

■ Upcoming

Now thru January 3

Holiday Market at CAIO

Community Arts Information Office, 149 College Avenue, Blacksburg • Mon. – Fri., 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Twenty-one artists are displaying a wide variety of mostly small works from 2D to jewelry, fused glass, note cards and much more. Stop by and support your fellow artists!

December 7

Paint Party — Frosted Forest

The Artful Place, A Fine Art Studio, 106 Faculty Street, Blacksburg • 7 – 9:30 p.m.

Join in the fun — \$30 covers all supplies. Register at <http://artfullawyergallery.org/events>.

Dec. 9 and Jan. 13

BRAA Monthly Lunch and Art Spot

Famous Anthony's, Blacksburg • 11:30 a.m.

Join your fellow members for lunch and hear about the latest art happenings. December's Art Spot will be presented by caricature artist, Kyle Edgell. Kirk Carter will speak about cartooning at January's luncheon.

Dec. 17 and Dec. 18

Holiday Open House

P Buckley Moss Gallery, Blacksburg

Saturday's open house will be from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday's from noon to 3 p.m. For more information, call 540-250-3210.

December 18

Figure Drawing

The Artful Lawyer, Blacksburg • 6–8 p.m.

The model, easels and drawing boards are provided and the cost is \$10. Reserve your spot online by the Friday before each session at <http://artfullawyergallery.org/events>.

January 12

Ava Howard Reception

The Montgomery Museum, 300 S. Pepper St., Christiansburg • 5–7 p.m.

Come view the latest works of artist Ava Howard. Art displayed through February.

Time to renew!

Annual membership fees are due **Dec 31**. Go to www.blacksburgart.org for a printer-friendly membership form.

It's all about art for Vera Dickerson

By Gerri Young

As a child painting alongside her artist mother, Lyndall Mason, Vera Dickerson started creating the picture of her life. It has turned out to be a masterpiece.

Since then, this well-known artist has laid brush to a long list of accomplishments in the art world and created a fan base of hundreds of artists who have admired and bought her work as well as benefitted greatly by her patient and giving style of teaching.

As holder of a master of fine arts in painting and American art history from American University in Washington, D.C., Dickerson amassed a long and impressive biography.

She has enjoyed 29 solo shows, exhibited in the Smithsonian American Art Museum, has many pieces in corporate collections, and been accepted in juried exhibitions too numerous to mention, including winning Best in Show in the 2007 Virginia Watercolor Society of which she was twice president.

She paints at her home near Fincastle, Va., shared with her husband, Bob, and a couple of cats; opening that home yearly for the Botetourt County open studios tour.

Early in her teaching career she taught at Radford University and Keuka College in upstate New York before moving back to Roanoke and teaching at Virginia Western Community College. After realizing that her favorite students were those older members of her classes, she and two other artists opened The Studio School in 1990.

First located on Campbell Avenue above the now Blacksburg-based art supply store, Mish Mish, this was an exciting step in fulfilling her legacy for a life of art. Over the years, the school moved to two other locations in Roanoke before finally landing in its current spot on Brandon Avenue.

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Vera Dickerson shows one of her student's work at The Studio School in Roanoke.

Another active year!

It's the time of year for reflection, and thanks to all the tireless volunteers who made the following BRAA accomplishments possible —

- 12 monthly luncheons with 11 Art Spot speakers
- 3 board meetings
- 3 workshops: Christine Kosiba – Sculpting, Jesi Pace-Berkeley – Watercolor, Danie Janov – Collage, and Amy Shawley – Golden Products Presentation
- Annual Theme Show at VTLS
- Art at the Market tent
- “Simply Elemental” art in the Hahn Garden
- VMFA workshops at Blacksburg and Christiansburg high schools
- Judging awards for Montgomery Museum—Blacksburg and Christiansburg high schools
- 6 plein air days
- 1 play date to make name tags
- 48 BRAA gallery exhibitions, lost two galleries, gained two galleries
- Successful December holiday market in CAIO gallery with over \$2000 in sales (Dec 2015)
- December 2016 holiday market with 21 artists
- 130 members (rises and falls)
- 10 newsletters
- Numerous group info emails
- Second all-BRAA art exhibition in Mathena Center gallery, Princeton, W.Va.
- Donated to Blacksburg High School end of year art event
- Established newsletter editorial board
- 1 Chair, 22 artists exhibition at Alexander Black House, Blacksburg
- \$200 check to Vera Villanueva, winner of local 2016 Scholastic Art and Writing Awards, Fine Arts Center of the New River Valley

And for next year ...

After a thorough review of the first ever BRAA online voting process, the current board of directors has been re-elected by a 100% landslide by 69 voters. That represents about half of our members who voted, but far more than typically vote during the annual meeting. The members of your board will continue to lead the way through 2017. Thank you for participating in the election.

BRAA partnership brings workshop to area high schools

Approximately 40 enthusiastic students from Blacksburg and Christiansburg High Schools were recently treated to all-day art workshops. “Abstract Watercolor Exploration” was offered by the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (VMFA) in cooperation with BRAA. VMFA artist Dawn Flores presented the workshop at Blacksburg High School on November 17, and again at Christiansburg High School on November 18. BRAA member Betty Moore coordinated the event.



Dawn Flores demonstrates a technique at the recent abstract watercolor workshop at Christiansburg High School.

Betty Moore



Guest artist Dawn Flores (center, green apron) poses with BRAA member Betty Moore and students in the abstract watercolor workshop at Christiansburg High School.

Carrie Lyons

Strathmore Artist Papers provides a newsletter full of tips four times a year. The latest edition has articles about working on toned paper, watercolor basics, online workshops, and paper cutting art. Downloadable at: <https://www.strathmoreartist.com/artist-newsletter.html> (Gerri Young)

Do you have an art tip to share?
Email stephens1@pemt.net or younggerri@googlemail.com.



Dickerson *continued from page 1*

First time visitors to The Studio School might have a hard time finding it, even though their GPS says they have arrived. A relatively new sign at the back of the parking lot points down and around below the brick building on the corner of Brandon and Brambleton in Roanoke, not visible from the street. It is actually a cool location for something like an art school, very quiet and invisible to the public.

Six other teachers contribute to the catalog of seasonal classes offered at The Studio School (<http://www.thestudioschool.biz>). This winter, students of all levels can choose from classes in oil, watercolor, composition, photography, acrylic, cold wax and encaustic. You can make origami ornaments, watch free videos or sign up for a summer workshop with award-winning watercolor artist Susan Stuller (susanstuller.com) teaching in June of this year.

It is not unusual for students to study in various mediums and with different teachers, in addition to studying with Dickerson. Her patience and willingness to share her knowledge seem to be without bounds. Her classes are full of painters who come back year after year, learning something new in every three-hour session. Artists of all levels are welcomed, even beginners.

Long-time student of Dickerson, Lisabeth Weisband, describes her as “giving.” “Some artists don’t like to share the processes they use,” said Weisband, “Vera delights in sharing with us, even her very newest techniques she often comes up with herself. I used to study with her mother when I first came in Blacksburg in 1990. I told mom I thought she was very good and was quickly told that I should see the work of her daughter, Vera. That was my introduction to Vera and I have been taking with her ever since.”

The Studio School is a simple, two-room place with big tables covered in tracks of paint brushes too numerous to count, painting the history of those who have worked there. Beginners and seasoned painters alike sit in a mix of unmatched chairs and watch, mesmerized, as Dickerson does a one-hour demo every week while explaining all the steps along the way and giving practical tips about how to handle the process. The artists then break away between the two rooms to work on their own projects and get personal attention as Dickerson moves between the two rooms.

Every three sessions Dickerson does an intense critique of whatever pieces the students want to put forward, whether created in class or not. Armed with a box of colored masking tapes—who knew you could get it in pink—Dickerson patiently studies each piece, says something positive, and uses little snippets of the appropriate color tape to show what would happen if you put just “one smidge of red right there.” Seeing a couple dozen paintings critiqued each time is part of the learning experience as students watch the growth of skills and confidence in themselves and others.

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MJ Burn



Lois Stephens

Quilting artist Paula Golden shared her expertise and creations during the Art Spot at the November 11 BRAA luncheon.

Now Showing

October 15 – January 15
(except where indicated otherwise)

Jeni Benos, Glencoe Museum, Radford (thru Dec.)

Pat Bevan, Pointe West Management, Blacksburg

Patricia Bolton, New River Bank, Christiansburg (thru Dec.)

Jennifer Carpenter, Montgomery Museum, Christiansburg (thru Jan.)

Charlotte Chan, Suffolk Center for Cultural Arts, Suffolk, Va. (thru Dec.)

Riley Chan, Zeppoli's, Blacksburg

Marie Collier, See Mark Optical, Blacksburg and Christiansburg Library (thru Dec.)

Carole Davis, Brown Insurance, Blacksburg

Vera Dickerson, Holtzman Alumni Center, Virginia Tech (thru Dec.)

Anne Hammond Tooke, Zeppoli's, Blacksburg

Sue Hossack, Blue Ridge Cancer Care, Blacksburg

David Pearce, Route 8 Donuts, Christiansburg (thru Dec.)

Ruth Lefko, Mill Mountain Coffee and Tea, Blacksburg and Haga Law, Christiansburg (thru Dec.)

Sally Mook, Blacksburg Transit Office

Nancy Norton, Zeppoli's, Blacksburg

Lois Stephens, Main Street Inn, Blacksburg

Jane Thorp, New River Bank, Christiansburg (thru Dec.)

Michele Walter, Blue Ridge Cancer Care, Blacksburg

Shaun Whiteside, VTLS, Blacksburg

Tom Wilkinson, Virginia Tech Women's Center

“You give but little when you give of your possessions. It is when you give of yourself that you truly give.” ~ Kahlil Gibran

■ Exhibit opportunities

Windows On My World

August, 2017

Alexander Black House Lawn

All BRAA artists are invited to participate in an art show the month of August on the lawn of the Alexander Black House. BRAA and Alexander Black House and Cultural Center will be sponsoring what is planned to be the first in a series of shows for local artists to share their perspective on their surroundings. This first show will focus on what Blacksburg means to each of the artists participating. Old window sashes are available free from event chair Diane Relf (dianerelf@icloud.com). Many shapes and sizes are available, or use your own. Any medium can be used to convert the window into a statement about the town and the artist's connection to it. However, it must stand up to a month of outdoor summer weather. Posts or other methods for hanging the windows will be provided.

Commitment to participate would be appreciated by **Dec. 20** but will be considered until the target of 16 artists is met. Windows can be picked up by Dec. 24 or after April 1. Work must be completed by July 15 to allow time for constructing the display.

■ Kudos

Congratulations to all those who had BRAA gallery sales this year, including —

- **Lisa Acciai** – Brown Insurance
- **Marie Collier** – Main Street Inn
- **Robi Sallee** – Blue Ridge Cancer Center
- **Karen Sewell** – Brown Insurance

Thanks to our gallery partners — Blacksburg Transit • Brown Insurance • Blue Ridge Cancer Care • Community Arts Information Office (CAIO) • Main Street Inn • Mill Mountain Coffee and Tea • Point West Management • Rack Space • See Mark Optical • Virginia Tech Library Systems building (VTLS) • Virginia Tech Women's Center • Warm Hearth • Zeppoli's

The art featured in this month's nameplate is "Morning Glory" (right, macro photography, 10 x 8") by Anne Hammond Tooke. More of her work can be viewed at Zeppoli's in Blacksburg through January 15.

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The supportive and constructive attitude of Dickerson has, over the years, rubbed off on the students. Appreciation, applause and encouragement are the norm, as strangers have become friends. Empathy for the inevitable personal events is obvious in reaction to news of life and death, babies and relationships, broken computers and traffic tickets.

The camaraderie of the students is greatly increased among those who take part in trips planned and organized by Dickerson and another Studio School teacher, watercolorist Robin Poteet. France, Ireland, and Scotland always sell out. Painting is done on location and hundreds of photos taken provide resource material for many paintings back home. The coast of Maine was a highlight in 2015. In 2017, a trip to New Mexico is on the agenda and already sold out.

Dickerson's life of art shows not only in the many paintings she has inspired, but also in the hearts and minds of the many students who continue to study with her for many years.

Reflecting on her life of art, Dickerson's pleasant voice and gentle demeanor perfectly frame her feelings. "I have been so fortunate to be able to turn my love into a career and share that excitement of creativity with others. When we find our JOY, that's the reason to be."

Dickerson currently has a solo show in the Holzman Alumni Center in Blacksburg through mid-January. ■



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