

# *The Calligraphers' Guild*

Serving Southern Oregon  
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Autumn 2022

Greetings members,

I would like to thank everyone who turned out for the Planning Meeting on August 19<sup>th</sup>. There were good ideas presented and I think that we have a creative and productive year planned. This will be a year of individual challenges, using tools and techniques that may or may not be familiar to us (me).

I realize that many are frustrated with in-Zoom meetings. However, we will revisit our meeting status in 2023 and hopefully resume in-person meetings then. We might also consider "hybrid" meetings combining in-person and Zoom for those unable, or too far away, to attend in person.

Linda Schneider's workshop recording is still available for anyone interested in getting a copy of it on CD or flash drive. Contact me if interested.

I look forward to hearing what each person chooses for their journal theme for the year. If it is personally meaningful and motivating to each one, all the better. I personally am paralyzed with fear and trepidation but will marshal all my resources to do justice to whatever I choose doing. (Unless I fall off a ladder, and break both hands,)

We again have an opportunity to promote calligraphy to the public at large with our November exhibit at Art Presence in Jacksonville.

I look forward to a creative and rewarding new year in the guild.

From the drawing board,  
Michael Rowbottom

## **"Inspired by the Elements"**

*Coming soon, see page 4*



Dates: Nov. 4- 27, 2022  
Location: Art Presence Art Center  
206 N 5th St.  
Jacksonville, OR 97530

## **Theme for Guild Meetings: The Creative Journal**

Members choose a subject they are interested in and at meeting show how they developed their subject using the assigned techniques or tool for the month. Some ideas: flowers, birds, cats, faces, dragons, fish, horses, shapes. Select something that interests you and have fun expanding on it. The techniques for the year are listed in the planning meeting notes. The following three months are:

**September 24: pencil**

**October 22: pen and ink**

**November 19: pastel**

In the next newsletter you will find Jan, Feb and Mar techniques and tools.

## **Resources**

<https://artistatticsales.com>

<https://www.centralartssupply.com>

<https://www.strathmoreartiststudio.com/> (many free lessons)

[https://www.johnnealbooks.com/prod\\_detail\\_list/online-classes](https://www.johnnealbooks.com/prod_detail_list/online-classes)

<https://www.skillshare.com/browse/calligraphy>

<https://www.portlandsocietyforcalligraphy.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/online-classesAUG-2020.pdf>

<https://www.facebook.com/RoguePens>

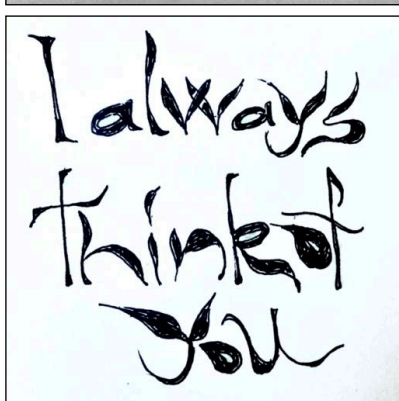
A few shots from the June gathering and artist sharing tables





## Member Art 1

Autumn 2022



Goly Ostovar: three from her journal



Cynthia Griffin



Mary Danca, Legacy class



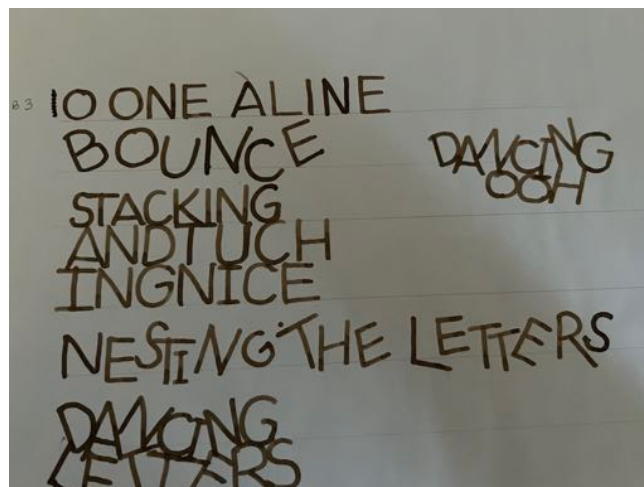
Steve Ostrander



JoAnn Evans from Heather Held's class. Ink and watercolor flowers and leaves, with Sparkle Pop pens for



JoAnn Evans: Celtic knot borders done with Prismacolor



Mary Danca, Legacy monoline class

## **“Inspired by the Elements”**

**~Water, Earth, Air, Fire~**

Calligraphers' Guild Exhibit November 4-27, 2022  
Art Presence Art Center, Jacksonville, OR  
206 N. 5th St., Jacksonville, OR



Dear Members ... Art Presence Art Center has invited our Guild to be their guest artists featured in their gallery November 4-27, 2022

The theme chosen, by our Guild, for this November exhibit will be

***“Inspired by the Elements” Water, Earth, Air, Fire.***

This theme was to put focus on our planet. Perhaps the colors of a particular element or the different shapes of fire, water, etc. combined with a letter, word, calligraphic brush stroke or quote will inspire you to create a piece to hang in the gallery.

I hope all of you participate! This exhibit is open to ALL levels of calligraphers. Together we complement each other on the gallery wall.

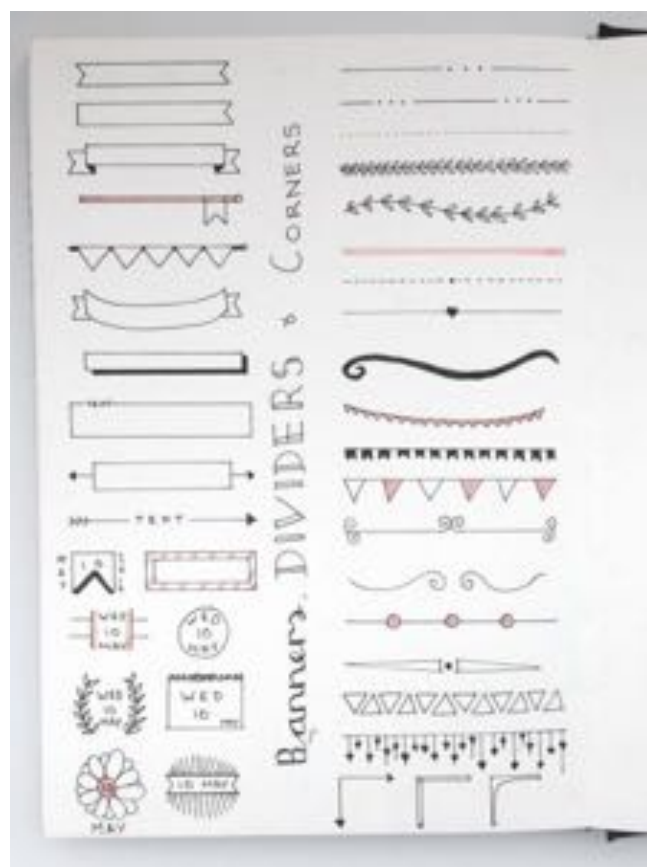
If you have any questions or need help in anyway as you start this journey please call, text or email me. Stay tuned for future announcements in regards to this exhibit.

Sincerely,  
Cynthia Griffin /Exhibit Chair  
cgriffin.629@gmail.com  
541-261-0236 (phone or text)



## Hints and Ideas

Pinterest has lots of creative ideas and here are a few that I found helpful and interesting.



## Member Art 2

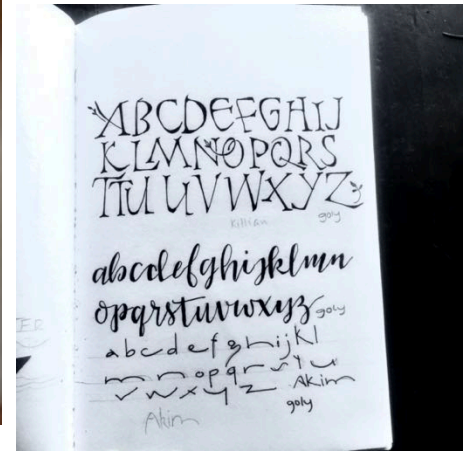
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Cynthia Mish to Mary Danca



Cynthia Mish to Mary Danca



Goly Ostovar: One more journal page



Mary Danca, two from Legacy classes



Goly's Ostovar's artistic skill shows through in all she does.



Mary Danca: framed cards



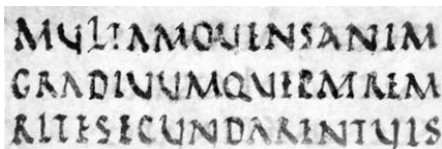
# A Fine Relationship between Calligraphy and Abstraction

(from Ideel Art submitted by Goly Ostovar )

**Calligraphy** is where symbol and gesture meet. At its core, calligraphy is writing. It utilizes the traditional tools of the writer: pen and ink, or brush and paint. But the objective of writing is to communicate predetermined meanings through standard forms of language. The calligrapher does not simply write words to communicate a fixed thought. The calligrapher uses the pen or the brush as an extension of the whole body, and the whole spirit. The calligraphic mark should convey something metaphysical as well as physical. The spirit should inform the body, which should move in a unified gesture, transferring the energy of both body and spirit into the arm, into the hand, into the pen and finally into the mark. Calligraphy has existed for thousands of years, manifesting independently in multiple cultures across the globe. Such devout respect is given to calligraphy in some cultures that a direct connection is made between calligraphic writing and the power of the divine. With its tradition of conveying meaning beyond the objective into the realm of the unknown, it is no wonder then that calligraphy has appealed to so many abstract artists, especially those concerned with the communicative power of gesture and line.

## Ancient Meaning and Gesture

A simplistic way to think about calligraphy is that it is a form of highly decorative writing. Many calligraphers in fact specialize in particular fancy type styles that evoke Old English writing, ancient Latin writing, Arabic writing, or Eastern Asian writing. But the spirit behind calligraphic gestures is not to simply copy some existing typeface or font. That would be the realm of typography, writing letters that might be decorative but that can be easily read. Calligraphy is more about individual gestures, and the meaning that can be expressed in writing beyond what is inherent in the symbols themselves



4th Century Latin calligraphy  
from a copy of Virgil's Aeneid,  
photo courtesy Vatican Library

To what extent a calligraphic tradition attempts to express the unknown depends on the culture from which it originated. Ancient Latin calligraphy is more like a traditional script than an expressive form of art. But each letter in Latin calligraphy nonetheless contains a serif, or a small, expressive line attached to the ends of the symbols.



Example of the Thuluth  
style of Arabic  
calligraphy by Mustafa  
Rakim

The serif is created by quick a physical gesture, lifting the tip of the pen off the page. In the serif can be found the subtle but important personal expression of the calligrapher. Compare that subtlety to the expressive flair of Arabic calligraphy. The most dramatic looking of the five distinct forms of Arabic calligraphy is Thuluth, a name that roughly translates into “*thirds*,” relating to the proportions of the written symbols. The greatest artist associated with Thuluth was Mustafa Râkim (1757–1826), whose calligraphic creations achieved what is considered the proportional ideal, showing great precision while also expressing maximum energy.

## Gestural Abstraction

Based on its ancient traditions, it is natural that the calligraphic tradition should hold relevance to abstract artists. From the beginning of abstraction, at least in the Western tradition, there have been two complementary, yet distinct tendencies that have repeatedly manifested in the work of many abstract artists. One tendency is toward the precise: geometric abstraction, grids, mathematical patterns, and so on. The other tendency is toward the free: impulsive marks, intuitive gestures, subconscious writing, biomorphic forms, etc. Calligraphy inhabits a space that incorporates both. It is system based, and yet it invites intuition, impulsivity, and subconscious intervention.

Many of the abstract paintings of Wassily Kandinsky are, in a sense, the perfect expression of the calligraphic spirit. They are sometimes referred to as geometric abstraction, due to their inclusion of universal geometric shapes and forms. They are also sometimes referred to as **lyrical abstraction** and **gestural abstraction** thanks to their use of spontaneous, free, biomorphic lines. Many of their curves and markings correlate to those seen in ancient calligraphy, especially from East Asian and Arabic traditions. Their geometric elements express stability and control, while their gestural, lyrical elements express the energy of the unknown, and the dynamism of the human spirit.



Wassily  
Kandinsky -  
Transverse Line,  
1923, Oil on  
canvas, 55.1 ×  
78.7 in, 140.0 ×

## Calligraphy and the Abstract Impressionists

May, 2021

After World War II, the idea of forming a deeper connection with the interior self was of monumental concern for many artists. In particular, the artists associated with Abstract Expressionism were interested in investigating any type of philosophy or tradition that might enable them to express themselves in a deeper, more intuitive, more honest way. The traditions of calligraphy informed much of the work made by these artists, as it provided a framework for bringing physicality, emotion, spirit and the ancient mind together in the expression of physical mark.

**Franz Kline** stood out as the Abstract Expressionist painter most directly inspired by calligraphy. He is known for making innumerable sketches of his subjects in black ink on telephone book pages. The sketches were done quickly in ink, and resembled in many ways the *kanji* of East Asian calligraphy. According to legend, his friend, the painter **Willem de Kooning** enlarged one of his small drawings in a projector. When Kline saw the power of the enlarged marks he understood the inherent energy and communicative potential of the calligraphic mark. His marks no longer had to relate to subject matter; they could become emotive forces in themselves. Kline worked large from that point on, making grand pictures of marks that seem to have been quickly made, but that were, in fact, the result of a long, deliberate process. His ability to convey the energy of a calligraphic mark through a laborious process remains one of the most stunning accomplishments of his career.



Franz Kline - Mahoning, 1956, Oil and paper on canvas, 80 3/8 x 100 1/2 in, 204.2 x 255.3 cm, Courtesy of the Whitney Museum of Art Society (ARS), New York

### Mythical Writing

Many other abstract artists have found, and continue to find, innovative ways to break down elemental calligraphic techniques in order to create new forms of mythical writing. Using gesture, line, energy and patterns they create new visual languages capable of evoking and conveying a range of emotional states. Here are some of our favorites:



Cy Twombly - Untitled, 1951  
Acrylic on canvas

### Cy Twombly

American painter **Cy Twombly** used the tradition of calligraphy to deconstruct the image making potential of writing. His paintings used the written line to create communicative images that sometimes seem to be part scribble and part kanji, but that are all gesture and emotion. Early in his exploration of this technique he focused more on the symbolic nature of his marks, creating structured compositions. As he became freer and more experimental he allowed the calligraphic impulse to manifest in a more abstract cursive style, what has become known as his iconic "scrawl."



Cy Twombly - Untitled I (Bacchus)  
2005 Acrylic on canvas

### Melissa Meyer

Third generation Abstract Expressionist Melissa Meyer incorporates the spirit and the aesthetic of calligraphy in her compositions, which manifest the complementary forces of structure and instinct through layers of abstract glyphs. Each mark and gesture builds toward what could be read as symbols, forms, and patterns. But the energy and movement in the work comes to the forefront. A reading of her gestural marks ultimately calls for an emotional translation, one that leads to a feeling of dynamic force and balance.



Melissa Meyer - Regale  
2005, Oil on canvas

### Margaret Neill

The elements of curve and line, which form the basis of all calligraphic art, also form the basis of the work of American artist Margaret Neill. Her paintings isolate the most expressive element of the calligraphic mark, the lyrical gesture, and incorporate it in the creation of layered compositions of lines in space. The depth of her gestural compositions confounds objective readings, defying the nature of script but embracing the dynamic, energetic potential that embodies the essence of the ancient tradition of calligraphy.



Margaret Neill - Manifest 1  
2015 Charcoal and water on paper



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## Happy Birthday to our Members



### September

6 – Eleanor Lippman  
 12 – Goly Ostovar  
 14 – Lola Daugherty  
 16 – Diana Brown  
 30 – JoAnn Evans

### October

6 – Lynda Stevenson  
 28 – Michael Rowbottom

### November

10 – Virginia Silbowitz  
 11 – Mary Danca  
 21 – Pam Evans

August Planning meeting was productive and resulted in an agenda for the year that focuses on journaling and using a number of tools and techniques. We opted to limit our subject matter to a single broad subject -- a favorite of each person's choosing. More information will be available soon. When you have decided on your subject, please let our president, Michael, know as he will be keeping a list and checking it twice.

### From the Editor

My thanks to all who contributed to this newsletter. Without your support, I would not be able to get it out to you. Please consider sending your work, whether it be a work of art, a page from your journal, class or workbook, an idea, suggestion or old photo of something you did long ago. We are all interested and without the newsletter we would miss out on each other's creative expressions. I hope to renew my efforts in calligraphy, having taken off a bit more time than I had anticipated. *"Creativity is intelligence having fun"* and we all need more of that in our lives.

Mary J. Danca

Who we are: Our Guild is a nonprofit organization that was founded in 1975 to provide a forum for the study and critical practice of calligraphy through classes, workshops, lectures and the interchange of ideas and techniques. We welcome all levels of skill. The Calligrapher's Guild currently holds monthly meetings and sponsors workshops, lectures, exhibits and related activities. Meetings are held on the fourth Saturday of the month, 10:00AM to Noon at Scrappy Craft in Phoenix, Oregon. No regular meetings are held in June, July or December (June is our Summer picnic, July is vacation and December is our Christmas Party).

The August meeting is a planning meeting for the coming year's calendar. If you have questions or need further information you can contact anyone listed on this page or find us at [RoguePens.org](http://RoguePens.org). or on Facebook at Rogue Pens.