

■ Art calendar

Now thru April 15

ARTGAWK, Choice Pickings From the Permanent Collection
Radford University, Covington Center Museum

Among the many fascinating gems in this exhibit are works by Picasso, Warhol, and our own Joni Pienkowski. Call 540-831-5754 for viewing hours and to obtain a parking permit.

March 13 – May 1

American Watercolor Society Annual Exhibit
Piedmont Arts, 215 Starling Ave., Martinsville

American Watercolor Society's 153rd Annual Exhibition includes 40 paintings, with styles ranging from hyperrealistic to abstract, by artists from around the globe. Founded in 1866 to promote the art of watercolor painting, the American Watercolor Society is one of the oldest and most prestigious art societies in the world. This year, 143 paintings were selected for the annual exhibition and 40 paintings were selected to travel on a cross-country tour of six museums and galleries, which culminates at Piedmont Arts.

April 9, May 14

BRAA Monthly Lunch (Virtual)
Via Zoom • 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Meetings are held online via Zoom or until weather is suitable for outdoor gatherings. Watch for email notification on how to join or logon from the website at <https://www.blacksburgart.org/meetings>. April's speaker is Ellen Morris who will talk about her experiences of painting the Live Fully mural in downtown Blacksburg. In May, Beth Lohman will discuss "Discovering the Huckleberry Trail in New Ways."

May 8–9

Plein Air Journaling
Historic Smithfield Plantation, Blacksburg • 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Participants will work with local artists Gerri Young and Matt Gentry to learn how to journal with watercolor (or the medium of your choice) onsite at Historic Smithfield. The workshop is suitable for beginner to intermediate painters, ages 15 and up. Fee is \$15 and the class is limited to 15 students. For more information or registration, email kjewell@historicsmithfield.org.

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A virtual chat with Lisa Acciai

As told to Gerri Young

Home town: I grew up in New York state but I've lived in Blacksburg since graduating college in 1989.

A little bit about your family: I've been married to my husband for 27 years and we have two young adult sons. We love living in the mountains of Blacksburg and, due to the pandemic, our recent college graduate son is living with us temporarily, doing work from home along with my husband. So much for the empty nest! My family is super supportive of my art career and I think I would have to say my husband is my biggest fan/technical support resource, as well as playing the role of art critic. I know I can always go to him for honest feedback on a piece of work.

Do you have a pet? We have a spunky and spoiled four-year-old, mini-Labradoodle named Ellie! She runs with me and two other dogs in the woods at Pandapas pond most mornings. Previously, we had a black lab named Lady, who was the inspiration for some of my earlier paintings.

Why do you belong to BRAA and how long have you been a member? I think it's important to support local art organizations and I appreciate the opportunity to exhibit my work at different venues throughout town. I'm not sure how long I've been a member but it's been several years.

What media do you work in and which is your favorite? I work in oil and charcoal and I love both mediums. I love oil because of its workability and its forgiving nature as well as its buttery feel on the surface. Charcoal, I believe, has some of those same qualities; but I also love its messiness — I can spread it around with my fingers and I enjoy that process. I also find charcoal has an ethereal beauty.

How long have you been actively pursuing artistic endeavors? I've been pursuing art all my life. I have always wanted to be a fine artist but I was nudged toward the



Lisa Acciai with her oil painting in the New River Art Juried Biennial in 2019.

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Coming soon ...

The Art Space @ The Artful Lawyer

Art by Members of the Blacksburg
Regional Art Association

Thanks to all of you who filled out our recent survey. We have listened to you! Many of you were interested in the possibility of opening up the BRAA gallery space at The Artful Lawyer to our members. The board has been working on a plan and is making this happen!

Space is being reserved on a first-come, first-served basis and requires both a monthly fee and a commitment to volunteer in the gallery. You may rent a booth with around 35 square feet of wall space and/or a smaller space such as a single shelf. Full details can be found at <https://www.blacksburgart.org/artspace>. Sign ups will be on a quarterly basis beginning in April and again in July. October through December will be set aside for a holiday market in which everyone may participate. Beginning April 10, hours will be Saturdays and Sundays from 12 noon to 4 p.m.

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May 21-23

Fluid Acrylic on Yupo

Christiansburg Moose Lodge • 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Tracy Budd will teach this three-day workshop in acrylic on Yupo, a synthetic water-color paper. Different techniques will be explored for controlling and not controlling the paint to build beautiful, exciting surfaces. Stencils, rollers and markers, along with fluid paint will be used to layer and build intriguing surfaces and integrate representational subject matter into the paintings. More information to follow, or visit www.blacksburgart.org/ for updates.

June 5-6

Chaos to Order — with Kathleen Conover Studio School, Roanoke • June 14-18

Award-winning Michigan artist Kathleen Conover presents her exciting workshop experimenting with materials, design, and watermedia. For examples of her work, additional description of this workshop and a supply list, visit her website at <https://kathleenconover.com/>.

The class fee is \$450 and there is a limit of 20 students. The registration deposit is \$200 and the \$250 balance is due **April 10**. For more information, call 540-206-2209.

SIMPLYelemental

By Diane Goff

Joseph Beach, who said, “A garden without its statue is like a sentence without its verb” would be thrown into delight if he walked through the Hahn Horticulture Garden of Virginia Tech when the Simply Elemental art installation was on display. Not only statues, but also all varieties of artwork grace the paths of the garden, which was established in 1984 by the horticulture faculty of the university. The six-acre Hahn Garden is the largest public garden in western Virginia and is open daily, free of charge. Along with seasonal flower borders, the grounds include a stream garden, maple tree allee, meadow garden, koi pond and conifer display. (Note: a parking pass must be obtained if visiting the garden M-F, 7:00 a.m. – 10 p.m. See hahngarden@vt.edu for more information.)

Starting in 2015, the garden has annually invited local artists and art organizations to submit art to an outdoor multi-artist installation aptly named Simply Elemental. The show runs August and September, just as the garden begins to settle down for its fall season. This installation helps the garden sing with bursts of color, enchanting shapes and compelling movement, all expressed in creative, whimsical and thought-provoking pieces of art.

In 2018, The Hahn Garden added performing arts to the mix and the sounds of music and poetry reading floated down the garden paths. In 2020, Simply Elemental weathered the pandemic by going virtual. Local gardeners and artists submitted photos of their creations and poets submitted poems. The resulting montage online uplifted us via our computers. This year, 2021, instead of a gathering for poetry reading and music, poetry will be shared in the garden in written form so that everyone can keep their distance. Also, this year there will be an art award for Best in Show.

The Hahn Garden is a teaching garden for undergraduates and a great learning resource for the community, providing environmental awareness and landscaping concepts. Drawing people to the garden, Simply Elemental amplifies this awareness. Many different art organizations and school groups have been an important part of the installation. Among them are the Floyd Quilt Guild, the Art Departments of both Floyd and Christiansburg High Schools, the NRV Master gardeners and the Virginia Tech Child Development Center.

The Blacksburg Regional Art Association has been a key player and support in creating Simply Elemental. One of the seed ideas for art in the garden came from BRAA member, Diane Relf, who had visited a similar combination of garden and art in New Zealand. Diane and other members of BRAA have been tireless workers in encouraging the arts to flower in the New River Valley, and their work with Simply Elemental has been a successful player in that arena. The benefit goes both ways, as seen in this quote from Gerri Young who served as president of BRAA for six years, “Simply Elemental offers all of us artists a chance to think outside the box. It made us do things we did not ordinarily do in our art practice.”

Gerri tells the story of visiting a local clothing store that was going out of business with another BRAA member, Nancy Norton. They came away bearing a load of long, stuffed fabric pieces that were used to put into the sleeves of clothing to give them dimensions. They gathered a group of artists from BRAA and went to work decorating the “sleeves.” That year Simply Elemental had a plethora of gorgeous seed pods, beans, and even a snake dangling from trees and structures in the Hahn Garden.



BRAA members painted cloth sleeves for Simply Elemental 2015.

Linda Correll

Another unusual endeavor using a “reuse/renew” theme happened the year when Diane Relf donated a group of used window and door frames that she and her husband had collected. Creativity of the artists soared as every artist invented her own portal leading to her own vision. These art frames actually started in an exhibition at the Black House

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■ Acciai *continued from page 1*

graphic arts in college so I could “survive” as an artist. I have worked in the graphic arts for over 30 years but approximately ten years ago I decided to pursue my original love of fine arts and started painting and drawing again. It all started with a pet portrait I wanted to paint as a gift for a friend’s birthday. I found people really loved getting portraits of their pets as gifts and I enjoyed creating and giving them!

Do you have work in a current show? I recently had work at the First Bank and Trust in Christiansburg. I also have some pieces at Mill Mountain Coffee along with three other artists in an 8x8 gallery of small art.

Do you have a favorite art/other media instructor? If so, who and where does she/he teach?

I have several online instructors I like. When I was first getting back into art, I found Will Kemp Online Art School and his video tutorials and blog on his website were incredibly helpful. I’ve also taken classes from Phil Starke — his landscapes are beautiful. The Tuscan Art Academy also has some great classes I’ve taken.

How has COVID impacted your usual creative practice? Creating more? Less? Differently? I think I’m creating about the same and my process hasn’t appreciably changed. I did slow down for a bit on my morning sketches I like to do because I got sucked into doom scrolling and news reading, but I’m trying to move beyond that. I thought COVID might slow down the volume of commissions I do, but it seems like I had more than last year. While several art fairs/street festivals I planned to take part in were canceled, I heard from several people they were looking to support local artists. I also think people just love their pets and like to honor them in portraits. The Thanksgiving to Christmas gift window is usually a busy time for me.

If you weren’t doing art, what would you be doing? I’m not sure how to answer that since I’ve always wanted to have some sort of creative art career. If you mean other interests when I’m not creating art? That would be yoga, running with friends and pups, travel, reading, and hiking.

Do you have a studio? I have a studio in our basement I use for painting; however, I love to sit and draw at my kitchen table in the perfect morning light.

What tip or trick do you wish you had known about when you began making art? Holding up my art in a mirror — it shows everything that’s “off” which is important when you are painting a realistic portrait.

Just for Fun: What movie/book can you watch over and over without ever getting tired of? Any period movie or book. I love all the Jane Austin movies and books. They’re funny, romantic, and I love the costumes. ■



Cat Eyes (charcoal) by Lisa Acciai.

■ Now showing

January 15 – April 15
(unless noted otherwise)

Dave Angle, Warm Hearth Village Center, Blacksburg

Charlotte Chan, Pointe West Management, Blacksburg

Pam Goff, Shaheen Law Firm, Blacksburg

Teri Hoover, Zeppolis, Blacksburg

Delbert Jones, See Mark Optical, Blacksburg

Ruth Lefko, Main Street Inn, Blacksburg

Cheryl Mackian, Glade Church, Blacksburg

Sally Mook, Art Pannonia, Blacksburg (thru May)

Diane Relf, Long and Foster Realty, Blacksburg, and Warm Hearth Village Center, Blacksburg

Robi Sallee, Bluefield College, Bluefield, Va. (until April)

Karen Sewell, First Bank & Trust, Christiansburg

Lois Stephens, Blue Ridge Cancer Care, Blacksburg

Michele Walter, Blacksburg Transit

Gerri Young, Brown Insurance, Blacksburg

■ New members

A hearty welcome to new BRAA members **Robin Price-Grubbs** and **Natalie Siegel**.



The Grove

■ Kudos

Norma Woodward's 20x30" photograph, "The Grove," was awarded first place in the January multi media national juried show, "Flora and Fauna," at the Fredericksburg Center for the Creative Arts.

"Art is not for the cultivated taste. It is to cultivate taste." ~ Nikki Giovanni

■ Exhibit and other opportunities

BRAA Theme Show

June 8 – July 31, 2021 • Perspective Gallery, Virginia Tech

Entry deadline: **April 30 and May 1**

This juried exhibition for current BRAA members invites works with a theme of "Place." The concept for the title has to do with being in a 'place' and reflecting on that through the creative process of the visual arts. The theme may be interpreted by each artist through his or her medium of choice. Artwork must have been created between 2019 – 2021 and not have been previously exhibited at Virginia Tech. There will be no physical opening reception due to COVID restrictions.

Members may enter up to two pieces per artist. The actual work must be submitted to Perspective Gallery for jurying on Friday, April 30, from 12–7 p.m. or Saturday, May 1, from 12–5 p.m. Early or late entries cannot be processed. The pick-up date for art not selected is May 17 or May 18 between 11 a.m. – 4 p.m.

For more information, visit <https://www.blacksburgart.org/2021-theme-show>

Water Quilt Project

Deadline for completed work: **May 1**

ARTivism Virginia is inviting participation in the Water Quilt Project to honor and protect the waterways of Virginia, West Virginia and North Carolina threatened by the Mountain Valley Pipeline.



The art featured in this month's nameplate is "Apples and Pears" (watercolor, 38x30") by Charlotte Chan. This and more of her work is on display at Pointe West Management in Blacksburg until mid-April.

This community art project is focused on building community and telling the story of neighbors and water bodies impacted by the MVP. Quilters, artists, storytellers, and water protectors from these directly impacted regions as well as anyone from around the globe are invited.

To learn more and participate in the project, visit www.tinyurl.com/WaterQuiltProject, or email waterquiltproject@gmail.com.

Taubman Museum of Art's 63rd Annual Sidewalk Art Show

August 21–22, 2021 • Downtown Roanoke
Entry deadline: **May 14**

Celebrating 63 years of fine art, this annual event has become one of southwest Virginia's most anticipated events. Works include original paintings, prints, watercolors, etchings, mixed media, fine art photographs, fine crafts, and sculpture.

This year the museum is also offering the opportunity for artists to list their artwork in an online art sale. This affords high exposure to the museum's patron base through digital marketing efforts. The online art sale will be active July – August 2021. Artists can select to exhibit in both the physical show on August 21-22 and the online art sale or choose one over the other. Artists for either presentation will be subject to the jurying process.

Artists may apply to participate at: www.taubmanmuseum.org/happenings/sidewalk-art-show.

■ simply elemental

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in downtown Blacksburg. From there, they went to The Montgomery Museum in Christiansburg, then ended up in the Simply Elemental installation. Diane Relf is a proponent of reusing objects, both recycled and natural, to make art, pointing out that in that case the artist doesn't need to take classes or buy tools and supplies to let their creativity soar.

As one strolls through the Hahn Gardens during Simply Elemental, one sees that art and gardens are a natural pair, a place where the Spirits of nature can commune with the Muses of art. Diane Relf says, "I think gardening and art are two very personal creative experiences. Humans were born to create." ■

For more information or to apply to participate in Simply Elemental 2021, visit: <https://hahngarden.vt.edu/elemental>



Making BRAA Work —

- Charlotte Chan**, president
- Alisa Colpitts**, vice president and workshop chair
- Marvi Stine**, treasurer
- Sue Hossack**, secretary and web administrator
- Gerri Young**, past president
- Ava Howard**, membership chair
- Vacant**, community gallery committee
- Teri Hoover**, marketing chair
- Ruth Lefko**, member meeting chair
- Lois Stephens**, newsletter chair
- Linda Correll**, public art chair
- Betty Moore**, education/outreach chair
- Jesse Burgardt**, New River Biennial chair



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

Lois Stephens, Gerri Young, Teri Hoover, Pat Bevan, newsletter editorial board