

■ Upcoming

January 28 and February 11

Figure Drawing

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

After a brief hiatus, figure drawing resumes every other Sunday. \$10 fee with registration due on Friday before each session. If you are interested in being added to the figure drawing mailing list, please contact Diana Francis at 540-589-1431 or visit <http://artfullawyergallery.org/events>.

February 9 and March 9

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. Charity Hall will be discussing jewelry making in February. In March, Larry Bechtel will talk about the sculpting process.

February 16 and 17

h'Arts on Main

100 W. Main Street, Christiansburg

You won't want to miss these two days of art, music and wine. For more information, visit www.MontgomeryMuseum.org.

March 7–9

All about Watercolor Pencils

Christiansburg Presbyterian Church, 107 W. Main Street

Robin Poteet will be instructing this fun class and will demonstrate multiple ways to use watercolor pencils. The course is geared for all skill levels and is \$175 per person. For registration and more information, email director@montgomerymuseum.org or call 540-382-5644.

March 17-19

Working in a Series

Warm Hearth Village Center, Blacksburg

Popular instructor Danie Janov will be sharing her expertise of creating works in series in this three-day workshop. For more information, contact Charlotte Chan at charlotteychan@gmail.com.

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Mina Hejazi — in pursuit of the American Dream

by Gerri Young

One of the advantages of living in a university town is the opportunity to meet people from all over the world. Thousands of students leave their homelands and arrive in Blacksburg each fall, seeking higher education on the beautiful campus at Virginia Tech, often experiencing their very first taste of America.

Some students come through a much more circuitous route, as is the case with Blacksburg Regional Art Association member, Mina Hejazi, native of Iran.

"I was born in Tehran but mostly grew up over 500 miles away in the towns of Tabas and Mashad," recalled Mina. Number four of six children, she remembers being excited about art as a child and realized she was pretty good at it.

Later, she took private lessons for three years from a professional artist, visiting the studios of accomplished artists and painting en plein air. "I loved it, and quickly learned how to handle oil painting," said Mina.

When she arrived in Blacksburg, she knew she needed to find an art group to continue her interest in art, but also to make friends. "I walked into the art supply store, Mish Mish, and into the Community Arts Information Office downtown and ended up with an email for a member of Blacksburg Regional Art Association who advised me to come to a luncheon."

"I went to the very next one where everyone was so nice to me and I joined," she recalls.



photo by Teri Hoover Photography

Despite a rigorous schedule of teaching and meeting the requirements of a Ph.D., Mina Hejazi immersed herself in the art community during her time in Blacksburg.

That was in 2011, the year she arrived at Virginia Tech. Since then, she has participated as much as her school schedule allowed, attending luncheons, day-long art workshops, opening receptions and volunteering to help on art projects. Along with that participation came lots of art friends.

Her love of art aside, Mina's real story begins long before when she was still in Iran. With art always in the back of her mind, she earned bachelor and master's degrees in agriculture engineering and

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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.

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.

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. Many diverse methods will be explored to achieve great results on this slippery, synthetic paper, and you'll see why Sandy says that painting on Yupo is a blast. Email charlottechan@gmail.com to express your intent to register. Your email simply lets her know how many people want to take the workshop. More information and registration form will be posted soon at <http://www.blacksburgart.org>.



Kirk Carter and Robi Sallee talked about zine and journal-making during the Art Spot at the November luncheon.



At the December luncheon, Loretta Bedia talks about one of her creations (with the assistance of Raf Bedia).

Mina Hejazi *continued from page 1*

agricultural economics from the University of Kerman and the Science and Research, Azad University in Tehran as steps toward working in international trade.

For the next five years, she worked as an economist at the Agricultural Planning and Economic Research Institute in Tehran and was a member of a team preparing documents for the purpose of Iran's accession to the World Trade Organization. Through all this, she dreamed of going to America, as "many Iranian kids do." She understood more English than she spoke. As time passed, she felt her master's degree was getting outdated and thought she should go back to school. After applying to several schools in the U.S. and Canada, she was accepted by several and ready to use her new visa.

"What better time to try to live in America!" she said. By August 2009, she was on her way to the University of Wyoming, in Laramie, to earn a second masters — this time, in international agricultural trade.

"I had mostly heard about places like New York and Washington and that was my vision of the U.S. big cities!" she said. "It was quite a surprise when I arrived in Laramie."

She was not only "in the middle of nowhere," she was exposed to English in a way she had never heard. "I called it a cowboy accent!" she said.

"One of my professors was really hard for me to understand! But I believe in order to get along in a new place you have to immerse yourself in the local culture and I did that. The people were really nice to me. I bought my first television in seven years and listened to English at every chance. I studied hard."

"I got so used to little Laramie, that when I went to Denver with some school friends I was actually afraid of my first real big American city!" When feeling homesick, she went to the student store to look at the art supplies, which reminded her of Iran.

By August 2011, Mina possessed her second master's degree and was headed to Virginia Tech, one of five schools to accept her, to pursue her doctorate in economics from the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. "It was the best school for my international trade studies," said Mina.

Before arriving in Blacksburg, Mina thought she was headed to live in the big city at last, but soon found that was not the case. "When I approached Blacksburg from the Roanoke airport all the trees along the way reminded me of northern Iran. I consider myself a big city person, but have grown to love Blacksburg and miss it when I am out of town."

"My habit of immersing myself in the culture of wherever I am paid off in Blacksburg," said Mina, "especially once I found the art organization and so many students from different countries."

From August 2011 until August 2017, Mina continued her studies, taught classes and worked for Virginia Tech at the same time, going back home to Iran only once for a month. Occasionally, VT sent her to conferences to make presentations in San Diego, San Francisco, Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, and Washington, DC, a testimony to how fluent she now is in English.



Mina's oil painting of Masuleh, a beautiful village in the north of Iran.

photo by Mina Hejazi

Mina Hejazi *continued from page 2*

From time to time, her brother came from Canada and an uncle from Iran visited her in Blacksburg. Lamenting her love of big cities to her uncle, he was quick to inform her she lived in "paradise."

This year, as she neared completion of her degree and the end of her student status, Mina began applying for teaching positions in her field throughout the U.S. and Canada, spurred on by the unsettled atmosphere currently surrounding immigrants in this country.

Shortly before her graduation, her efforts were rewarded when she was offered a tenure track teaching position at Chico State University in California, one of this country's top 10 agricultural universities.



Mina Hejazi at her official "hooding" ceremony during her December graduation.

photo by Logan Wallace

On Dec. 21, Mina joined hundreds of students in Cassell Coliseum on the Virginia Tech campus in the procession of academic-robed achievers as she prepared to accept the maize-colored hood indicating her completion of her doctoral degree from the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. There was never a doubt this day would come for this very determined woman.

While artist friends high in the coliseum seats cheered her on, her family in Iran watched the entire ceremony live on streaming video on their computer.

On Aug. 1, 2018, Mina will report to yet another American university but this time she will be the one standing at the front of the room. California's gain will be Blacksburg's loss and she will be missed. ■

Artists and Virginia state tax responsibilities

Because BRAA members have engaged in sales through the Holiday Market for the past three years, it has been brought to our attention that when an artist sells his or her work, VA tax of 5.3 % (for our area) should be collected with each sale and paid to the state. For those artists who may not already have Virginia tax identification numbers for operating a small business, you may look on line at www.tax.virginia.gov for information and forms. This website should answer your questions about how to obtain a number and file quarterly on line. Paying taxes is the responsibility of each person who actively sells work.

Sales tax has never been collected during the BRAA Holiday Market at the Community Arts Information Office. Some individuals who already have a number calculate the tax on total sales and pay as if the tax had actually been collected. Paying tax is every artist's responsibility and the law, so each artist who does not have a tax number might check the website above.



photo by Lois Stephens

■ Kudos

Congratulations to BRAA member **Lisa Acciai** whose painting, "The Nose Knows" was named **Best of Show** in Carilion's Patient Art Show. The exhibit, displayed in the lobby of Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital November 1 – January 25, is sponsored in part by The Dr. Robert L. A. Keeley Healing Arts Program.

■ Now Showing

January 15 – April 15

(except where indicated otherwise)

Raf Bedia, Long and Foster, Blacksburg

Jeanette Bowker, Mill Mountain Coffee and Tea, Blacksburg

Diana Dougherty, Shaheen Law Firm, Blacksburg

Paula Golden, Main Street Inn, Blacksburg

Leslie Roberts Gregg, Montgomery Museum, Christiansburg (thru February)

Johanna Jones, Shaheen Law Firm, Blacksburg

Sidra Kaluszka, Brown Insurance, Blacksburg

Cheryl Mackian, Zeppoli's dining room, Blacksburg

Elina McCartney, See Mark Optical, Blacksburg

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

Martha Olson, Community Arts Information Office, Blacksburg (Feb. - Mar.)

David Pearce, Blue Ridge Cancer Care, Blacksburg

Joy Rosenthal, Blacksburg Transit

Robi Sallee, Virginia Tech Library System (VTLS), Blacksburg

Linda Weatherly Shroyer (and Walter Shroyer), "Imaginations," Rotunda Art Gallery, Chuck Mathena Center, Princeton, West Va. (thru Mar. 4)

Michele Walter, First Bank and Trust, Christiansburg

Shaun Whiteside, Glade Church Gallery, Blacksburg

Norma Woodward, Virginia Tech Women's Center

Gerri Young, Point West Management, Blacksburg

"You don't have to see the top of the staircase to take the first step."

~ Martin Luther King, Jr.

■ Exhibit and other opportunities

H'Arts on Main

February 16–17, 2018

Ignite (Old Baptist Church, Christiansburg)

Don't miss the opportunity to participate in this new event. There will be live entertainment both Friday and Saturday evenings. Artists are invited to set up booths in the Great Hall on Friday and Saturday. The cost is \$45 for the weekend and space is limited. Set up takes place on Friday morning.

For more information or to reserve space, contact Ruth Lefko at Rlefko2@gmail.com or 540-449-1328.

60th Annual Sidewalk Art Show

June 2-3, 2018

Downtown Roanoke

This annual show is sponsored by the Taubman Museum and is the premier destination for fine art shopping. Submission categories include: original paintings, prints, watercolors, etchings, mixed media, photography, fine craft, and sculpture. Application deadline is **March 9**. For more information and prospectus, visit <http://www.taubmanmuseum.org/happenings/sidewalk-art-show>.

The Artful Lawyer, A Fine Gallery Inc.

318 N. Main Street, Blacksburg

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

- Transportation, February 7 – May 2
Application deadline: **January 17**
- Drawing and Sculpture, May 9 – July 25
Application deadline: **April 18**
- 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.

6th Annual Bower Center National Juried Exhibition

May 22 – June 30, 2018

Bower Center for the Arts, Bedford

All artists over the age of 18 are invited to enter up to three works for this show. The event offers more than \$1500 in awards to be presented at the reception on June 8. Entry fee is \$30 and the deadline is **April 4**. For more information, visit <https://www.bowercenter.org/>.



photo by Gerri Young

Holiday market brought joy to shoppers and artists

The 2017 BRAA holiday market offered a variety of selections for shoppers and broke previous records for sales. More than 20 artists participated and earned around \$3415. Thanks to **Carole Davis** for leading the charge for this successful endeavor, **The Community Arts Information Office** for their support, and for all who volunteered. Plans are underway for next year's event which has been expanded to begin in November (rather than December).



The art featured in this month's nameplate is "Chincoteague Sunset" (photograph on 24 x 36" stretched canvas) by Norma Woodward. This and more of her work can be viewed at the Women's Center at Virginia Tech through mid-April.



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Send news of receptions, exhibits, awards, photos, comments, or newsletter suggestions to **Lois Stephens** (loisstephens56@gmail.com)

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