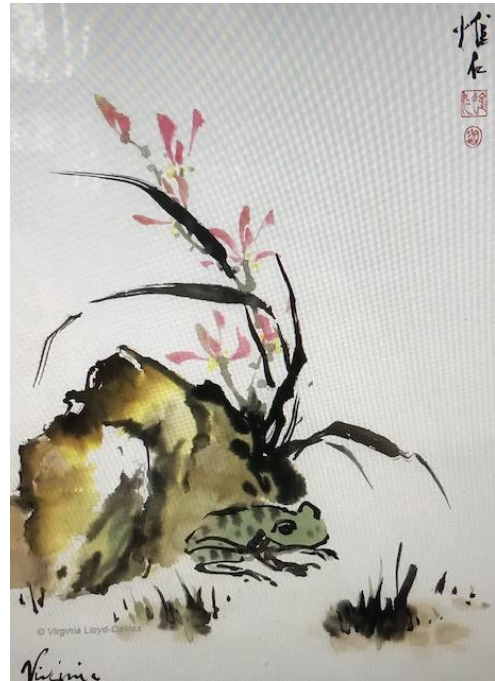


Chapter Workshop FREE DAY October 26 or 27, 2019

Gail Goodman

The Scholarship/Education Committee is very pleased to announce that the Chapter will be offering a FREE WORKSHOP DAY to all *paid* chapter members. Your dues must be paid to the treasurer, Mari Bennett for the upcoming year 2019-20.

- This workshop is free and there will be no charge to members.
- 25 participants per day
- The workshop guest artist will be Virginia Lloyd Davies.
- Westminster Canterbury, Penthouse Suite, 9:30 am - 3:30 pm, lunch included, arrive and set up prior to 9 am. Pick up breakfast available
- Subject material to be determined
- DEADLINE TO SIGN UP IS SEPTEMBER 30, 2019.
- Respond to Gail Goodman, kcduffer@cox.net.
- ONE free day is offered to all members, a **second** free day is also offered to members who express interest, if there are left over spaces at the workshop. SECOND FREE DAY spaces will be filled by lottery from those members who have expressed interest.
- Cancellations must be sent to Gail before Oct 15, 2019.
- Donations to the Chapter Educational fund will be accepted.



You must respond to Gail, in writing, with the following information: YOUR NAME, email or contact information. YOUR PREFERRED FREE DAY, SATURDAY, OCT, 26 OR SUNDAY, OCT, 27. List your second free day choice to be entered for lottery.

A little bit about Virginia Lloyd Davies

Virginia Lloyd Davies has been painting in Sumi-e since 1976. She is primarily a traditional painter but also instructs pouring and splashed ink. This painting style has taught her to appreciate the delight of spontaneity. She has expressed that there is no “perfection” in painting, but there is much joy.

In December 2019 Virginia will be releasing her new 128-page book, *"Mindful Artist Sumi-e Painting"* through the publisher Walter foster. She also has a website, Facebook page, a blog, and many You Tube videos. The book weaves the concept of mindful attention into explanations on how to paint favorite subjects. It focuses on how to use the practice and discipline of painting techniques to focus the mind. The book will be sold at bookstores and at Amazon.

Virginia is a master of the brush and traditional techniques. Her paintings of birds are absolutely the best. She also features a segment called "save your painting" and importantly, she will talk about risk taking in your painting, - She believes, "Never give up, and you can always use more wrapping paper, if it doesn't work out".



Upcoming Classes

Norene Spencer's Sumi-e Class

Norfolk Botanical Garden, Tuesdays, 11:30-1:30, Oct. 22 – Nov. 19, 2019

The subjects are determined in conjunction with class attendees. The class is challenging for both beginners and long-time painters. To register call Norfolk Botanical Garden, Adult Education Programs, 757-441-5830 X 338 or online registrar@nbgs.org

Inspirations and Acknowledgments*

"I've been 'playing with ink' ever since I fell in love with the process of Sumi-e: the way the ink moves into the paper, and how the brush responds. My goal is to express the subject's essence and energy/life force. Experimentation is important to me, and 'happy accidents' lead to new discoveries."

From Susan Frame's website susanframe.com

Thank you, Gail Goodman, for organizing Guest-artist Workshop with Susan Frame! Her amazingly creative approach taught attendees to be flexible and bold in their painting process.

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

Thank you, *Joe Nicholas*, for your internal workshop held in June 2019! It always good to return to the basics while expressing ourselves in *Four Gentlemen* paintings.

Thank you, *Yasuko Zucker*, for inviting a skillful calligrapher *Kinuko Fukumine*!

Congratulations to Ting Mei!

Ting Mei's painting was accepted into the 2019 National Sumi-e Art Show. Read below to understand how she applied the principles of Sumi-e and created her masterpiece.

Title: Cape Henry Light House, Virginia Beach

Paper: *Tapa Mulberry Paper* (50 sheets were donated to the chapter for members' use.) This paper can "hide" imperfect strokes. It presents ink and color so well. It is raw paper which can be stored for value appreciation, but it is 30% sized by a special process on bark.

Ink: *Old Hu Kaiwen Best Premium Extra Fine Pure Pine Soot Ink Stick* This ink is especially good for

landscape and calligraphy. All my landscape paintings accepted by National Sumi-e Society Shows are created with this ink.

Inspiration: Cape Henry Light House contains so much historic meaning, and it leads people to the right path. I feel the Four Treasures in the Chinese Intangible Culture Heritage List have been doing these

same things. They offer artists not only their rich history but also lead artists to the right way of Sumi-e.

Composition and Methods: The common "C" shape composition is utilized. Some virtual strokes are arranged at the left side for the composition and for representing the beach, the bridge-tunnel, the sea and the sand.

For the trees, I used the accumulating ink method to represent the different density and layers. For the beach path, calligraphy styled lines enhance the oriental taste. Rubbing with a smooth progression of change in ink colors created the distances within the painting.



Part of beach is realistic, and part is virtual. Combining impressions from multiple views to one image is a traditional composition method.

Since the lighthouses are in distance, their features are very simply painted.

By controlling water and ink, ink can be divided into the full spectrum of ink colors: dry, wet, thick, light and dark. Western audiences prefer colored paintings, but the core of Sumi-e is ink and water. Understanding the relations among ink, water and paper can increase the weight of the work.

Congratulations to Dianne Milner!



Dianne's painting Red Joy was awarded the 1st Place in the Prime Plus Senior ArtFest Competition.

Prime Plus Senior ArtFest

Jill Valentine

I would just like to say how enjoyable it is to participate in the annual Prime Plus Senior ArtFest. The people who work there are so pleasant and make the whole process easy and fun.

The opening reception is always a very special affair, friends gather around, admiring one another's work, and there is music, and plenty of good food. The drawings, paintings, photographs, sculptures, ceramics, quilts, jewelry, etc., are all beautifully displayed.

It's a wonderful show! The Blue Heron Chapter is usually well represented, and we are not limited to Sumi-e painting, we can display any other works of art in which we have an interest. I would like to encourage more of our members to get involved next year, you will surely be glad you did!



Sumi-e Art Exhibition at Coastal Virginia Unitarian Universalists (CVUU)

Bill Larkin

Members of CVUU opened their doors and their hearts to Blue Heron members and our art. The hospitality at the Meet-and-Greet was warm and welcoming.





Close-Up with Sumi-e Painter

Ann McCarthy, 2018-2020 Chapter Secretary

Statistics

Family: John, husband

Pets: Belle, our brown tabby cat

Occupation: Teacher of English as a Second Language for elementary students

Education: BA in English from William and Mary; MA in Linguistics from University of Texas-Austin

Favorite Painting Tool: a good brush

Favorite Movie: *Gone with the Wind*

Favorite Celebrity Crush: James Garner in "Maverick"

Favorite Thing to Do: Watch birds, dogs, cats, horses—any animal with fur or feathers just being an animal

Favorite Gadget: Sewing machine

Pet Peeve: Dishonest people

Theme Song: It's not a song. It's "The Lark Ascending" by Ralph Vaughn Williams

Comfort Food: Sharp cheddar cheese on a grilled cheese sandwich; dark chocolate

Book Recommendation:

I recently finished reading the first of Robert Caro books about Lyndon Johnson. It was a real education in the workings of government. It was also very readable, considering the subject matter.

If you could invite three famous people living or dead to dinner, who would they be?

Jesus, Buddha, Mohammad - I want to find out from the sources how many things they agreed upon without having to listen to the interpretations of other people.

Who or what inspires you?

People who remain curious and involved in life give me inspiration

Of what achievement are you most proud?

Not giving up when things are difficult

If you could give your ten-year-old self one piece of advice, what would it be?

Start saving money now, and save something every time you get even a little bit of money. Also, don't worry about whether everyone likes you—you will find friends wherever you go.

If a snapshot was taken of you enjoying a perfect day, what would it look like?

My day would begin with having breakfast, reading the paper and talking with John in the morning. Walking on the beach, spending some time reading and painting or spinning would be next. I would enjoy a visit to the zoo to see the red pandas and the tigers or a trip to a museum. The day would end with a nice dinner with John. The older I get, the more I value everyday experiences.

How did you become a painter?

I took a watercolor class in college as an elective but didn't follow up. I took a basic Sumi-e course when I was in college in Austin but, again, there was no follow through. I took a watercolor class with Lee Wertheimer when she was teaching at the Hermitage, and she encouraged me to try Sumi-e again. Now I paint traditional watercolors and Sumi-e

What words of wisdom can you share with someone who does Sumi-e?

Don't be overly critical of yourself. Paint to enjoy the process.

Words from the Pros

Joe Nicholas

I have been asked to address the topic of “how to evaluate one’s own painting and know if it is ready for framing”. Actually, they are really two different topics and certainly too much to address in one article. I’ll leave the “ready for framing” for another day. In this article I’ll try to hit the highlights/major points in evaluating a painting. I believe the best way to evaluate a painting is to base it on the fundamental principles of art and in particular those aesthetic standards that apply to our genre of painting. The information in this article came from a variety of sources and the primary one, focusing on our genre of painting, was Kwo Da Wei’s Chinese Brushwork in Calligraphy and Painting – Its History Aesthetics, and Techniques. (I personally believe that Chapters 6 and 7 of that book should be required reading for all would-be brush painters.)

So, let’s begin our evaluation (in no particular order).

First Impressions. Our painting should have a center of focus as well as a direction of flow within the painting. Moreover, it should not be just a pretty picture, but instead have some inherent meaning, tell a story, convey a feeling or mood, or generate an emotion. Hopefully it is unique or shows creativity in how you have depicted your subject - done out of the normal way of seeing things. Of course, it’s our own work, not plagiarized.

Composition. Is the concept of “host and guest” evident and properly employed? Does the painting have a variety of interesting shapes? Is there balance (asymmetry) among shapes and white space? Shapes should not be too dense or too loose. There should be diversity within the unity of the work.

Tonal Values. We should have a value range from dark to light in our painting. This applies to both works in ink or color. There should be few if any passages of color or ink that have no tonal variation.

Color. Colors in use should convey the mood of the work and reflect the correct perspective with hard and soft edges effectively used.

Craftmanship. Here I am addressing the technical skills in the use of our materials. Are the forms in our painting recognizable? Originality and imagination are good things, but our viewer should be able to recognize what we are painting. If painting a tulip, it should not look like a morning glory - developing drafting skills will enhance your painting skills. Brushwork is a paramount skill in Sumi-e. Brushwork should show strength and agility. Strokes should be “alive” in showing tonal variations. Look for “economy of stroke” in evaluating your brushwork. With the use of unnecessary strokes, you lose freshness and spontaneity and the result looks overworked.

An After Thought. One of my favorite art books is, Alla Prima – Everything I Know About Painting, by Richard Schmid. The book is about oil painting; however, it does include a listing of common mistakes and difficulties that hinder producing a quality painting - many of which are also applicable to our field of painting. Here is a slightly modified listing:

- Careless drafting
- Too many sharp edges
- Trying to paint things instead of color shapes

- Inventing impossible color
- Too thick or too thin paint
- Overworking what should be left alone
- Not squinting for values and edges
- Muddy color.
- Working too close, not stepping back to view work
- Paint shadows too light, lack contrast
- Trying to paint too much detail
- Timidity – fear of making a mistake.

I hope this article will assist you in effectively evaluating the strengths and weaknesses in your paintings and give you an idea on what to work on for your next effort. If you have any questions about this article or suggestions about subjects you would like me to look into, let me know. I'm always on the hunt for new subjects to tackle. Lastly, if you put in the time, and focus on what needs improvement, you **will** produce better paintings.

2019 Sumi-e Painting Challenge

Mary Ann Matika

Remember all those newsletter articles I wrote to encourage you to enter the National Sumi-e Show? After writing those articles, I knew I had to enter. I did submit two paintings and was not selected for the show. From the start I was not pleased with the paintings I selected, but they were the only totally original art I had. Only two times in the last six years of lessons did I sit down and just paint from memory without the guidance of handouts from classes or my large assortment of “how-to” Sumi-e books.

The lesson I learned is I need more practice in order to really improve my work. I am convinced that the way to improve my Sumi-e is through practice, practice, and more practice. This practice is not drudgery but a time to be creative and get lost in the act of painting. Practice will improve all the elements of Sumi-e painting and add confidence and freedom to the time spent with brush and ink.

For one week I hope you will join me in practicing Sumi-e. As a community we will be painting together. Read the following instructions and accept this challenge:

- October 12 set up a place to paint. Have ink, brushes, water, paper cut to size and etc. all ready for the week of painting.
- From Sunday, October 13th through Saturday, October 19, **paint every day**. Paint anything you want and for as long you want.
- If enrolled in a class, that counts as having painted for that day.

- Select something you painted to share at the Sunday, October 20th meeting. Your selection does not need to be a finished painting. And if you do not wish to share, that is fine also.

The Sumi-e Painting Challenge is the program for the October 20th meeting. Please do the best you can to paint daily. Please bring some example of your work or just be ready to give your evaluation of the process.

Education/Scholarship Committee Report

Gail Goodman

The Chapter Mission Statement encourages us to foster and encourage an appreciation of East Asian/brush painting techniques through publications, workshops, lectures, and exhibitions and to furnish information to all persons who wish to learn about this art form.

In keeping with this mission statement, the Chapter has awarded one scholarship to a worthy individual for the last two years. The recipients have been able to attend the Guest Artist Workshop through the provisions of the scholarship. The Education/



Scholarship fund has been built up thru various fundraising events held by the chapter to include, but not limited to raffles, selling donated Sumi-e painting items, and individual monetary donations. The fund has grown to a whopping \$1998.78.

Through the generosity of the chapter to supplement this figure with some additional funds, the board has approved a motion that this year, the scholarship will not be for one individual but it will support and provide a FREE DAY for ALL chapter

members to attend a guest artist workshop at Westminster Canterbury the last weekend in October. Virginia Lloyd Davies will be the workshop presenter. We are pleased, proud, and grateful to acknowledge the chapter as a strong and viable resource for East Asian Brush painting, and we celebrate the strength of support by each of our members.

Protecting a Chinese Brush

Ting Mei

The most valuable part of a Chinese Brush is the tip which plays a critical role in painting and calligraphy. If being used every day, the tip is typically used out in three months. The following habits harm the brush:

(1) Buying a used brush.

The remaining life span of the used tip is unknown. Unlike ink stone, buying used brushes is just wasting money.

(2) Forgetting to wash the brush

The glue in the ink and color pigment sticks the tip together, so the tip becomes fragile. The Chinese brushes are not supposed to be soaked for a long time. Soaking causes the brush to lose hairs.

(3) Drying the brushes in a pen holder

A wet brush should be air dried vertically with the tip pointed to the floor. A pen holder is nice to store dried brushes but not wet ones.

(4) Dipping a dry brush in ink or color

Fully dipping in water before dipping in ink is critical for hairs. Wetting the brush before grinding ink and preparing paper is a good idea. Or wet the brush twenty minutes before dipping ink. Then absorb extra water with a piece towel or used rice paper. The best way is to drag the brush on the paper,

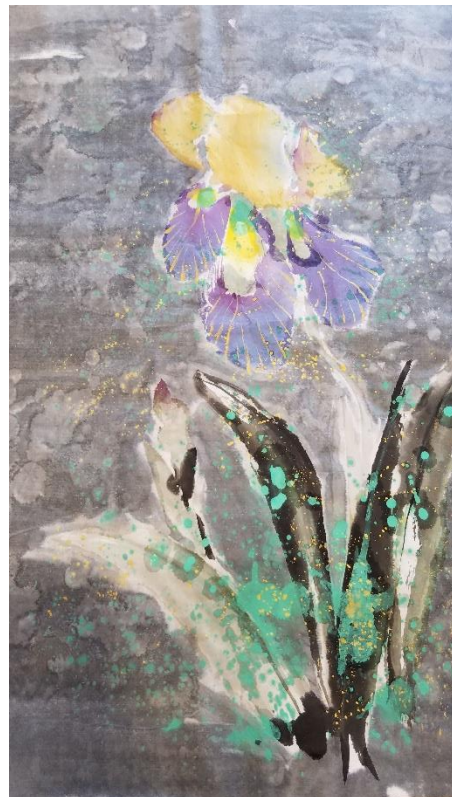
Photo Gallery:

- June Painting Party at Flo's



- Guest Artist Workshop with Susan Frame





- End-of-the-Year Luncheon at Forbidden Palace

"Excellent food and great company!" – Jill Valentine

