



September - October
2024
Newsletter

Shenandoah Valley Watercolor Society
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Embracing Change & the Beauty of Transitions

As a teacher for nearly forty years, this time of the year always feels like “endings and beginnings.” Students and teachers are beginning a new year with anticipation and enthusiasm yet filled with some trepidation. Summer heat and sunshine will be giving way to cooler weather, hopefully with more rain. Gardens are giving up their last fruits, but leaves will be wearing their new colors. The holiday season will soon be here, with thoughts of what to gift our friends and family. Now we have finished our paintings for the Members’ Show, and we are anticipating the opening day celebration.

I earnestly desire that each of you can find joy in the change of seasons, beauty in your spirit as you continue to paint this fall, and strength for each day as you live fully in the moments given to you. Let’s begin!

Barbara Gautcher

*The preciousness of life,
and the changes of weather, and the beauty of seasons –
all those things have always sort of dazzled me.*

Anthony Doerr

Bahir Al Badry: Painting from a Global Palette

By Mindy Morrison

Treat yourself. Take a visual vacation and journey into southern Iraq's ancient Sumer region. Stroll into OASIS and you'll recognize Bahir al Badry's inimitable artwork. Who is this man, tucked upstairs in his aerie seven days a week, creating one unique masterpiece after another? His catalog includes hundreds of acrylic abstract paintings on paper, sheets of aluminum, and cloth. His art is that of a man familiar with cultures from around the world, steeped in ancient history, with a contemporary twist.

Bahir Al Badry was born in Ur, a 5,800-year-old town that once was an important city in the region of Sumer, a part of ancient Mesopotamia, near the Euphrates River. It is the site of a famous archaeological excavation, worth a fascinating Google search. Considered "the cradle of civilization," the people before him created the world's first cities, writing, agriculture, and art. Like his ancestors, the Mesopotamian influence sits at his very core.

As you meander through Bahir's Sumerian-inspired art, notice the cuneiform writing symbols, cylindrical forms, and the emotions of people writ through the eyes, mouths, teardrops. See the purposeful patterns and textures reminiscent of the style. You will experience the same vivid earthy reds, golden ochres, and royal purples once derived from natural dyes. All are design elements unique to this classic archaic art.

However, Bahir is not a man stuck in the past but very much in the present. He finished high school in Baghdad, and studied five years at a university in Croatia, receiving a degree in marine engineering. Throughout his adventurous 20-year career on merchant ships, he travelled to ports around the world, always visiting art museums and tucking away new ideas. As the ships churned through risky, roiling seas, Bahir would grab any paper available to sketch his ideas and feelings, all of which he kept. Art was his balm.

Eight years ago, after his retirement, family members who had settled here, recommended Harrisonburg to him and his wife, a homemaker and avid gardener. His brother works for JMU. One son has an IT degree and works locally, another is an MMA fighter in Miami, while a third son is an artist in Belgium.

Badry begins each painting with an overarching universal theme, dealing with the human condition and/or the natural world, even climate change. An engineer by trade, scientific ideas are often an artistic element. He may doodle freely across a broad swath, then look for a place to draw an eye, an animal, allowing his theme to build and congeal. Every painting evokes a specific idea and invites the viewer to think and feel.

His journey through art continues to grow. In the future, he yearns to stretch beyond his current brand. He wants to hire an administrator/marketer to help him integrate his art into clothing, with technology skills to expand beyond this geographic area. Finding



someone to fill this role has been a challenge. If you know of someone he could contact, please let him know.

From his roots in Ur, to his brush with art and cultures from around the world, and his future in Harrisonburg and beyond, Bahir Al Badry continues to evolve. As you gaze into his art, all these rich influences are there for you to see and savor.

Member News

Congratulations, Karen Moyers, our new Master Signature Member! Karen demonstrated a master's level of expertise in water media by providing proof of invitation and participation in three juried exhibits and shows. Her painting, *Taking the Stairs VII*, won Best-in-Show in the 2023 SVWS Member show and is featured on this year's posters and programs. She joins Rob Kloetzer, our only other Master Signature Member. Many of you would qualify for this status. Check with Rob or Karen for more information.

Welcome Our New Signature Members!

Three Signature Members were juried into SVWS after our August meeting. They will now have an asterisk (*) after the names in the program for the Members' Show, on their Title labels for the show, and on our Membership List. They may show in any of the SVWS venues. Congratulate the following artists:

Laura Pooler
Barbara Risi
Jennifer Wharton

OASIS Volunteers Needed: Please consider volunteering at OASIS a couple of times each month.

SVWS Treasurer Yep, still need a Treasurer. Please consider!

Upcoming Events & Exhibits

September Art Exhibit at Hess Financial: Donna Detrich will display her paintings along with four other artists during the month. Hess is located at 380 East Market Street in Harrisonburg and will participate in First Friday on September 6. Stop by and give Donna some Oohs and Ahs!

September Exhibit at the Shenandoah Valley Art Center, Waynesboro: For more information, please go to the SVAC website.

September 5, 12, 19, & 26, 6-8 pm: Barbara Gautcher will be teaching "Old As Dirt," a mosaics class, at Friendly City Clay and Art Center. For more information, contact Barbara or check out www.friendlycityclay.com

September 6 – October 31: Lynda Chandler's watercolor exhibit "Botanical Brilliance" will be featured at the Mezzanine, Hotel Madison @ JMU, 710 South Main Street in the 'Burg. She would love to see you on First Fridays, 5-7 pm. Expect live music with food and beverage.

September 7: NO SVWS MEETING

September 7, 9:30 – 11am: Deliver your Member Show paintings to VMRC Park Gables 1491 Virginia Avenue, Harrisonburg. Hang around long enough for your painting to be checked for acceptable content for VMRC and framing before leaving. The show will run through November 8.

September 8, 2 – 4pm: SVWS Member Show Reception. **3:00 Judge's presentation of awards**

September 9 Next Gallery Day: SVWS Signature Members are invited to show and sell their work at three locations in Harrisonburg. Paintings are changed every three months on the first Monday following our regular monthly meetings.

- Taste of Thai restaurant, 917 S. High St. - Contact Lois Whitecotton, Lwhitecotton@yahoo.com
- The Rocktown Gift Shoppe inside the Hardesty-Higgins House Visitor Center, 212 South Main St. Contact Barbara Gautcher is interested.
- OASIS Fine Art and Craft, 103 S. Main St. Contact Donna Detrich, DonnaDetrich@gmail.com
- Sharp Litigation offices, 124 Newman Ave. Suite 201, Harrisonburg. Barb has info about this new location.

September 11, 10 – noon: Harrisonburg Plein Air will be at a family farm north of Harrisonburg. The address is 3712 Buttermilk Creek Road, Rockingham, VA.

Second Wednesday of the month, 10 am – 12 pm. If you are interested in being notified when and where we are meeting, Elaine Dunaway is collecting phone numbers. She will text you a week ahead and then the Monday before to remind you. You are not bound to come if you agree to have your phone number included. Just RSVP if you will join us so we know how many to expect. There will be bathrooms, and shade when necessary. Feel free to paint in the medium of your choice. Text Elaine Dunaway with questions 540-246-1833

Save the following dates, although they may be subject to change due to unforeseen situations:

September 11 – A family farm north of town

October 9 – Bluestone Winery

October 4, 5 - 7pm: First Friday Reception at VMRC

October 5, 10 – noon: monthly SVWS meeting

October 29 – December 3, 10 am – 2 pm: “Advanced Color Class: How to Use Color to Make More Expressive Watercolor Paintings” by Peg Sheridan. A required prerequisite for this class is her last “Color Course for Watercolorists.” For more info, go to www.PegSheridan.com.

November 2, 10 – noon: monthly SVWS meeting

November 9, 9 – 11am: Pick up your paintings from the Member Show. Be sure to sign them out before you leave. We must account for who every painting as it leaves the building.

December 7, 10 – noon: Our final meeting of the year will be a potluck celebration.

Brushstrokes

If you sell a painting, receive an honor or award, are exhibiting, or teaching a class, email Mindy Morrison at MJDM@comcast.net It will go into our next bimonthly newsletter.

News for the Next Newsletter?

Send it to me, Mindy Morrison, at MJDM@comcast.net. Please specify in the Subject line “For the next newsletter.” This bimonthly newsletter’s color scheme is rust and coneflower blue. A virtual pumpkin pie to editors Janet Lee Wright and Barbara Gautcher, for their polish!



Acrylic Painting by Bahir Al Badry

The coming and going of the seasons give us more than the springtimes, summers, autumns, and winters of our lives. It reflects the coming and going of the circumstances of our lives like the glassy surface of a pond that shows our faces contorted with pain or radiant with joy.

Gary Zukav