

Letter Perfect

The Newsletter of SDFC

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Summer Conferences

What a busy start to our calligraphic summer! Conferences in both Utah and Kentucky kept members busy. We'll start with **Letter Works** and then jump to **IAMPETH** . . . Lots of photos and class reviews!

Letter Works 2017, Ogden, Utah

June 24—July 1

Years ago, I told myself the next time the international conference was at Saint John's University in Minnesota I was going to drop everything and finally attend for the first time, especially with the major undertaking of the Saint John's Bible project 'nearing completion.' In 2009, my wish came true, along with a week-long class with Suzanne Moore, one of the American calligraphers who worked on the Bible. But first, a visit to see some of it for the first time. The first book in the room had a fully illustrated page on the verso (left) side with primarily text with a few illuminations on the recto (right) side. Surprising to me, in the upper third, I saw my family name twice on the page: Perez.



Yvonne Perez-Collins spent time viewing pages from the Saint John's Bible Project.



"The Gospel According to Matthew"

Fast forward to this summer's Letter Works Conference in Utah, where we had the tremendous good fortune to have ALL seven books of the Saint John's Bible. They were on loan from various sources for us to not only view in absolutely wonderfully soft lighting, but with cleaned (with baby wipes), ungloved hands we could turn the pages ourselves and take photos. We could look closely to study these books called the Heritage Collection that were reproduced with custom paper to replicate vellum and printed to look as though the show-through of the ink from the other side was actually occurring. They were on loan for a day, and I gave up the trip to hear the Mormon Tabernacle Choir for this cherished time with these treasured tomes of art and calligraphy. Okay, I was secretly glad the bus trip took longer and I had more time.

We were fortunate to have one book left to peruse for an extra day. It's "Gospels & Acts," the one shown behind me in the photo, which contains the page with my family name. Coincidentally, that is also the page that our member, Stephanie Chao, selected as a personal challenge to write the entire text on paper and recreate the artwork. The page is titled, "The Gospel According to Matthew." After hearing assorted conversations at the conference, the St. John's representative stayed for yet another day at his expense so the book could be available for additional viewing.

Yvonne Perez-Collins



My wonderful week-long class with **Suzanne Moore** was titled **Studies in Contrast**, which started out with us writing with sumi mixed with gouache, in our most familiar hand, and then deconstructing the letterforms using both traditional and unconventional tools. We then learned different ways of adding color to our papers, using Golden acrylics, gouache, assorted mediums, pastel and conté crayons. The results from everyone were all different but most inspiring.

Stephanie Chao



Left: Assorted products Suzanne brought for us to play with.



Right: One of a dozen papers I made.



Marsha Vanetsky in Sharon Hanse's class

I took two 2 1/2 day classes, both with **Sharon Hanse**. In the first class, **Dimensional Calligraphy**, we learned how to cut out stencils, create paper overlays, and select backgrounds that work best for our cut out message. Things were a bit tricky as we found ourselves working backwards in mainly negative areas. It's a definite mind adjustment, but easy once you grasp the concept. My second class was called **Metal Magic**. We experimented impressing four different types of metals: brass, copper, pewter, and aluminum with dry embossing styluses of different sizes. Some were easier to impress than others, but all had challenges when it came to applying the rich patinas to the different substrates. Some would only take creams/waxes, liver of sulfate, alcohol inks, acrylic paints, etc. Sharon brought all the materials we needed and her patient guidance with upbeat demeanor made the days fly by. Sharon was a problem solver par excellence, and not a single piece was discarded. Everyone completed several pieces of art in each class, and as soon as one piece was done another idea surfaced for additional works. Yes, both classes were great fun and really stretched our creativity.

Certainly, one of the best aspects of being at Conference is the final Show and Share display of what everyone had accomplished during the week. The creativity was abundant beyond description. In the end, it's not just the techniques we learned, the ideas we all shared or the birth of the new works of art we created, but to my mind, it was the greeting and meeting all those that have become friends. Letter Works was a success on all accounts.

Marsha Vanetsky

Letter Works Photos



Left: Helen Lebowitz, Wendy Watson-Diedrick, Yvonne Perez-Collins, Ellen Mott-Jablonski, Stephanie Chao, Diane Reiter



SDFC banner on display at conference



Stephanie Chao

YIKES! A Master Class! What was I thinking?

Thank goodness **Pat Blair** was the instructor. (**Master Class in Copperplate: Dressed Up and Dancing the Night Away**)

One could not wish for a more professional, understanding and kind teacher. Sixteen of us lucky people from all over the country came to the class with varied levels of expertise in Copperplate. After a while it was evident to me that there were some very accomplished artists in the room, but we each got the individual attention needed for growth no matter where we started. As is her style, Pat had prepared a beautifully decorated folder for each of us containing templates of the letters, slant lines and examples of flourishes.

Beginning with a review of the Copperplate alphabet, Pat added flourishes to both upper and lowercase letters. She encouraged us to add flourishes in pencil when practicing, whether one or two words or several lines. For those of us not very comfortable with flourishing, Pat suggested tracing them from the template sheets until our hands and arms became accustomed to the required movements.

She had requested that we bring about six to ten lines of text to write out for our finished piece. A good deal of time was spent discussing layout and design of our writing. What surprised most of us was that as experienced as Pat is, she often has to try many different layouts for each project until she is satisfied. I think this made us feel more comfortable about doing a lot of drafts as we tried to find the best arrangement for our words. Pat encouraged us to try using a variety of interline spaces, from quite large to almost stacked text. Flourishing could be added to ascenders, descenders and capitals depending on spacing and total look. We did go through a lot of paper! For our finished piece some of us opted for black or other colored papers using white ink or fluorescent gouache.

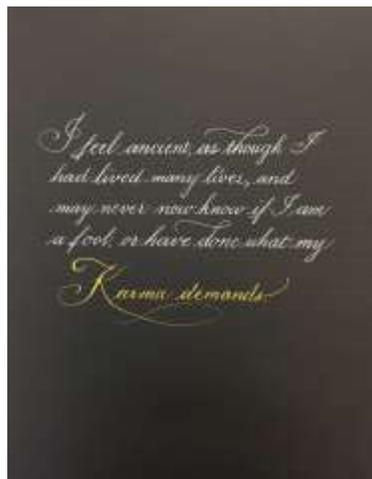
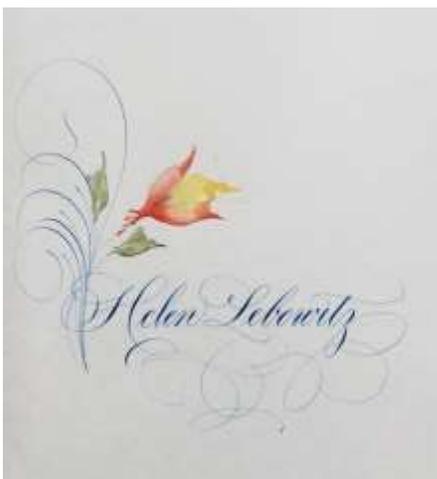
For the second project, color as the inspiration for words, we used a large piece of Arches hot press watercolor paper. Some areas were wet and others left dry. We applied splashes of watercolors around the sheet. The following day we cropped out areas we liked and added a flourished word or two, hopefully being inspired by the colors and the design they made when dried. We used colored papers to back our pictures.

We all wished we had more time to try variations of what we learned but I think our "Show and Share" afternoon was a wonderful success. I hope I have another opportunity to study with Pat Blair some day soon.

Helen Lebowitz



Helen Lebowitz



Far left and center:
Samples of Helen's
classwork. Author of
poem is Garry
Snyder.

What a great start to our week at IAMPETH - with **Rosalee Anderson's** class, "**The Missal Letter - Thinking Inside the Box**".

We got a brief introduction on design elements within medieval texts. Rosalee pointed out interesting design techniques on samples of Biblical texts. She explained that although the works looked very complex and elaborate, they were generally rectangular shapes within other rectangles. Curvy leaf designs were used frequently to break up a boxy look or any static areas. Large decorated letters were used to introduce text or to emphasize certain words. And decorations at the end of text lines were used to justify the text area and to fill in the space. She pointed out several areas with a diapered pattern. Often used in backgrounds, diapered or filigreed decorating along with the generous use of gold added to the glory of the text.



Rosalee Anderson

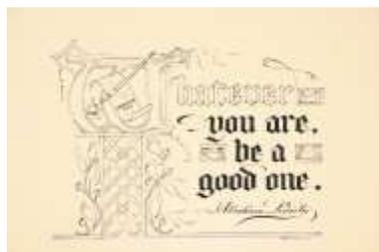
We got right to work on our pieces. Rosalee provided us with a pre-printed quote on Arches 140lb hot press water color paper. Our first step was to outline our piece with a waterproof black pen. This would help keep our colors "corralled" when we started painting. We got a great tutorial from Rosalee on how to first paint a bit of full strength color and then use a brush loaded with water to tease a lighter shade into the rest of the area we were working on. We got great results from this technique. On the written quote we used three different colors on each letter of the first word. We continued to fill in colors onto our pieces.

We practiced on a separate piece of paper how to paint leaves to show how they turned and curved. Rosalee walked around the room to look at our work and answer any questions we had. Once we finished the basic colors, Rosalee showed us how to add white ink with a very fine-tipped brush onto areas of color to make it "pop." And we used a light color to surround our letters to create the illusion of a background.

The class was very informative and enjoyable. To close, we did a "show and tell" of our work. It was great to see how our pieces turned out. Classmates used different shades of colors, different finishing touches and some used Finetec gold and colored pencils to add interest.

I enjoyed learning about medieval missal letters as well as painting and decorating tips from Rosalee. She is a very inspiring instructor.

Wendy Telford



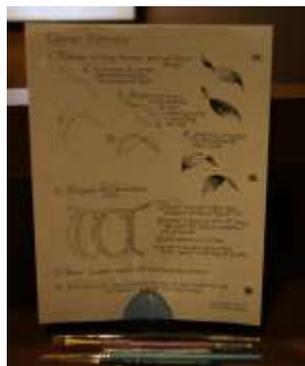
We started with a black/white version of our piece.



Next we outlined the drawing and filled in with red and blue gouache.



Final piece with green added, white highlights on the blue and use of a light color to surround each element



Far left: Rosalee's handouts showed in detail how we could embellish our missal letter.



Center: We practiced shading leaves on a separate paper.

Upcoming Library Exhibit

The SDFC bi-annual Members' Exhibit is only a month away. The exhibit is a great way to showcase the variety of talents of our membership. Please consider sharing at least one of your pieces in the show. Exhibit guidelines, file cards and label cards can be found on our website www.sdfconlione.com. Drop off your artwork no later than August 31st. Volunteers welcome for set up and hanging the exhibit on September 5th. Questions? Contact Wendy Telford:

publicity@sdfconline.com

Dates and events you don't want to miss:

August 31 - Final drop off date for exhibit pieces

September 9 - Exhibit reception, Point Loma Library, 1—3 p.m.

2017-2018 Workshops

Connie Furgason: [Watercolors and Gentle Messages](#), October 5 & 6, 2017

Connie Furgason: [Very Free Versals](#), October 7 & 8, 2017

Jane Shibata: [Spice It Up! With Colored Pencils](#), January 13 & 14, 2018

Barbara Close: [Gestures in Graphite](#), March 10 & 11, 2018

Yukimi Annand: [Blackletter - Textura & Contemporary Fraktur](#), April 14, 2018

[Click here](#) for more information on upcoming workshops

Any items for our next newsletter? Email to [Wendy](#) at publicity@sdfconline.com

