



■ Art Calendar

NOTE: Some of following events may be postponed or cancelled due to the pandemic. Please check with each listing's contact before heading out.

March 21

Ukrainian Easter Egg Class

Newport Community Center, 434 Blue Grass Trail, Newport • 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Artist Sandy Randolph is teaching this class on how to decorate Ukrainian Easter eggs. The fee is \$20 and each student will not only go home with an egg or two, but also with supplies to continue working at home on this ancient and beautiful tradition. Space is limited. For more information, email Carol Grippo at newportreccenter19@gmail.com.

March 23 and March 25

Fun with Experimental Mixed Water Media Techniques

Blacksburg Community Center • 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Betty Moore will be teaching this two-day workshop for beginning as well as advanced painters. A variety of techniques will be demonstrated and students are encouraged to experiment with the subject matter of their choice. The fee is \$50 for Blacksburg residents and \$60 for non-residents. Supplies are extra and you may call 540-443-1142 for a supply list. Registration may be done online, by phone at 540-443-1100, or in person at the Blacksburg Community Center.

April 1

Whet Your Palette Reception

The Artful Lawyer, 318 N. Main St., Blacksburg • 5:30 p.m.

This fine art photography exhibit features works by Richard Mallory Allnut, Langley Anderson, Linda Correll, Aileen Fletcher, Diane Goff, Larkin Goff, Richard Goff, Pippi Miller, David Pearce, Guillaume Pilot, Michael Shroyer, and Charlie Whitescarver. Works will be displayed until May 27.

April 10 and May 8

BRAA Monthly Lunch and Art Spot

Bull and Bones, First and Main, Blacksburg • 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Join your fellow members for lunch, hear

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A tale of lizards, pots and salt shakers

By Gerri Young

Ceramic artist Tom Jenssen is known to BRAA members as a man patient enough for the challenging process of throwing pots and creative enough to top those pots with unexpected whimsical creatures. Little do they know there is a great deal more than kitschy salt shakers to this artist.

Tom, 80, was an associate professor of biological sciences in the College of Science at Virginia Tech where he was conferred "associate professor emeritus" in August of 2007, the year he retired. He had joined the faculty in 1971, but had a varied, adventurous and down right, low down assortment of experiences before settling in Blacksburg.

Raised in the Midwest and California, Tom received his bachelor's degree from University of the Redlands, his master's from University of Southern Illinois and his Ph.D. from University of Oklahoma. Beginning with an interest in engineering, he soon switched to biology which led him to some jumpy, slithering experiences!

"With a bachelor of science centered on field biology," recalled Tom, "I became interested in frogs and studied them in swamps along the Mississippi for two years. Then at the U of Oklahoma, my doctoral mentor, Charles Carpenter, introduced me to Anolis lizards and I became a bit obsessed with them. For three years I spent my summers living in a Volkswagen van in Mexico to study them." While the frogs took him from land to water, the lizards were tree-dwelling, iguanid creatures found all over the southern tropics, so Tom got to dry out.

Because Tom's specialty was animal behavior, he witnessed firsthand the different stages of camera development. "I spent a lot of time behind a camera to record lizards in their natural habitat. I progressed from Super 8 movie film, to VHS tape, to digital formats." Today he puts videos together in his basement.

Still hooked on Anolis lizards, Tom spent a two-year postdoctoral fellowship with Harvard

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Tom exhibits an assortment of his pots and salt shaker creations.

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the featured speaker's Art Spot, and share news about the latest art happenings. Robin Scully (Boucher) from Virginia Tech's Perspective Gallery will be speaking on April 10 on social practice arts and also share information about this year's theme show. The May speaker will be Vera Dickerson from Roanoke's Studio School.

April 25–26

20th Annual Open Studio Tours of Roanoke Various Roanoke Locations • 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Come celebrate 20 years of creativity as artists open their working and living spaces. Nine studios will feature 27 regional artists and artisans and their works of paintings, ceramic arts, jewelry, fiber arts, mixed media, and more. For more information, visit <https://www.openstudiostourroanoke.com/>.

May 2

Blacksburg Cork and Fork Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center, Blacksburg • Noon – 6 p.m.

This fun festival showcases local and regional wineries, artists and restaurants. Attendees enjoy wine, art, food, music, and a unique charity event, Can Do!

May 11–16

Second Plein Air Roanoke Roanoke, Virginia

The Little Gallery announces its second annual opportunity to paint or watch some of the best artists from across the country paint Roanoke and the Blue Ridge landscape. This year's event kicks off with nationally recognized plein air artist, Mary Garrish, leading a workshop on May 10 and 11. She will also be judging the plein air event on May 15 as well as the Quick Draw session. For more information and registration, visit <https://thelittlegallerysml.com/pages/plein-air-roanoke-2020/>.

May 30–31

62nd Annual Sidewalk Art Show Downtown Roanoke • 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Come check out this perennial favorite in the heart of Roanoke's historic area where you'll find original paintings, prints, watercolors, etchings, mixed media, photography, fine craft, jewelry, and sculpture.

June 26–28

Design Theory and Composition Workshop Warm Hearth Village Center, Blacksburg • Times TBA

Danie Janov will teach this workshop to build artists' design and composition skills. More details coming soon, but you may contact Charlotte Chan at charlottechan@gmail.com for immediate information.

a tale of lizards *continued from page 1*

University, working in Jamaica, Panama, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic. His studies in evolutionary biology landed him a faculty position with Virginia Tech as an ethologist studying and teaching animal behavior. He settled into Blacksburg for good.

Along the way he took a sabbatical at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C. and went to a dinner party that changed his life. "I met this interesting lady named Kitty and was quite impressed. At the end of the evening I offered to take her home and we ended up spending hours together talking and listening to music which we both love. I was living in Blacksburg at the time so we stayed in touch by post cards. Yatta-yatta-yatta ... and we have been married for 34 years."

"We didn't have much money so we bought a very old, needy farmhouse on eight acres in McCoy," said Tom. "It sat on locust posts and we took it from pretty much falling down to almost modern over the next 30 years. We could literally see daylight through the sides of the house in the beginning. I like to work with my hands so it kept us busy. We fixed every surface and updated plumbing, heating and three generations of electrical wiring.

"Sometimes I would come home to a room that was white plaster board in the morning and pink by the end of the day because my wife, Kitty, liked to paint and is a colorist. We built in custom shelving and located electrical outlets where we needed them to be efficient. Lots of outlets! We liked the challenge!"

Later, Tom remodeled a home for his sister, but it could be said that this old McCoy house was his largest and most ambitious artistic project. It was one they would eventually sell to move to Warm Hearth in 2015 as they got on in years. "It was very hard to leave the country place but it was time. It sold quickly to people who really love it so that helped."

Having retired in 2007, Tom needed a new purpose and remembered he had enjoyed working with ceramics while attending the University of the Redlands in California. He checked out the pottery studio at the YMCA in Blacksburg, did a bit of "leap frog" and started yet another venture. "The Y pottery studio is a great thing," said Tom. "You pay a small monthly fee to have access to everything you need. I don't have to have any of the equipment or supplies at home."

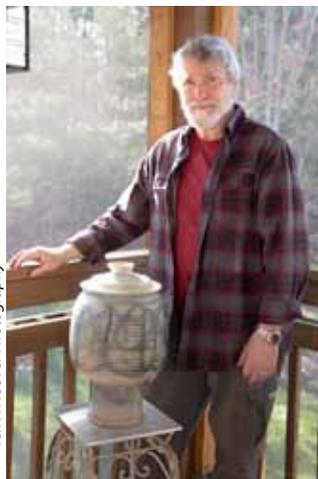
His pots generally are earthen toned in various sizes and shapes. He often draws characters around the sides, borrowing designs from southwest native Americans. So far, so normal. Then one day, Kitty provided him with an "orphan" from her salt and pepper shaker collection, just one facet of a much more vast collection of vintage Japanese lusterware, and a unique style of pottery was born.

His pots, topped with the colorful creatures, are local favorites. In the summer of 2019, during the Blacksburg



Tom at work at the YMCA pottery studio in Blacksburg.

Kitty Jensen



Tom's largest clay creation enjoys a sunny spot on the back porch of his home at Warm Hearth.

Teri Hoover Photography

10 things to do while waiting out the virus

With every passing day, another event gets cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic. While the introverts among us may be secretly relishing the idea of solitude, others may be wondering what to do with that extra time. Let's be creative!

1. Improve your skills with timed exercises: 5 minutes per sketch and 20 minutes for a painting. Then generate some interaction by posting those creations to our BRAA Facebook page!
2. Sort through your accumulated magazines for photos for an inspirations file, cut out images for collages, or clip solid hues and make a color chart for future reference.
3. Consider this a perfect time to spruce up your studio or creative space, organize your papers and canvases, and throw out dead paint and dried up markers.
4. Seriously clean your brushes (a good soak in Murphy's oil soap can bring some of the nastiest acrylic and oil crusted brushes back to life).
5. Start a "Quarantine" journal. Paint/draw/write a page a day to document your feelings and/or your occupations in this uncertain time. Stumped for ideas? Make it an alphabetical journal where each page kicks off a different artwork based on the assigned letter.
6. Search the Internet or YouTube for new ideas, tools and processes of creating something you might not ordinarily do.
7. Remember all those books about the life of an artist you have been meaning to read? How about actually opening one of them and learning the story of his or her life?
8. Practice paint mixing and create a color chart of your favorite combinations.
9. Watch YouTube art-related videos such as Art Show Winners and Why They Won (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dgOAraOC82Y>), Our Biggest Art Mistakes (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OFvdH4tSMVU>), or The Rule of Thirds – 10 Myths (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AJ7fahM5sBQ>).
10. Consider all the money you've saved by staying at home and make an art supply wish list!

Kudos

Jennifer Lovejoy recently had her work, *Convergence*, accepted in the Homeward Bound juried show at the Taubman Museum of Art. The exhibit featuring entries from across the state opens May 1 and will be displayed until Sept. 20.



Convergence by Jennifer Lovejoy

New Member

A hearty welcome to new BRAA member **Robert Smith**.

tale of lizards *continued from page 2*

Regional Art Association's annual theme show, four of his pots were the only pieces to sell from the dozens of artworks exhibited. The obviously expert hand-wrought pots contrast whimsically with the salt or pepper shaker cats, dogs and other things perched on the top. Recently, he started a series topped with animal miniatures bought locally appearing to stand in pools of water made of acrylic. Occasionally, a pot features a hand-carved lizard wrapping around the sides, giving a nod to his lizard observation days.

Their home in Warm Hearth is very much a reflection of their partnership. Their favorite furniture pieces from the McCoy farm house mix with new pieces. Kitty's lusterware collection adorns many surfaces while Tom's newer, hand-thrown pots topped with and without toppers cover the rest. They have created an art-filled home in a tranquil setting and made friends with the lovely, 94-year-old neighbor, Marian Kelso, who thinks they are wonderful.

A selection of Tom's unique work is currently on view at The Artful Lawyer in Blacksburg through March 24. He does not yet have a webpage to show his work, but it is likely he will figure that out soon along with the whole social media scene. It is never too late to share with the world. ■

Now Showing

January 15 – April 15

(except where indicated otherwise)

Lisa Acciai, Blue Ridge Cancer Care, Blacksburg

Marie Collier, The Artful Lawyer BRAA Gallery, Blacksburg

Alisa Colpitts, Glade Church, Blacksburg

Linda Correll, Main Street Inn, Blacksburg

Paula Golden, Blacksburg Transit

Maxine Lyons, Shaheen Law Firm, Blacksburg

Cheryl Mackian, Glencoe Museum, Radford (thru May 7)

David Pearce, The Artful Lawyer BRAA Gallery, Blacksburg

Dianne Gillis-Robinson, A New Leaf Gallery, Floyd (thru April)

Joy Rosenthal, Pointe West Management, Blacksburg

Robi Sallee, First Bank & Trust, Christiansburg

Karen Sewell, Brown Insurance, Blacksburg

Lois Stephens, See Mark Optical, Blacksburg

Linda Weatherly, Zeppolis, Blacksburg

Norma Woodward, Long and Foster, Blacksburg

"The mind is sharper and keener in seclusion and uninterrupted solitude. No big laboratory is needed in which to think ... Be alone, that is the secret of invention; be alone, that is when ideas are born."

~ Nikola Tesla

■ Exhibit and other opportunities

■ *Moonshining the Arts: Reflections on Canvas*

April 4–25, 2020 • Franklin County Public Library, Rocky Mount, Virginia

This year marks a milestone in American history — The Centennial of the passage of Prohibition and the start of an extraordinary era with lessons and legacies relevant to today. Prohibition encompassed greed and glitz, godliness and gluttony. It went from boom to bust, from the Roaring Twenties to the beginning of the Great Depression. It was the time of women’s suffrage, the literary movements of the Lost Generation and Harlem Renaissance, changes in music, fashion and the arts, and debates over morality, individual freedom and the will of government.

Moonshining the Arts: Reflections on Canvas encourages artists to look back in history, to consider the influences of the Prohibition era on present day, and to interpret Franklin County’s role in the American moonshining story. If you’d like to participate in this exhibit to help shine a light on this time and place in America’s history, contact carolsart1944@gmail.com or visit <https://conta.cc/399nryP>.

■ *Place — An Invitational Exhibit for the Blacksburg Regional Art Association*

June 5 – August 1 • Perspective Gallery, Squires Student Center, Virginia Tech

This show features a focus on “place” and artists may interpret this theme through their mediums of choice. BRAA members may submit up to two entries. Art will be selected by an independent juror and artists will be notified by email on or before May 20. Entry deadline will be mid-May (exact date to be determined). Check next month’s newsletter for more information!



■ *Simply Elemental — Call for Artists*

August 1 – September 30 • Hahn Horticulture Garden, Virginia Tech

The Simply Elemental exhibit has provided an outdoor art experience for the public in the New River Valley for the past six years in a beautiful garden setting. This outdoor sculpture show calls for artists to create and exhibit garden sculptures for the public’s enjoyment. This show is for anyone who wishes to create and display art for others to enjoy! The only requirement is that the art be family friendly and be able to withstand two months in the elements. This year’s theme is Art Among Us — Be Inspired. New this year is a People’s Choice award of \$100.

The deadline for applications for participation in this year’s event is **April 30**. The opening reception will be held from 5–7 p.m. on August 2. For more information, visit the Hahn Horticulture Garden website at <https://www.hort.vt.edu/hhg/index.html> or email vtgarden@vt.edu.

■ *C.O.D. — Curator Off Duty*

January 2022 • Olin Hall Galleries, Roanoke College, Salem

This exhibition is open to all Virginia artists. The only curatorial criteria is that each submission must fit within one cubic foot. The exhibition aims to unite the Virginia visual arts community through diversity and inclusion. Olin Hall Galleries will host material studies and process oriented workshops until the opening of the exhibition in January 2022. At the closing of the exhibition, participating artists will have the option to sell their work to support a local cause. Artwork is now being accepted and may be dropped off any time during regular gallery hours. Each artist is invited to submit three individual works of art. Any medium is allowed and must arrive ready to hang or install. For further information, visit www.roanoke.edu/curatoroffduty.

The art featured in this month’s nameplate is “Morning Shimmer” (left, oil, 16 x20”) by Lisa Acciai. This and more of her work can be viewed at Blue Ridge Cancer Care in Blacksburg through mid-April.



Making BRAA Work —

Charlotte Chan, president
Alisa Colpitts, vice president
Jeanette Bowker, treasurer
Sue Hossack, secretary
Rafael Bedia, membership
Gerri Young, past president
Jeanette Bowker and **Nancy Norton**, gallery committee
Gerri Young, marketing and plein air chair
Charlotte Chan, workshop chair
Robi Sallee, luncheon/hospitality chair, theme show chair
Lois Stephens, newsletter chair
Gerri Young, Teri Hoover, Pat Bevan, newsletter editorial board
Sue Hossack, web administrator
Linda Correll, bylaws review chair
Betty Moore, high school workshops chair



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Send Facebook news postings to:
Gerri Young at younggerri@googlemail.com
 or **Teri Hoover**
 at crystalirisphotos@gmail.com

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Send news of receptions, exhibits, awards, photos, comments, or newsletter suggestions to Lois Stephens (loisstephens56@gmail.com) by the 15th of each month or July 1 for June/July and Dec. 1 for Nov./Dec. issues.