

■ Art Calendar

April 22 and May 6

Figure Drawing

The Artful Lawyer, A Fine Gallery, Inc., 318 N. Main Street, Blacksburg • 6–8 p.m.

Figure drawing is currently held every other Sunday. A \$10 fee with registration is due on Friday before each session. To register, visit <http://artfullawyergallery.org/events> or call 540-443-9350, ext. 707.

May 9

Whet Your Palette: Drawing and Sculpture Opening Reception

The Artful Lawyer, A Fine Gallery, Inc., 318 N. Main Street, Blacksburg • 5:30–8:30 p.m.

This show features dry media drawings and sculpture. Works will be exhibited until July 25.

May 10-13

Backyard Stone Carvers Spring Workshop Newport Community Center, Newport

New carvers are welcomed to join experienced carvers for this event that starts on Thursday afternoon and continues until 5 p.m. on Sunday. The fee is \$50. For more information, contact Linda Correll at lcurrell83@gmail.com or call 540-599-7376.

May 11 and June 8

BRAA Monthly Lunch and Art Spot

Bull and Bones, First and Main, Blacksburg • 11:30 a.m.

Join your fellow members for lunch, hear the featured speaker's Art Spot, and share news about the latest art happenings. May's speaker will be Joe Scarpaci, who will be talking about group travel to Cuba.

May 16

Paint Party – Henri Matisse

The Artful Lawyer, A Fine Gallery, Inc., 318 N. Main Street, Blacksburg • 7–9:30 p.m.

Explore negative space in the style of Matisse. The cost is \$30 per person and includes all supplies (wine extra). Register at <http://artfullawyergallery.org/events> or call 540-443-9350, ext. 707.

May 23

Art Opening Reception

P. Buckley Moss Gallery, 223 Gilbert St., Blacksburg • 5:30–7 p.m.

Works created by students in Virginia Tech's

continued on page 2

Havana: a city of contrasts

by Réjane Pratelli

It's dark, windy, and the air reeks of exhaust fumes. And yet, as I leave the airport, I can't help smiling. Finally, I'm back!

The goal of my second trip to Cuba is set: exploring every single street of Havana, the capital city, and trying to understand what makes it so fascinating to outsiders. Havana is nothing like the typical bustling South American megalopolis, such as Mexico or Sao Paulo. It is much smaller, much quieter, less modern. Time stopped in Cuba in January 1959, just after the "triumph of the revolution." International relationships dwindled, the U.S. imposed a strict embargo and the Cuban economy relied on the support of the Soviet Union. As the eastern bloc collapsed in the early '90s, so did Cuba's economy. The unexpected outcome of these events is that Havana didn't grow and change as most other cities did. It is still one of the great historical cities of the New World.

Havana Vieja, the historic center, harbors colonial castles, convents, and palatial mansions reigning majestically over plazas and cobbled streets. Centro Havana offers street after street of Art Deco and Art Nouveau buildings. The modern parts of the city display an architecture borrowing elements from the Southern Mediterranean and South American traditions. No skyscrapers, no flashy neon lights, no unsightly billboards. Add a touch of Hollywood glamour with old casinos and the ubiquitous old American classic cars. There you have Havana, the mysterious, multi-faceted rough diamond of the Caribbean.

Having barely settled down, we rush back outside. Havana really comes alive at night. Music echoes from a street nearby. We hasten toward the sound, off down a cobblestone alley threading between crumbling colonial palaces. We emerge onto a plaza filled with people: diners sitting at outdoor tables, waiters, children running. A salsa band plays in a corner. Trumpets glow under the spotlights. Hands blur over conga drums. Two dancers twirl expertly. Soon, tourists and local residents join them. The Cuban salsa is emblematic of the complexity of the country: at once intense, sorrowful, exultant, laced with complex improvisations, it makes you feel Cuba. It burns with a joy and a passion that keeps us on our feet until the wee hours.



The architecture of Havana is one of the many attractions of this fascinating and historic city.

■ **Upcoming** *continued from page 1*

Lifelong Learning Institute's fall and spring art classes will be displayed through May 28.

May 25–27

Working in a Series

Warm Hearth Village Center, Blacksburg

Popular instructor Danie Janov leads this three-day workshop. The class is full; to be placed on a waiting list, contact Charlotte Chan at charlotteychan@gmail.com.

June 2–3

Sidewalk Art Show

Taubman Museum of Art, Roanoke

This annual show attracts thousands to the downtown streets of Roanoke near the Taubman, and has featured original fine art since 1958.

June 12

Opening Reception, Mary Draper Ingles Exhibit

Glencoe Museum, 600 Unruh Dr., Radford • 5-7 p.m.

As part of the Mary Draper Ingles festival, this exhibit features work by plein air artists who will paint at the Ingles farm, the Ingles tavern and ferry, or the Ingles statue. The exhibit will run through August 3.

July 12–14

Vera Dickerson Workshop

Christiansburg Presbyterian Church, 107 W. Main Street

Mark this date on your calendar to attend this workshop with this ever-popular instructor. For more information, email director@montgomerymuseum.org or call 540-382-5644.

July 21

Art at the Market

Downtown Blacksburg • 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

This juried show is held in conjunction with the annual breakfast at the market. Art, food, and music make this a must-attend event!

August 5

Opening Reception, Simply Elemental

Hahn Horticulture Garden, Virginia Tech • 2–4 p.m.

Stroll around the garden and be among the first to admire this year's art installation. Works will be displayed through September.

September 5-9

The Best of Yupo Workshop with Sandy Maudlin

Warm Hearth Village Center, Blacksburg

If you love texture and gorgeous color, this workshop is for you. Email charlotteychan@gmail.com to express your intent to register. More information and registration form will be posted soon at <http://www.blacksburgart.org>.

Havana *continued from page 1*

To begin our exploration, we first take the usual tourist path: Plaza de Armas, down to the Plaza Vieja, back north to the Plaza de la Catedral. This part of Habana Vieja has seen extensive renovation work in the past 20 years. The result is certainly stunning, and as the renovated buildings are turned into hotels, restaurants and museums, they generate revenue to be re-invested in further renovation. The downside is the crumbling buildings used to house a large number of low-income families, who get relocated to other parts of the city so poverty won't be an eyesore for the wealthy tourist.

Wandering away, we finally see this "other" Havana. Peeling paint, cracks on the facades, missing doors and windows, collapsing walls, rotting timber. Time, hurricanes, and crumbling economy have all taken a heavy toll on the buildings and their inhabitants. Peering through open doors and windows of formerly stately mansions, one discovers hastily built housing units sheltering a large part of the impoverished population. On the streets, large chunks of pavement are missing. Laundry hangs from the walls or shaky wrought-iron balconies. Plants grow in the smallest crevices. There is a wild, sorrowful and compelling beauty to these streets. Beggars ask not for coins, but soap or pens. Cubans still line up for subsidized food rations, and shortages of food and household supplies are not uncommon. And yet children play happily in streets swept and cleaned daily, adults smile and wave as we walk by. It's an intense emotional experience.



The shell of this once majestic building reveals the sad reality of some sections of Havana.

The art scene in Havana is thriving. Music and dance are a way of life more than artistic endeavors. Painters' cooperatives set up shop in abandoned warehouses. The most impressive is the Taller Experimental de Gráficoato, where artists engrave and print one-of-a-kind pieces on antique hand-primed presses. The Fábrica de Arte, an avant-garde cultural venue, wouldn't be out of place in New York City's Meatpacking

District. The UNEAC (National Union of Cuban Writers and Artists) is ground zero for intellectual life. Most artists, especially the younger ones, are eager to engage and talk about their art, their struggles to get supplies, and their hopes for their own careers and their country.

The Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes displays the smooth, water-like sculptures of Rita Longa and Wilfredo Lam's paintings. Lam spent a number of years in Europe and was influenced by Picasso, Matisse, Braque and Miró, but his works also show the strong roots of his own Afro-Cuban culture, which set him well apart from any other cubist artist. I also discovered other Cuban painters, such as Amelia Pelàez or the contemporary artists Ever Fonseca or Angel Acosta León. Here again, the special circumstances of the Cuban life shape a unique and fascinating take on art.

There is a lot more to see and to talk about in Havana, and much more to Cuba than Havana. From protected natural areas to colonial cities to historic



Coming September 5–6!
The Best of Yupo Workshop with Sandy Maudlin

Explore bold color and texture in watermedia on Yupo, a slippery synthetic paper. Email charlotteychan@gmail.com to express your intent to register. More information and registration form will be posted soon at <http://www.blacksburgart.org>

BRAA and VMFA sponsor workshop for area high schools

The BRAA and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts sponsored an all day Abstract Mixed Media workshop at Blacksburg High School on Thursday, April 5, and at Christiansburg High School on Friday, April 6. The workshop was presented by VMFA artist **Kendra Wadsworth**, who traveled from Richmond to present this workshop for approximately 15 students at each school. BRAA member **Betty Moore** arranged the workshop and provided support at both locations. BRAA member **Robi Sallee** also assisted at the Blacksburg workshop along with BHS art teachers **Pam McGraw** and **Katy Hypes**. BRAA member **Cheryl Mackie** assisted at the Christiansburg workshop along with CHS art teachers **Carrie Lyons** and **Laura Graham**.



Instructor Kendra Wadsworth demonstrates how to apply paint with tagboard.

photo by Betty Moore

The students were very engaged and enthusiastic during the course of the workshop. Wadsworth showed a video of contemporary American artist, **Julie Mehretu**, who is best known for her densely layered abstract paintings that use global urban landscapes as a source of inspiration. She also demonstrated a two-part process which involved choosing several colors of acrylic paint and applying them with a credit card sized piece of tagboard rather than a brush. While this was drying, the students used rulers, drawing pencils, charcoal pencils, and erasers on another sheet of paper to create what would become the first layer of their abstract mixed media piece of art. On top of the first layer, the students could then either apply paint directly or cut out and collage their abstract painting. While the students were working, music was playing and Wadsworth encouraged them to let the rhythm of the music encourage their strokes and lines.



Teri H. Hoover Photography

MARCH LUNCHEON

Artist **Martha Olson** was the featured speaker at the BRAA's March luncheon at Bull and Bones in Blacksburg. Olson discussed her process and shared examples of her paper creations.

Now Showing

April 15 – July 15

(except where indicated otherwise)

Lisa Acciai, Shaheen Law Firm, Blacksburg

Tom Barnhart, Unitarian Universalist Church, Blacksburg

Pat Bevan, Blue Ridge Cancer Care, Blacksburg

Patricia Bolton, First Bank and Trust, Christiansburg

Charlotte Chan, Community Arts Information Office, Blacksburg (May – June)

Marie Collier, Point West Management, Blacksburg

Judy Crowgey, Virginia Tech Women's Center

Carole Davis, Zeppoli's dining room, Blacksburg

Susan Hensley, Long and Foster, Blacksburg

Sidra Kaluszka, Mill Mountain Coffee and Tea, Blacksburg

Ruth Lefko, See Mark Optical, Blacksburg

Maxine Lyons, Brown Insurance, Blacksburg

Christy Mackie, Alexander Black House, Blacksburg (April 6 thru May 5)

Larry Mitchell, Community Arts Information Office, Blacksburg (May–June)

Betty Moore, Glade Church Gallery, Blacksburg

Phil Ramsey, Warm Hearth, Blacksburg (May – June)

Linda Weatherly Shroyer, Main Street Inn, Blacksburg

Lois Stephens, Blacksburg Transit

“Inspiration is a guest that does not willingly visit the lazy.”

~ Tchaikovsky

■ Exhibit and other opportunities

23rd Annual New River Valley Garden Tour

Saturday, July 7, 2018

Gardens throughout the New River Valley

This event is sponsored by the New River Friends of the Library and features seven beautiful gardens. They are requesting two plein air artists per garden, so find some shade and pull up your easel and chair, and support a great community event. A potential show of works at the Montgomery Library is being considered for the fall of 2018. Contact Teri Hoover at crystalirisphotos@gmail.com to sign up. All levels welcome; register by **May 1**.

The Artful Lawyer, A Fine Gallery Inc. 318 N. Main Street, Blacksburg

Applications are now being accepted for participation in the remaining 2018 shows.

- Social Commentary, August 1 – Oct. 10
Application deadline: **July 11**
- Black and White, Oct. 17 – Dec. 19
Application deadline: **Sept. 26**

For more information or application form, visit artfullawyergallery.org/gallery-shows or contact Diana Francis at Diana@creekmorelaw.com, or call 540-443-9350, ext. 707.

Arts Depot Spotlight Gallery, 2019 Abingdon, Virginia

Proposals are now being accepted for shows in the Spotlight Gallery at the Arts Depot in Abingdon. Proposals are juried in June 2018 for the 2019 season. All media



are eligible. The Spotlight gallery offers 97 running feet of wall space and 12 foot ceilings. Proposal submissions must consist of original and recent work and include 6-12 correctly oriented images. Works done in classes, copied from books, magazines or from photographs not taken by artist are not eligible. The Arts Depot will help to hang or install work, provide publicity, mail printed invitations and host an opening reception at no cost to the artist. There is a \$20 non-refundable proposal fee and the association will retain a 35% commission on works sold. The proposal deadline is noon on **June 9**. For more information and guidelines for submission, visit www.abingdonartsdepot.org/ and download the Call for Spotlight Gallery Proposals 2019.

Virginia Watercolor Society

September 7 – October 7

Olin Gallery, Roanoke College, Salem

This annual juried exhibition is now live on callforentry.org. Deadline for entry is **June 26**. You must be a VWS member to apply. Check it out and don't let the electronic entry scare you! BRAA members needing help with the entry should contact braaarts@gmail.com to request assistance. If you have never used Call for Entry (CAFE) before, you must create an account first and can do that at any time. It is really very simple! You can find the entire call for the show on the CAFE website.

Havana *continued from page 2*

sites to timeless agrarian landscapes, there is more than enough to pique curiosity. Cuba is unique because of its seclusion from the rest of the world. It takes time, patience, and open-mindedness to appreciate this country and the incongruities peppering every aspect of life. They might be charming, discouraging, challenging, heart breaking. But they're not to be ignored or downplayed. ■

BRAA member and jeweler Réjane Pratelli visited Cuba in January 2018. This article

The art featured in this month's nameplate is "White Tulips" (left, oil monotype, 24 x 18") by Patricia Bevan. This and more of her work can be viewed at Blue Ridge Cancer Care in Blacksburg through mid-July.



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