

■ Upcoming

February 18

Reception, New Works and Celebrate the Past and Present in Paint
Floyd Center for the Arts • 5-7 p.m.

The annual New Works exhibition in the Hayloft Gallery features regional artists, including many by fellow BRAA members. Also featured at the reception is the exhibit, Celebrate the Past and Present In Paint by members Suzanne Davis Ross and daughter and granddaughter, Michele and Bethany Walter. Works are displayed through March.

February 24–26

Abstract Watermedia Workshop
Hahn Pavilion, Virginia Tech Campus

This exciting BRAA-sponsored workshop will be taught by member Rita Montrosse (www.ritamontrosse.com). The fee is \$225 and class size is limited to 16 participants. For more information and registration, visit the BRAA website (www.blacksburgart.org) or contact Charlotte Chan at charlottechan@gmail.com.

Feb. 26 and March 12

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>.

March 10 and April 14

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. The March art spot will be presented by Laureen Blakemore who will speak about downtown Blacksburg events and other art happenings. In April, Jenny Boyd will be talking about Warm Hearth and what it has to offer to the community and artists.

March 15 and April 12

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

The theme for March 15 is "Cat" and "Goldfinch and Cherry Blossoms" will be the subject on April 12. Join in the fun — \$30 covers all supplies. Register at <http://artfullawyergallery.org/events>.

continued on page 2

Critique your own art!

By Danie Janov

The process of attempting to look at your own art work with a critical and unbiased eye is a formidable task. It is not, however, impossible. Even if you notice a few small potential adjustments, or perhaps one change which could make quite a big difference, you will become more aware of your own stylistic tendencies.

Your best friends for this "lonely" process are TIME and DISTANCE. When your painting or collage is near completion, turn it away from your sight for a few days. Then position it in a place where you will catch a glimpse of it as you come around a corner. What do you notice first? A positive reaction, or an "oh, no, THAT needs to change"? Or is everything so similar that nothing stands out?

Another option is to view the work upside down, and a third possibility is to use a mirror, space permitting, or a reducing glass.

But beyond these helpful manipulations, it is vital to know what you are looking for.

The selection committee for an art exhibit and the juror for awards will be looking for **successful composition, technical skill, and originality, surprise, emotion** — the intangible qualities that draw the eye and the heart and the mind.

As you go through this much more personal and understandably biased process

continued on page 2

Example 1

A 4 x 4 non-objective collage.

- The composition is vertical, within a square format.
- The color harmony is complementary, with red-violet and yellow green, muted values.
- Centered and to the right are collage papers with intermingled color shapes, moving vertically from bottom to top.
- These shapes are counterbalanced from within the color shapes by black line work moving randomly to the left and upward. These lines are also on collage papers.
- The compositional space is divided roughly in thirds of different widths.
- The value variation is limited, with the differences between the soft edges of the color shapes and simple line work providing the contrast.
- The image is enclosed by negative space, and movement stays within the compositional area.
- My design instincts told me not to add color to the left, not to darken any values, not to add any more line work. These are all things which I considered and discarded.
- I felt that the contrast between dark simple line work and suffused color shapes with a complementary color harmony provided enough interest for me.



■ Upcoming *continued from page 1*

March 31 – April 2

Expressive Watercolor Portraits

Floyd Center for the Arts • 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Instructor Susanne Davis Ross will help workshop participants develop confidence and spontaneity with watercolor using their photos of people of all ages and walks of life. Previous experience with watercolor is necessary. Supply list will be provided. Fee is \$132 for Center members; \$165 for non-members. For more information and registration, visit the website at floydartcenter.org.

April 7

Art Walk

Downtown Blacksburg • 5-7 p.m.

Rain or shine, stroll through an evening of art in downtown Blacksburg. A variety of businesses will participate in this free art walk. For more information, make the Community Arts Information Office on College Avenue your first stop.

April 27

Reception, Research in the Abstract

Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine, Roanoke • 5:30-7:30 p.m.

This exhibit features the results of collaborations between medical researchers and artists. Works will be on display through July.

May 20

Plein Air Opportunity at Cruise In

Downtown Christianburg • 4-7 p.m.

Plein air artists are invited to paint at the annual Cruise In of vintage cars. For more information, contact Ruth Lefko at rlefo2@gmail.com.

June 17

Reception, New River Art Biennial Juried Exhibition

Floyd Center for the Arts • 5-7 p.m.

This reception will celebrate works in this biennial exhibition, which is a joint effort of the Floyd Center for the Arts, Pulaski's Fine Arts Center for the New River Valley, and BRAA. The art will be on display until August 5.

July 5-7

Obsessive Compulsive Collage with Vera Dickerson

Christiansburg Presbyterian Church, 107 W. Main Street • 9:30-4 p.m.

This workshop will be three days of joyous color and pattern art. Participants will produce collage papers using stencils and stamps and then refine their color sense by selecting those which describe the chosen images. The fee is \$175; supply list will be provided. For more information, contact Sue Farrar at Montgomery Museum at 540-382-5644.

Critique *continued from page 1*

concerning the art work you have loved, hated, struggled with, and smiled upon, let us try to formulate a series of questions to ask yourself.

Go back to the initial image you had in mind, coupled with the intent at that time, and congratulate yourself for all the positives you have accomplished. Acknowledge that things change in process, sometimes for the better, and try to think about why any changes might have occurred.

We need to be in agreement that art work is fundamentally composed of the elements and principles of design. Therefore, whether your work is realistic, abstract or non-objective, the ingredients are the same. Whether you made sketches, and value charts, and preliminary paintings, or you are the expressionist painter who is not a planner, the process of questioning your choices will still apply as you look with a critical eye at the work produced.

What overall composition did you choose? Is this a composition that you work with regularly? Is it a recognizable hallmark of your work?

Compositional formats include, but are not limited to: **cruciform, landscape, high horizon, low horizon, portrait, triangle, S curve, radial, all over, symmetrical, asymmetrical, vertical, flat, grid, wedge**, or some variation of these. A tried and true compositional format may serve you well.

How have you chosen to use the elements of design? Are you a traditionalist, or an adventurer?

Is your LINE work evident? Mostly defining edges of shapes, or more textural?

Did you begin with a COLOR harmony determined? Do you use a limited palette?

COLOR harmonies include primary triad, secondary triad, complementary, split complementary, neutrals, analogous, tertiary, monochromatic.

Do you vary the VALUE of the colors you choose to use? This can be value variations within a single color, as a monochromatic color harmony would be, or the choice of a lighter color played against a darker color.

continued on page 3

Example 2

Half sheet, watercolor, primary triad color harmony.

- The composition is horizontal, landscape with high horizon line.
- Realistic imagery, based on a photograph which I took.
- Value variation moves from top to bottom. The darkest blue value is across the top,



which is a departure from the photograph, because the nature of the emotional content of the image required the darker value to press downward on the figures. The figures are set off to the right center of the image, because negative open area on the left provides a sense of separation from others. The figures are alone with and dependent on each other. The brightest primary colors are associated with the figures. The bright colors act as a contrast to the obvious limitations of the couple. The light value under their feet also speaks to limited support underfoot. Sparse shadows speak to limited strength, and the frailty of the figures. The emotional content of this image provides more interest than does the design, although design elements reinforce the emotional content.

Critique *continued from page 2*

Important point to think about: COLOR gets all the credit, but VALUE does all the work!

Are the SHAPES you use generally organic or geometric, or are you able to combine them effectively?

Is TEXTURE an important part of the image, or do you work with flat surfaces and shapes? Is this choice consistent throughout, or intentionally varied?

UNITY is a very important component of the success of your art work. A limited color palette helps to establish unity, while value VARIATION is a device for moving the eye around within the composition, and a very good way to define the FOCAL POINT of the image. Frequently, the darkest dark next to or surrounding the lightest light will dictate the placement of your focal point. When you glance at the image does it seem to be much the same in value and color?

Does the FOCAL POINT that you intended really hold your attention? If you have a "favorite area," is it the focal point, or just your favorite area?

Have you chosen to use a symmetrical BALANCE or an asymmetrical BALANCE? Is the visual weight well distributed? Does the eye move around the area but stay within the confines of the compositional space? Are the corners all somewhat different? Are there any LINES or SHAPES that lead your eye out of the composition? Are your NEGATIVE SHAPES as interesting as the POSITIVE SHAPES?

Is there a consistency of TECHNIQUE? Is your style evident throughout? If the brush strokes are evident, do they remain the same throughout?

Did you have an intended EMOTIONAL response? Will the viewer experience an exciting, vibrant image? A calm and restful image? An intriguing or surprising image? A sense of anguish or an unsettling image?

Will this image become stronger, more effective by adding anything to it? Will it be more successful by eliminating something? Remember that by adding or eliminating one thing, a shape, a color, a series of lines, you may change the whole art work.

The two visual examples provided, with observations regarding each, are a small peek into the conversations I have with myself near completion of an image. Many of the decisions about composition and color harmonies and value variations are made prior to beginning a painting or collage. Many of the decisions made in process are instinctual, based on experience. Instincts are fueled and supported by experience and education. The conversations that you have with yourself will inform your choices.

The ability to critique your own art work is an affirming skill which you will be able to develop with practice. ■

Danie Janov has an Ed.D. in art and art education and more than 30 years teaching experience in higher education. She has taught workshops in Richmond and for Shrine Mont, Kanuga, Hemlocks, and BRAA. She is a signature member of WSNC and ISAP, and memberships in VWS, SWS, and ISEA.

■ Kudos

Several BRAA members were accepted in the Floyd Center for the Arts "New Works" exhibition, including **Jennifer Carpenter**, **Judy Crowgey**, **Fred Jones**, **Ruth Lefko**, **Shaun Whiteside**, and **Gerri Young**.

Jennifer Carter's drawing "That's A Wrap!" was selected by a review panel to compete for "life-changing" cash awards totaling \$120,000 at ArtFields in Lake City, SC. She also received honorable mention for her work, "Let Me Out!" in the Roanoke College Juried Biennial.

Paula Golden and **Susan Hensley** have been chosen to collaborate with medical researchers at the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine. "Research in the Abstract" will be exhibited April 7 – July 31 at the medical college in Roanoke.

Congratulations to all!

■ Now Showing

January 15 – April 15

(except where indicated otherwise)

Alison Armstrong, Zeppoli's wine room, Blacksburg

Patricia Bolton, CAIO (Community Arts Information Office), Blacksburg (Feb.) and Haga Law, Christiansburg (thru Mar.)

Jennifer Carpenter, River City Grill, Radford (thru April) and Bluefield College (thru April 13)

Paula Golden, Blue Ridge Cancer Care, Blacksburg

Ava Howard, Montgomery Museum, Christiansburg (thru Feb.)

Angela Kinzie, Main Street Inn, Blacksburg

Ruth Lefko, Rack Space, Blacksburg

Susan Lockwood, Holtzman Alumni Center, Virginia Tech Campus (until April 6)

Cheryl Mackian, Mill Mountain Coffee and Tea, Blacksburg

Larry Mitchell, CAIO (Community Arts Information Office), Blacksburg (Feb.)

Martha Olson, Warm Hearth Village Center, Blacksburg (Feb.)

Sally Mook, Art Pannonia, Blacksburg (thru April)

David Pearce, VTLS, Blacksburg, and Hometown Bank, Christiansburg (thru Mar.)

Joy Rosenthal, Brown Insurance, Blacksburg

Robi Sallee, Zeppoli's dining room, Blacksburg

Karen Sewell, Virginia Tech Women's Center

Lois Stephens, Pointe West Management, Blacksburg

Shaun Whiteside, Blacksburg Transit Office

Gerri Young, See Mark Optical, Blacksburg

*"The world today
doesn't make sense,
so why should I paint
pictures that do?"*

~ Pablo Picasso

■ Exhibit opportunities

The New River Valley Through an Artist's Eye

October 4 – December 13
The Artful Lawyer, Blacksburg

Photograph, paint, collage, or otherwise interpret artistically what moves you in the New River Valley. All original works will be contributed to The Artful Lawyer Gallery and will be featured in both the juried Whet Your Palette show in October, and in a corresponding book project that will be published and offered for sale throughout the New River Valley and beyond. Additionally, all original works will be part of a live and silent auction during the Whet Your Palette juried show with funds raised going to the collective book project. The application deadline is **February 28**. For more information and an application, visit <http://artfullawyergallery.org/gallery-shows>.

Art at the Mill — Clarke County Historical Association

April 29 – May 14
Berryville, Virginia

The Clarke County Historical Association is now accepting submissions for Spring 2017 Art at the Mill. The registration fee is \$35 for up to seven entries and the historical association retains 35% of the sale price for maintenance and operation of the mill. Entries can be submitted at <https://artatthemill.artcall.org/>. The registration deadline is **February 22**. For more information, email artatthemill@gmail.com or leave a message at 540-837-1799.

Floyd Artists Association

The Floyd Artists Association is looking for 3D artists who would like to show their work at the FAA gallery in Floyd. The "featured artist" would have a two month exhibit with reception and publicity. Anyone who is interested should contact Judy Crowgey at jcrowgey@comcast.net or call 540-552-0006.

Simply Elemental 2017

August 1 – September 30
Hahn Horticulture Garden, Virginia Tech

The theme of this year's outdoor installation is Garden Variety. The proposal should include a .jpg file of the planned work and possible location, approximate measurements and any special needs. Include with the proposal a short bio with an image of the artist(s) and contact information. Because this is an exhibit of relatively short duration, materials used in the pieces can be non-permanent but need to hold up to the elements for 8 weeks. As the Hahn Garden is open to the public at all times, the garden cannot guarantee security for the works on display. The entry deadline is **April 15** and submissions should be sent to artinthegarden@vt.edu.

New River Art 2017 Biennial Juried Exhibition

June 9 – August 5
Floyd Center for the Arts

Visual media artists within 150 miles of Floyd are invited to submit artwork for this 14th biennial exhibition. The exhibit rotates every two years between the Floyd Center for the Arts, the Fine Arts Center for the New River Valley in Pulaski, and the Blacksburg Regional Art Association. Top cash prize is \$500 and other cash prizes and honorable mentions will be awarded. Artwork will be selected by Juror Amy Shawley of Virginia. The deadline is **April 25** and the entry fee is \$40. For more information visit floydartcenter.org.

■ Welcome, new members!

BRAA welcomes all new members, most recently **Linda Olin** and **Sidra Kaluszka**.



The art featured in this month's nameplate is "Conflict I" (right, acrylic, 36 x 48") by Shaun Whiteside. More of his work can be viewed at the Blacksburg Transit office until April 15.



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