



Blue Heron Chapter of the Sumi-e Society of
America

Blue Heron News

May 2022

Announcements*

- **June 26** – Chapter luncheon (see below for details)
- **May 23—26** – deadline to submit to Senior Art Show in Prime Plus Center.
(See [page 6](#) for details)

- **Congratulations to the 2022—24 Chapter Officers:**

- Co-Presidents: Mary Ann Matika and Betty Oliver
- Vice-President: Cathy Peyton
- Secretary: Bonnie Campbell-Kuhn
- Treasurer: Karen Bess

Elected by unanimous vote at Chapter's May meeting.

- **Luncheon:** Sunday, June 26, 2022, at 12:30 PM
 - Geisha Japanese Steakhouse
741 Eden Way North, Chesapeake
 - R.S.V.P. with Cathy Peyton by email
at cathy.peyton@earthlink.net
 - *Everyone orders and pays for their own meal in the restaurant.*



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

Message from the Chapter President

Dear Blue Heron Members,

As you know, the end of my 2-year term as your President is coming to a close. It has been a pleasure to serve among such wonderful artists and friends. As I look back, I feel encouraged by the way our community faced the demands of the Covid season with such splendid resilience. We supported each other, discovered Zoom and our commitments to each other became richer. I also continue to be amazed by how tenacious we have become as learners-- many of our number now routinely study online, share using Marco Polo, and find ways to encourage and uplift those who are in a creative "dry" period. The results are clear—our sumi-e skills have expanded, and creativity deepened despite the obstacles. Especially, I want to thank each of our board members. In addition to keeping me straight with encouragements, suggestions, and reminders, they helped us stay strong through arranging workshops, exhibition opportunities, and community promotional events. The board faithfully served us by doing many behind-the-scenes administrative tasks, setting up Zoom, writing the newsletters and cards, and making timely phone calls. Special thanks to Pearl and Rose for helping us to find Sunday meeting places at their churches. In the coming year, I am looking forward to continued collaboration and teaching among our Blue Heron members, and, of course, carving out more time paddling marshes. Best wishes in what remains of the Year of the Tiger. Here is a snapshot of a gongbi piece that I am currently hoping to finish...soon.



Blessings,
Mike Lane

Message from the Chapter Treasurer

Reminder about Blue Heron Membership Change:

A friendly reminder that the Blue Heron Chapter's membership now runs from January to December, with our normal summer meeting hiatus (though we still have a lot going on!). Dues for membership for 2023 are not due until January 1. This is a change from previous years that allows our group to better align with the National Sumi-e Group.

Reflections on Two Years as Treasurer:

It has been such an honor serving as the Blue Heron Chapter's Treasurer these past two years. I know I am leaving you all in good hands as Karen Bess takes over as treasurer, and just as many of our past treasurers helped me, I will make myself available to help Karen whenever needed. I hope by passing the treasurer responsibilities to Karen's capable hands that I'll have a little more time for painting, between chasing after a toddler.

As things begin to open back up, it is such a joy to meet in person again. It's a good time to reflect on the challenges our group has faced in the past couple years, and the many innovative ways we were able to overcome them. When I took over this position it was just before the Covid-19 pandemic began. I was fairly new to sumi-e, having just taken one or two classes with Mike at Titustown, and I was very new to the Blue Heron Chapter (I think the ink on my check for membership dues was still drying when I was approached about being treasurer!).

I joined this group at such an uncertain time in the world, not least of all for our special group of artists. The pandemic could have meant the end of our chapter as we had to stop meeting in person, but I don't recall harboring any great concern that our group would fall apart, even though I was so new to the group myself. Under Mike and Cathy's steadfast leadership, and with the enthusiasm of our members, our group really thrived in new ways during the last two years. Between Marco Polo videos, Rose's challenges, a virtual Holiday card exchange, our beautiful newsletters, several impressive exhibits, amazing virtual workshops, and zoom meetings (just to name a few of many examples), we were able to keep in touch, keep our spirits up, and keep painting. Any activity we did before Covid had to be reimaged to keep our members and community safe. Not only did we manage to continue having meetings, workshops, and exhibits, but we were able to create new ways of interacting, many of which I hope will continue beyond the pandemic. This was no small feat, and credit should be shared by all our members.

When I describe this group to other people, I inevitably describe how kind, warm, and welcoming everyone in this group is. Being the treasurer did require time and effort on my part, but members of this group so often and so genuinely expressed their gratitude that I sometimes felt that I hadn't done enough to deserve the praise, and I easily and happily continued to do my part to help this group thrive. What a gift that gratitude is!

I look forward to continuing to see you all at meetings and workshops, whether it's via zoom or in person. Hopefully, with a little freer time, I'll have some paintings to share with the group and maybe I'll even finally finish the Gongbi style painting of my cat!

Erin Smyth

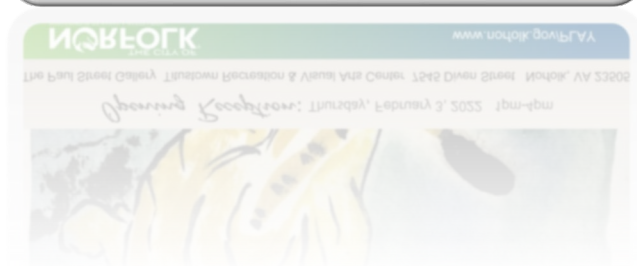
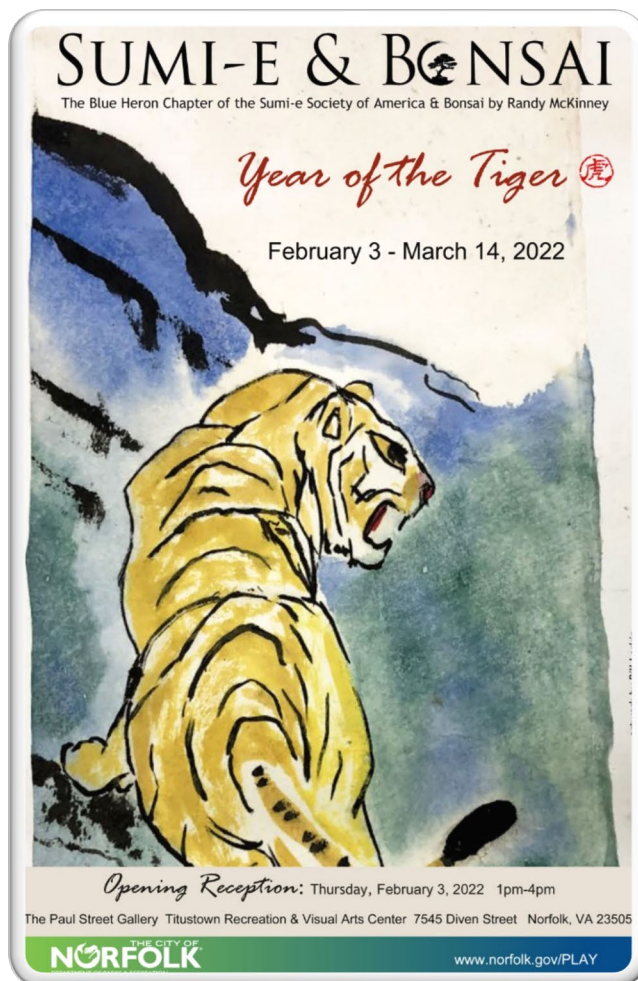
Message from the Exhibits Chair

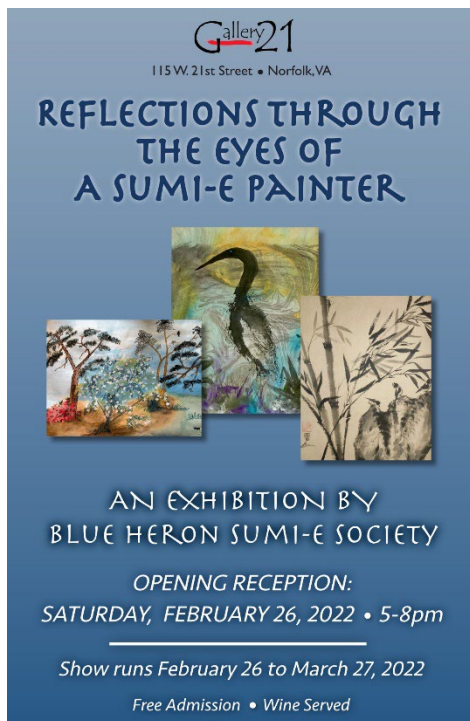
Dear Blue Heron Membership,

Jointly with the Bonsai Society, the Chapter held an exhibit at the Paul Street Gallery from February 1 through March 14, 2022. The theme of the show was "The Year of the Tiger."



Opening reception was on Thursday, February 3, 2022, from 1:00 to 4:00 pm. It was nice to get back to our annual show and gathering. Members and guests enjoyed food, drinks, and browsing the exhibits.





Well, our Blue Heron Society has just completed a showing at the beautiful Gallery 21, which is located in Norfolk, Virginia. Our show was held from February 26, 2022, through March 27, 2022. We were honored to be on the Gallery 21 show list for 2022. We had 84 works of art and 19 artist members participating. Thank you to each and every one of you! From the two days of hanging our show to the taking down of our work, I must say it was an honor and privilege to have been the Exhibit Chair. The staff at Gallery 21 were wonderful to work with ... from the beginning publicity to our opening gala! They guided me every step of the way! There were so many diverse and gorgeous paintings by our members, and I do hope each and every one of you were able to see the show! We have heard so many compliments from others. Five artists sold their work, and we would love the

opportunity to congratulate them: Mike Lane, Gail Goodman, Mary Ann Matika, Jerry Singer and the owner of the gallery, Jim Todd (a past member of Blue Heron). How excited they must be! Our reception Saturday evening, February 26, 2020, was exciting and fun the whole evening. We were thrilled with the number of attendees and the exciting chatter and laughter that could be heard in the room all evening! There were yummy nibbles provided by our members, wine served by Mermaid Winery and a demonstration table where our leader Mike Lane painted to show guests that were interested to have a look. There was also time for anyone who wanted to try their hand at Sumi-e were given the chance. I know my two grandsons loved that part of the evening! Dan Mack has created a video for his filming and editing of a wonderful video that may be accessed via the [Blue Heron website](#). It is a treasure for sure!!!!

Donna Wynn





Message from the Calendar Chair

I am so excited for everyone to vote on this year's calendar in person. We will be selecting 13 paintings which need to be mounted. The size is 8½ by 11. Paintings can be done with watercolor but must have Sumi-e black ink in the painting. The calendar of 2023 will be another spectacular one because of YOU!

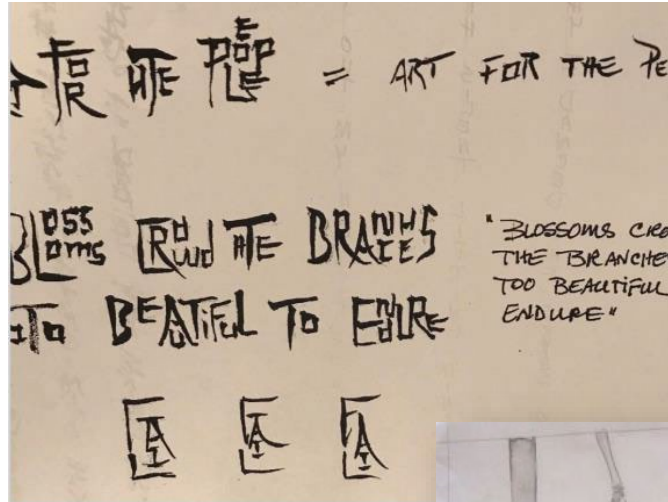
Betty Oliver

Message from the Internal Workshops Chair

We have a great internal workshop schedule for this summer, 2022.

Saturday, June 4. Asemic and Square Word Writing by Gail Goodman

This workshop will focus on two types of calligraphy. This is a fun workshop to tap into your creative juices and play with letters in the oriental style. Avant-garde calligraphy may be abstract but not calligraphy. It should reflect an appreciation of the aesthetics of designing space with ink strokes in an expressive way while being freed from the strictures of traditional calligraphy.

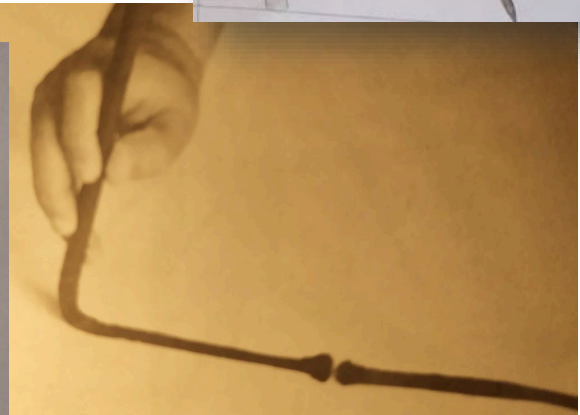
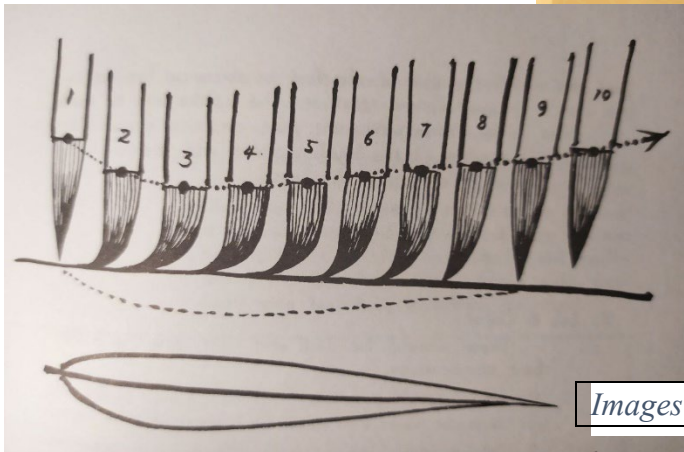


Saturday, July 9. Tarashikomi by Norene Spencer

Tarashikomi literally means "dripping in" but a more accurate description is "ink staining". Traditionally, it's a technique of painting wet on wet on rice paper (or silk). As with most techniques there are several variations of applying this concept. Norene will share the method she learned from Master Shozo Sato (see photo to the right).

Saturday, August 6. Brush Strokes by Joe Nicholas

Joe's workshop will explore the magic in your brush. Bring your brushes, some practice paper, as well as some of the paper you normally work on. We will work with both black ink and color, so bring a few basic colors with you. We will look at lots of different subject matter: "You won't get bored."



Images from *The Book of Bamboo* by I-Hsiung Ju

- All workshops will be held at the Fred Heutte Center in Norfolk with details to follow. (Supplies, starting times, parking, etc.)
- Each workshop is 2--2.5 hours and costs \$10 for members and \$15 for nonmembers.

To reserve your space, contact me, Dianne Milner, at **(757) 403-9200** by text or phone call. Registration is complete when I receive payment.

Make check to: Blue Heron, S.S.A.

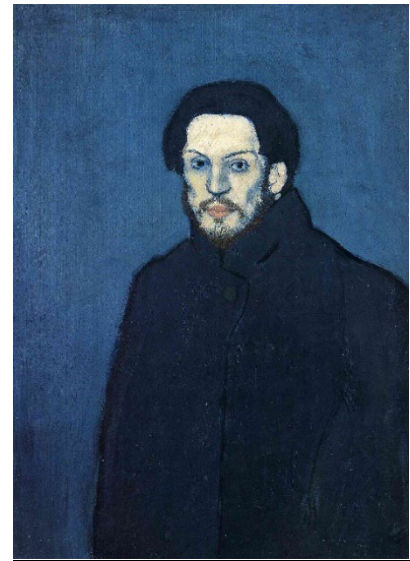
Mail to: Dianne Milner, 7714 Castleton Place, Norfolk, VA 23505

Dianne Milner

Inspirations and Acknowledgements

"Art is a lie that makes us see the truth."

Pablo Picasso



Pablo Picasso, *Self Portrait*



Thank you, Jill Valentine

For the engaging demonstration of painting palm trees during the January Chapter meeting. Members had fun following along while Rose showed her pro skills acquired from observing palm trees during her multiple winters in Florida.

Thank you, Bill Larkin

For connecting fun musical rhythms of exotic instruments with artistic inspiration during the April Chapter meeting, Members participated in vocal attunement while playing the instruments led by Bill.



Thank you, Joe Nicholas

For an instruction on washes full of pro tips and common sense during the March Chapter meeting.

Words from the Pro: Washes

Joe Nicholas

Welcome to the world of Washes! This article will be an abbreviated version of the demonstration I presented at the March Chapter meeting. Before I get into the tools, preparations, and technique of Washes, there are a few important considerations. Firstly, what is the purpose of a wash? The purpose of a wash is to improve our painting. If a wash is not going to improve your painting, there is no reason to do one. Secondly, you have to know your paper. Thick paper that is very absorbent is not good for a wash. Also, single *Hsuan* which is very thin and fragile is not easy to work with. I have had good success working on lightly sized papers *MA* and *Pi*. Do not try to apply a wash to a paper that you have not worked with before. Thirdly, paint used for your wash should be transparent and paint on a painting to be washed should be permanent.

Lastly, hold up the paper against a light to inspect for imperfections such as grease marks from our hands.



Tools and Equipment

1. Blanket -- You need a piece of woolen blanket larger than the painting to be placed on the table first. Make sure it's clean and free from any excess ink or paint from previous paintings.
2. Two flat brushes -- This flat brush *pai pi* in Chinese and *hake* in Japanese are especially designed for background washes. A good general size is about 4 inches wide. Need one for flattening the wet painting and one for applying the color wash. Also, good to have on hand for possible corrections would be a clean large flow brush or equivalent.
3. Plates for color and water -- One for mixing color and one for additional clean water. White porcelain is best. The dish for color wash should have a diameter sufficient to accommodate the *hake* brush.
4. A good sprayer -- One that will give you a fine spray.

5. A roll of paper towels or rice paper ... This is for blotting excess water or color.

Preparation

1. Mixing the color --- Be sure transparent colors are in use and that you mix more than enough color for the task. It is very difficult to match a wash color if you run out and need more to finish the job. In mixing you color err on the side of too light in shade. You can't lighten your wash once applied, but you can make it darker. Best to apply multiple shades. Moreover, it's easier to apply light shades than one dark one. By the way, make sure color is thoroughly mixed and there are no undissolved specks of color in your dish. A real disaster if you pick up one of these when you do your wash.
2. Wetting paper with sprayer --- Apply thoroughly to back of paper and let stand a minute or so to let water soak in. Use paper towel or rice paper to blot excess water.
3. Flatten wet paper --- Use a dry and clean *hake* brush. Start brushing lightly starting in the center of the paper, moving away to the edges. As soon as you are done, apply the wash.

Applying the Wash

- As soon as the paper is flattened, apply the wash to the desired side. Make sure the color is well mixed and carried by the brush in the right amount. The brushing can start from the top or bottom. Apply with a horizontal movement from edge to edge, from left to right (right to left for left handers).
- Recharge the brush after each pass to keep the color of the same strength. There should be no gaps or overlaps of strokes.
- By adding more water to the brush, you can produce a graded wash. If desired, you can regain color strength by recharging.
- When completed, let air dry. I do not recommend a hair dryer to speed up drying.
- When dry, evaluate if another coat is needed overall or in parts. If so, start the process by rewetting the entire paper even if only a portion of it requires another coating of color.

Final Thoughts

The keys to success are care and patience, don't be in a rush.

For more detail on washes go to the primary source for this article:

Part IV, Background Wash, in the I-Hsuing Ju book, "The Book of Plum."

In the next issue of our newsletter, I will address how to paint a moon in the background of your painting.

Close-Up of Karen Bess

New Member and Treasurer 2022-2024

STATISTICS:

Family: Carl – husband

Pets: Scout – Welsh terrier

Occupation: Retired (formerly HR Manager)

Education: B.S. in Business Administration – University of Wisconsin at Eau Claire

Who or what inspires you?

Warm sunny days, learning something new, positive people, live painting demos.

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

Waking up early for a nice cup of hot coffee, playing Pickleball with friends, a walk with Carl and Scout, and then on to the beach for a relaxing dinner. I like a Poke bowl and lemon drop martinis.

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

Explore careers that include creativity.

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

Don't rush – let it dry!

Favorite Painting Tool: Large flow brush

Comfort Food: Homemade Mac and Cheese

Favorite Movie: *The King and I*

First Celebrity Crush: David Cassidy

Favorite Gadget: Garlic peeler

Favorite Things to Do: Pickleball, Kayak, Paddleboard, relax at the beach

Book You Would Recommend: *The Rent Collector*

Is there anything else you would like to share with Blue Heron members? Thank you for being such a welcoming group. I look forward to getting to know all of you.

Garden Parties

Cathy Peyton

For the past fifteen years, many of our members have held garden parties to celebrate spring renewal and friendship. With the pandemic, this literally halted. Recently, I've noticed that small groups are starting to get together again to paint, visit each other's art rooms, and share ideas.

One beautiful spring day, my sister, Betty, and I were invited to Karen Bess's home in Norfolk's East Beach area. We both arrived at Karen's home at the same time, got out of our cars, and laughed together because we had brought Karen cut flowers. Karen proudly gave us a tour of her art room, garden, and shared paintings on the walls of her home. She served yummy ginger cookies and cold tea, and then we painted for over an hour. As we were leaving, we said happily, "We'll have to do this again some time."

When you feel comfortable sharing your home and/or garden with others, keep in mind your Blue Heron friends. Visit with them indoors or outdoors while enjoying their company and painting together.

Marco Polo

As we have all been locked down, we have found another great way to share with Blue Heron members through an online forum, *Marco Polo*. For the past two and a half years, I have painted every day. Most mornings I post a painting and share a technique, idea, or quote. I usually start the day off around 6:00 a.m. with my post. However, on one morning, I was late sharing. I received a text from Gail, "I was concerned that you may be very sick but all you were doing was walking in your backyard." Immediately I felt good and was motivated to paint. Other members post their artwork, and we learn from each other brush painting techniques. If you would like to become a member of the *Marco Polo* Sumi-e Creatives group, contact Mike Lane, and he will give you an invitation.



Painting Emotions, Not Things

Sharon Weinstein

When we paint, we are making music.

Just so our brush touches down and sings. We are completing a song, and we want it to be whole.

We study our effort, wondering where we should place our next mark.

We want to leave some space untouched, so it can sing for itself, without our interference.

We want our colors to like each other and be in harmony.

Each painting is in a certain musical key and adheres to that design structure.

Every white sheet is a new chance to make new rhythms.

How do I create?

I revere nature, but I don't copy it.

I leave it in my heart and let it cook.

When I begin to paint, all that is stored inside me begins to emerge.

I paint out of curiosity.

In a poetic trance, I experiment with color and shape. What will this blue look like next to this shade of red?

Do I have too many arcs and curves? Do I need some straight lines? If I turn the paper a different way, will it sing?

What is emerging? What does it need to make it whole?

My brush moves into my palette. Like my mother used to cook: A little bit of this. A little bit of that. If it's good ingredients, how can it be bad? She would always say.

I often don't know exactly what's on my brush. I dip into one color, then the next, sometimes leaving the previous colors on the brush.

Ooh what a happy surprise. How interesting. Like my mom: I can never make the same casserole twice. And I certainly can't write down the recipe.

Sometimes it looks terrible. Bye bye to that one.

Other times, I am so pleased, and I look at my painting over and over: wondering how I got there.

Always hoping to create a fantasy world that intrigues and delights my viewers. And satisfies something deep inside me.

Always hoping my viewers will take a bit of magic with them.



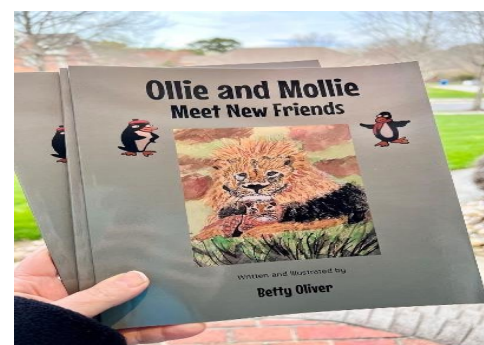
Sumi-e Painters Become Authors

OLLIE AND MOLLIE MEET NEW FRIENDS

Written and Illustrated by Betty Oliver

Thank you to all the people who have bought my book. I will contribute to the SPCA with my proceeds. If anyone would like a book, please let me know, and I will deliver it to you.

Thank you,
Betty (bjoliver@verizon.net)



YOU ARE THE AUTHOR *By Rose Burroughs*

Rose will be signing her books at her home on 5947 McGinnis Circle, Norfolk, VA 23502. Saturday June 11 10am – 2pm. She is inviting any other local artist to join her by setting up their display inside or outside. For more information, contact Rose at (757) 618-8466.



A Brief History of Chinese Painting Ting Mei and Cynthia Xiong

The Origin of Chinese Painting

In archaeology, the age when human beings began to appear and the production tools were marked by stone tools was called the "Paleolithic Age".

The arrival of the Neolithic age is a decisive development event in human history. It is basically characterized by primitive farming, animal husbandry, settlement, pottery making, stone grinding and drilling techniques. It is the first culture with roughly the same connotation in human living areas all over the world, and it is also the last cultural stage before the appearance of characters.





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The Origin of Chinese Painting

In China, animal bone fragments with images of hunters, antelopes and birds have appeared at the late Paleolithic site in Shiyu, Shuozhou City, Shanxi Province, about 30000 years ago, which is the earliest known painting relics.



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The Origin of Chinese Painting

The early Neolithic culture, represented by Wannianxianrendong culture, Peiligang culture, Cishan culture and Dadiwan culture in the Yellow River Basin and Weihe River Basin in Gansu Province, began about 8000 BC and has the characteristics of farming, polishing stone tools, pottery making, clan cemetery and so on. According to incomplete statistics, more than 7000 Neolithic sites have been found in China so far.



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The Origin of Chinese Painting

The remains of Neolithic paintings are known as rock paintings, painted pottery paintings, line depictions, murals and ground paintings.

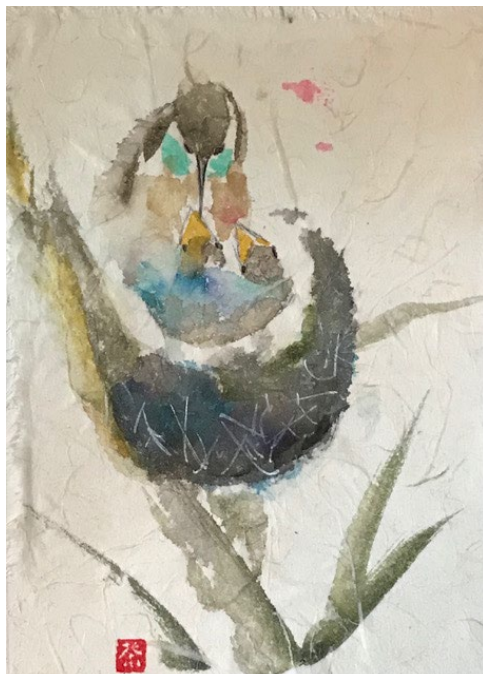
In terms of production methods, it can be divided into two categories: one is line engraving (including percussion and grinding), such as the images on rock paintings and stone tools, bone and pottery; the other is painting, such as painted pottery, rock paintings, murals and ground paintings. For prehistoric art, the standard of painting works is actually determined by the degree of realism of their images.



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Sumi-e Technique Tips to Improve Your Painting, Remembering Just a Few Points

Gail Goodman



Recently, I have participated in the free Henry Li Fusion Watercolor Workshop offered thru the Brooklyn Library System. I listened intently to his soft-spoken voice and took detailed notes. As I did this, I mentally noted that he was imparting many, many pearls and gems regarding principles of good brush painting.

Since then, every day when I sit down to paint, I read over the list to remind me of the important rules of good brush painting. I think my work has improved remarkably and hope that your paintings will too by just printing off this page and reviewing good tried and true rules for good Sumi-e painting.

So, in no particular order:

1. Ink stones tend to dry out when they are stored for any length of time. Soak the stone and lid in water overnight before use and the ink stick will work much better.
2. Use the rough side of your paper when painting animals, flowers, or landscapes unless you're painting outline style. You will get more texture or softness in your work.
3. The secret of using ink lies in knowing how much water and ink to put on the brush. This is something the student can learn only with practice and patience.
4. AVOID parallel lines - in everything, that includes ink strokes with the edge of the paper.
5. Avoid STRAIGHT LINES - the line should have a slight curve as it is far more interesting. The bone stroke is a good example of this. Never make two lines the same.
6. Vary the thickness of the line, as this adds interest.
7. NEVER cross a line at the halfway point, cross at 1/3rd, 1/4th, 2/3rd or 3/4th.
8. Support your painting hand for a strong and confident stroke.
9. Be patient, have calm, clear your head of negative thoughts.
10. Hold your brush 1/3rd to half-way up the brush handle, not too tight. Do not hold the brush like a pen.
11. Always load the brush with at least two colors, then "squish."
12. Strive for tonal variation (employ loading the brush with another brush).
13. Color and color relationships are important.
14. Keep a mixing plate close at hand.
15. Keep the brush straight up in your hand unless you are doing a side stroke. Remember your painting hand is supported to help you do this.
16. Practice, to vary the speed of the brush, vary the pressure to the paper, combining light and heavy pressure, turn the brush slightly to vary the line and add quality.
17. Use wet and dry strokes.
18. Keep a clean brush damp but not too thirsty so you can use it to "wick up or draw up excess water, and sometimes a tissue works for this.
19. PLAN your composition - Sumi-e is NOT spontaneous but should lead the viewer to feel spontaneity.
20. Practice your strokes, then begin to dance the brush when you have "muscle memory."



21. NEVER place the main subject in the CENTER of the page.... offset the subject.
22. Don't throw your work away until you have stepped back from it for at least 5 days with a thoughtful self-critique.
23. To bring out or emphasize your subject, you may want to shadow paint around the subject, and this will bring it out.
24. To get MIST: add water to your brush and paint the edge of what you have painted (i.e., the bottom of a waterfall) but be careful not to have too much wet into wet (or it will get muddy).
25. When painting leaves on a branch, one should be larger and one smaller.... Remember that no two things are the same.
26. AVOID parallel and symmetric subjects.
27. Balance the painted and white space in the composition.

Looking Back in Chapter's History

Gail Goodman

In the following picture, the members are those who were a part of the first year of the founding Chapter and who were still members 20 years later, in October 2008.

There are a FEW CHAPTER MEMBERS whom we continue to honor now, 32 years after the Chapter founding. Can you find them in the picture?



At Meyer Oberndorf Library, Virginia Beach, October 2008

Left to right: (Front row) Al Young, Lee Gerry Wertheimer, Doris Weber - Founder, Shaw Mei Shen; (Back row) Jane Lehmborg, Bill Shealy, Joe Nicholas, Jill Valentine.