



Calendar

**Next Member Program
Live Evening Reception and
Demo with Aline Ordman**

May 8, 2025

[Get more information](#)

**Aline Ordman Workshop
*Creating Dynamic Pastels***

May 9-11, 2025

[Get more information](#)

**The Center at Belvedere
9th Annual Judged
Members Exhibit**

Expressions in Pastel

May - June 2025, 2022

[Get more information](#)

**June 2025-May 2026
Annual Membership Dues
Join or Renew [Here](#)**

Expressions newsletter will feature member's pastels each issue. Artwork for this issue is by **Shavon Peacock, Costa Rican Poolside.**

■ From the President

Spring is here, and it's the perfect time to head outdoors with your sketchbooks and paints! Whether you're new to painting or have years of experience, working from life offers so much more than a photograph ever could — the shifting lights, subtle mid-tones, and rich darks all come alive when you experience them firsthand.

Remember, outdoor work doesn't have to be a finished painting. A quick sketch, color notes, or even photos with thoughtful observations are all valuable. The more you practice seeing, the stronger your studio work will become.

While it's easy (and enjoyable) to paint from pictures, nothing compares to experiencing the real scene — feeling the light, sensing the atmosphere, and watching the ever-changing shadows. The more you look and observe, the more it will translate into your paintings when you return to your studio.

On a personal note, I'll be traveling to Greece this month for a plein air adventure. I'm leaving my pastel box and easel behind, and instead taking a sketchbook and a small set of gouache or watercolors. It'll be my first trip focused solely on sketching, and I'm excited for the simplicity — no long setups, easier movement, and (hopefully!) cleaner hands.

I encourage you to take advantage of this beautiful season — get outside, look closely, and let nature inspire your art.

Happy Spring!

Fondly,

Joan Dreicer

MAPS President and Workshop Chair

Painting Tips

- When starting a painting, squint at your reference to see the large shapes, not details.
- Create a thumbnail sketch with no detail.
- Step back to look at your easel often.
- Act like you know what you are doing and make confident marks in a variety of directions.
- Make sure your background has less contrast and intensity than your foreground/focal point.
- Carve out negative shapes in your positive ones. Sky holes are a good example of this.



Golden Azaleas, Joan Dreicer
Plein Air Unleashed 2024

Upcoming Program

Saturday, May 8, 2025 **Live Evening Reception and Demo with Aline Ordman**

In-Person Reception (By Reservation Only)

Time: 6pm - 9:00pm

Location: Hampton Inn Suites
1101 Technology Park Drive



Our last program of the year is an evening reception and demo with Aline Ordman, our Spring Workshop instructor. This evening will begin with a buffet of heavy hors d'oeuvres and will be an opportunity to meet Aline. The buffet will be followed by Aline's announcement of our Judged Exhibit Award Recipients and then she will demonstrate her process and technique. And, of course, we will give away 2 door prizes for 2 lucky members who are in attendance.

Member News

Joan Dreicer has paintings in an exhibit at **Loving Cup Vineyard** in North Garden, VA. The exhibit runs from May 1 to June 30th and is with the local pastel group, Piedmont Pastelists in the Charlottesville area.

Joan will be taking place in the plein air event, **Plein Air Unleashed** in Deltaville, VA. There will be an exhibit of art from juried artists participating (that includes Joan). The opening reception will be held Friday May 2, 6pm at the **Deltaville Community Center** located at 17147 General Puller Hwy, Deltaville, VA 23043. Saturday, May 3, the exhibit will continue from 9a - 4pm.



Sidewalk Stopper

Joan will also be traveling to Greece in mid May to participate in an artist excursion. She will fly in to Athens and then travel to Mykonos and Santorini.

Workshops

Aline Ordman
May 9-11, 2025



Karen Margulis
November 7-9, 2025



Upcoming Workshops

Aline Ordman

Creating Dynamic Pastels

Richmond, VA - May 9-11, 2025 (In-Person)

Painting is learning to see. Often, we paint what we think we see because we all have preconceived notions of what something looks like. However, to really paint what you see, you must break down everything you are looking at into just abstract shapes. Don't see a "house", see a series of interlocking shapes.

Working from their own photo references, students will transform these into pastel paintings using the principles of color, value and design. Aline will talk about understanding color in terms of temperature, intensity and value while translating those ideas using pastel technique. She will also emphasize the concept of creating shapes and carving back on them in order to achieve a painterly finish.

Aline is a Master Pastelist with the Pastel Society of America, an Eminent Pastelist with the International Association of Pastel Societies, A Signature Member of The American Impressionist Society and a Signature Member of the Oil Painters of America. Her website is www.alineordman.com

Karen Margulis, PSA-MP IAPS-EP
Workshop

Richmond, VA - November 7-9, 2025 (In-Person)

Karen is a contemporary landscape painter and art educator. She is a Master Pastelist member of the Pastel Society of America and Eminent Pastelist status with IAPS. She has been a faculty member at the prestigious IAPS Convention, the Plein Air Convention and the online Pastel Live conference.

Karen enjoys the opportunity to share her techniques and approach to making art in her workshops. She is known for her ability to make art simple, accessible to all and fun. Karen is also an avid Daily Painter and online instructor. She paints everyday and shares her work, art tips and inspiration in her daily posts in her Patreon group 'Pastels Made Simple'. Karen looks forward to helping others share their own artistic vision.

For more about Karen, visit her website at www.karenmargulis.com.

Member Spotlight



Costa Rican poolside



Miami acrylic plein air



Airport sketches

Traveling & Plein Air Art-Making

Shavon Peacock

It is hard for me to paint in my studio since I have become addicted to plein air painting. I love the outdoors and painting from photographs doesn't give you the same light and dark values, colors, and sensations that you experience while in nature.



My uncle's living room

When I am not painting with pastels or acrylics with the **Virginia Plein Air Painters (VPAP)** group on Thursdays or with Matt Lively's **Painting Outside** group on Fridays, I like traveling. I am an active traveler so don't have too much down time to make art, but I usually have time to sketch people while waiting at the airport. Often using a 5.5 x 8.5-inch Strathmore Toned Tan sketch pad and a set of Kimberly graphite pencils, I feel pretty sneaky drawing people, but I don't think anyone has caught on to me yet. They are usually too engrossed in their phones. The challenge is to get a good sketch before they move. One day I even drew a young woman who was surreptitiously drawing someone else!

I had down time when visiting my sister in Miami last year and was able to get in some sketches, a pastel, and an acrylic painting in her backyard. You use what you can for an easel, and in my case, lids from big plastic storage bins worked perfectly! A couple of colored pencils thrown in helped with a sketch of my uncle's living room when visiting him in NC.

I was able to get in a poolside pastel pencil sketch in Costa Rica last year. Back home I painted a couple of beach scenes from my photos. The most successful sketch I got on my last trip a few weeks ago was of two fellow travelers playing chess as we cruised down the Mekong River in Laos. Since I took over 2,000 photos of our trip to Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, I suppose I will soon be trying to recreate some of the beauty of those places and the people we saw with paintings in my studio, so stay tuned!



Sager Creek June
16 x 12 / oil on panel



Rise and Shine
Pastel on Panel/18 x 22

To find out more about Greg Stone [click here](#) or go to his Instagram page at @gregstone76

■ Creating Dramatic Landscape Paintings

By **Greg Stone** (with permission)

In March, I was joined in my studio by several local pastel painters for a workshop on how to create more dramatic landscape paintings. I shared some of my techniques for selecting dramatic more interesting reference photos and how to design a composition to heighten its impact. The painting above,



Sunlit Descent
10x13 / pastel on LuxArchival

Sunlit Descent, was a painting I did to demonstrate my techniques.

The success of a dramatic landscape painting begins with the composition, so you should plan it in your sketchbook. Your composition should have a limited number of shapes of various sizes that represent various values. If you're looking to make your landscape paintings more dramatic, consider these strategies when designing your composition, whether in your camera's viewfinder or in your sketchbook:

- 1. VARY SHAPE SIZES:** Include a mix of large, medium, and small shapes to create visual interest. For instance, use a dominant large shape (like a mountain or the sky) with smaller elements such as a stand of trees or rocks.
- 2. ASYMMETRICAL BALANCE:** Avoid symmetry by placing shapes unevenly across the design. This creates tension and draws the viewer's eye to different parts of the composition.
- 3. FOCUS ON OVERLAPPING:** Overlap shapes to create depth and complexity. For example, position buildings or trees to obscure parts of each other, forming an engaging patchwork of shapes.

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“I go to nature to be soothed and healed, and to have my senses put together.”

--John Burroughs

- 4. USE LIGHT AND SHADOW:** Distribute light and dark areas unequally to emphasize drama. Highlight key areas with light while keeping other sections in shadow for contrast.
- 5. EXPERIMENT WITH PERSPECTIVE:** Explore different vantage points to find a composition where shapes naturally divide the space unequally, enhancing the dynamic quality of the scene.

Finally, I suggest spending time closely studying masterworks that present dynamic and dramatic scenes. I often go to paintings by Albert Bierstadt, Edgar Payne, or Susie Barstow for inspiration.

If you're a landscape painter or are interested in painting your own landscapes, I hope some of these tips will help you create more dramatic landscape paintings that convey energy and emotion.

■ Plein Air Setup

If you want to get started painting plein air (from the French “en plein air” meaning “in the open air”) and learn to directly observe and capture a scene in its natural setting, here are a few links with tips on what kind of equipment you might need.

Outdoor Painter talks about the best easels for plein air painting.

Solutions for any outdoor artist at **En Plein Air Pro**.

The **Easel Butler** is an armature that attaches to your metal tripod or easel providing arms on which to rest a box of art supplies.

Sturdy pastel boxes for plein air painting from **Heilman Designs** and **Dakotal Pastel**.



Easel Butler



Heilman box



Dakota large traveler box

Member News

Sally Babylon is looking for MAPS members who plan go to the **Lake Tahoe & Reno Plein Air Convention** May 19-24. She knows best values for places to stay and would love to contact others who are going. Contact her at sallybabylon@yahoo.com.

The convention includes pastel demonstrations every morning, giant art materials expo hall, art exhibit open to all artists. Transportation to afternoon paint-outs at amazing locations. Sponsored by Plein Air Magazine. More info at PleinAirConvention.com.

Tricia Shands has a pastel entry in the *34th Annual International Miniature Art Show* at **Seaside Gallery in Nags Head, NC**.



Member News

Members Show–NEXT-LEVEL Cultural Arts Center

Linda Wolitz teaches three adult day classes (Mon, Tues & Wed) of “Soft Pastel Painting and Drawing” at *The Cultural Arts Center* at Glen Allen, where she has taught for at least the last 15 years. Her students range from beginners to very accomplished. Every few years TCAC invites some of the students to show and sell in their galleries in an exhibit called the **Next-Level**. Several MAPS members who are under Linda’s tutelage, as well as Linda herself are showing this year.

The Gallery is open to the public Monday - Thursday, 9am-9pm; Friday, 9am-5pm; Saturday, 9am-5pm; and Sunday, noon-5pm.

NEXT LEVEL - SLANTWALL

Cultural Arts Center
April 1 - April 30



Linda Wolitz



Barbara Woodward



John Lynch

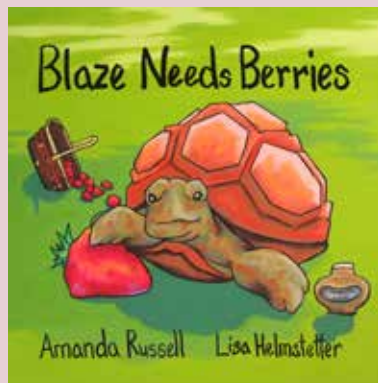


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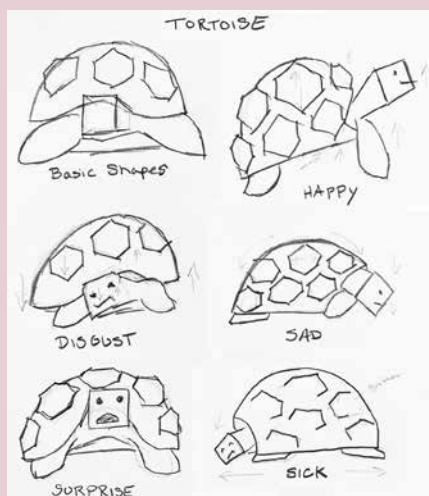


Dornan Trainer

Lisa's Book Images



Cover



■ Illustrating a Children's Book

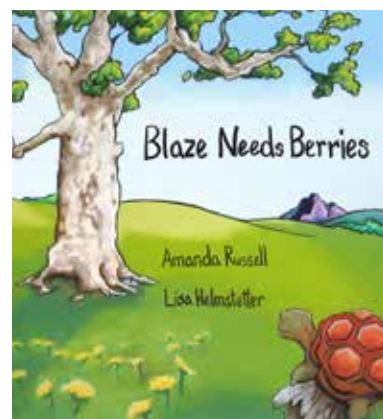
From Lisa Helmstetter

I recently got an opportunity to illustrate a children's book, which was on my art project bucket list. My sister-in-law, who is the author, said she would like to see bright colors so I knew I had to do it in soft pastel. The story is part of a group of books related to children with special needs. My nephew has autism and my sister-in-law wanted to help her daughter and other kids to understand how to engage with him. The book I illustrated was about special diets which is something I relate to with my own dietary limits. Check out her website at [karingkritters.com](http://karingkритters.com).

I got to choose the characters and made preliminary sketches of 12 forest animals, and we whittled it down to 6 (tortoise, bunny, mouse, chipmunk, bear, and ant). The storyboard sketches were helpful to plot out how the pages would flow through the story. The favored food choice for the main character was a strawberry, and I was able to go out to a picking farm to get some really good sketches and photos.

I started with pencil sketches and worked on the pages as two-page spread. I would use tracing paper, and in some cases xerox enlargements or reductions, then collage pieces of the scene together until I liked it. I would then take a big piece of tracing paper and redraw the whole spread, in dark pencil, to size of 12x24" so that the image was reduced slightly for the book. I used a carbon paper I made with vine charcoal to transfer the drawing onto the sanded pastel paper (UART 400). The vine charcoal worked well to give me the black outlines I wanted, without contaminating the pastel colors.

I was careful to record the color palette used for each character so I could reuse the same pastels. I set-up a mini photo



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Call for Art

Please consider entering your artwork in the last show of the year at **The Gayton Kirk** gallery. The Kirk is located at 11421 Gayton Rd, Henrico, VA 23238.

JOY - June 2025

The theme is **JOY**. Paint whatever makes you happy.

Drop off for this show is Friday, May 30, 10 - 10:30. The reception has not been scheduled, but it will be on a Sunday afternoon from 3:30 - 4:30. Date to be confirmed.

[Click here](#) to sign up.

Images by Susan Singer



studio space to photograph everything in the same lighting, then brought the jpg files onto the computer into Photoshop. There were a few color adjustments made through the proofing process, and the printer proofs.

Several pages of the final artwork are currently on display and through the summer at the Brightpoint Community College library, located on the 2nd floor of Hamel Hall, 800 Charter Colony Pkwy, Midlothian, Va. I would love it if you went by to take a look and let me know what you think!

ONE TIP – don't leave your art on the fire mantle where the cat can walk by it. One of my pages was severely damaged from the cat fur rubbing across it and smearing the charcoal and pastel all over, and it turned my tuxedo cat red!

Member News

Artist Residencies in Iceland By Susan Singer



I just returned from an art residency in Iceland. Iceland is the home of my heart! I fell in love with its beauty, its vastness, its majesty, and its very kind people.

When fishing dried up in Iceland due to overfishing, artists turned the factories into places to make art. These art residencies all have studio space, bedrooms, and kitchens. Some are for a single person or a couple and others have as many as 16 artists.

To learn more here's a link to all the residencies: www.visiticeland.com/article/artist-residencies-in-iceland.

If you're interested in doing a residency in Iceland, feel free to contact me at SusanSingerArt@msn.com. I have done several there and can give you lots of info and recommendations.

If one could only catch
that true color of nature -
the very thought of it
drives me mad.”

--Andrew Wyeth

Welcome
New Members!

Jody Ball
Lindsay Heaton
John Lynch
Karen McKinney
Jan Van Dyne

■ Upcoming Exhibits

9th Annual Judged Members Exhibit **The Center at Belvedere** *Expressions in Pastel* **May - June 2025, 2022** **Aline Ordman, Judge**

Our annual member exhibition will be in the spring for 2025 at **The Center at Belvedere** in Charlottesville, VA.

The exhibit will be judged by **Aline Ordman**, an award winning pastelist and oil painter. It's never too soon to start painting and be ready to put in something wonderful. We will host a reception at **The Center** on May 15 from 5-7 pm. For more information go to thecentercville.org.



Fall Exhibit **The Montpelier Center for Art & Education** **Oct 1 - Nov 21, 2025**

Our upcoming fall exhibit will be held at **The Montpelier Center**. Located on historic Route 33, the Montpelier Center is a cornerstone of country living in western Hanover county. Surrounding spacious, light-filled atrium ballroom are three gallery walls which are home to rotating art exhibits. The Montpelier Center gallery hosts local and internationally known artists. For more information go to www.montpeliercenter.org.



“A landscape’s impact comes from amplifying colors,
not copying them, to evoke emotion rather
than mere observation”

—Johannes Vloothuis, artist

2024-2025 Executive Board Members

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WORKSHOP CHAIR

Joan Dreicer

jdreicer54@gmail.com

VP & PROGRAM CHAIR

Judy Leasure

leasure.judy@gmail.com

TREASURER

Dornan Trainer

dornan.trainer@gmail.com

SECRETARY

Alison Carter

acarter9@aol.com

MEMBERSHIP CHAIR

Trish Volp

pmvolp@wm.edu

EXHIBIT CHAIR

Terry Atkinson

teeatkinson@gmail.com

TECHNOLOGY CHAIR

Sheila Chandler

scjorlinz@gmail.com

NEWSLETTER CHAIR

Patti Jeffries

patti.jeffries@gmail.com



■ Board Happenings

Tax designation

We are currently filing for Non Profit status with the government. The board felt it necessary for filing taxes. In looking back at previous notes for the establishment of the group it seems this was the plan, so Dornan, our treasurer is getting all of the paperwork completed.

Budget

The board met in mid April to review the budget for the 2025/2026 year. The final version will be voted on by the board members and placed on our website, in the Members Only section for those wishing to see it.

Programs for 2025/2026

Judy has worked diligently to put together an amazing series of programs for next year. More to come...

Workshops

Joan has lined up Karen Margulis for the Fall workshop. We will open registration in late May. There is not yet an artist for our Virtual workshop in the Winter months. Barbara Jaenicke is scheduled for Spring of 2026 and Liz Haywood Sullivan is tentatively scheduled to return in the fall of 2026.

Artists are trending toward charging per person for teaching workshops. This trend is making it more expensive for us and we will need to apply that increase to the cost of participating, since we always budget to break even.

Joan received a tip from a member to check out a location in Ashland for future workshops. If the space is appropriate and available, it will help with some of the costs.

Credit Card credits

We receive a small amount of credit when we use our credit card. Dornan will apply the credit to our next credit card bill.