

Selma Trower Petersburg

A member of the Azalea Chapter of the Garden Club of Virginia, Petersburg resident Selma Trower is a first-time exhibitor in Fine Arts & Flowers. She was told about the event by another Garden Club member and so she “just decided to jump in.”

Trower chose a red and gold hanging called “Krishna's Gopis” in the Indian Gallery of the South Asian wing on the museum's third floor. She said she thought designing a floral display to match the hanging “would be a challenge—and it was!” Trower added



she was “inspired by the location of the tapestry” in the serene gallery.

Being able to create a floral design for such an unusual piece reflects Trower's design style. “I like to stray from the traditional” flower arrangements, she notes. She explains that there have been “Asian influences” in many of her pieces, which she describes as “airy.”

Selma Trower has been immersed in floral design since 2003, at which time she retired from her career as a school teacher and joined the garden club in Petersburg. She must have been a quick learner because she won First Place at the novice level in the first statewide flower show she ever entered! She followed that up with a “Designer's Choice” win in the second statewide show in which she participated. Despite her obvious flair for flower design, Trower has not yet made it a profession; but many churches in the Petersburg area, as well as Hope House, have been the beneficiaries of her floral gifts.

When planning her design for the upcoming Fine Arts & Flowers exhibition, as she does for any major exhibit, Trower first visualizes what she wants the arrangement to look like and then commits her ideas to paper. In considering “Krishna's Gropis,” Trower knew immediately that she wanted her design to “bring some dimension, color and texture” to the artwork. She and her assistant, Louise Mayer, started with a sketch and “then we create as we go.”

Rosemary Francis Roanoke

Rosemary Harris from Roanoke is doing her third Fine Arts & Flowers floral design at VMFA. While she has been doing this for many years, she started out as a young girl helping her parents who were avid gardeners. Tulips were their specialty and she continues to enjoy working with them when available.

Starting with no particular concept in mind, Rosemary spends several months doing research and thinking about the design she will create to complement the deKooning painting. She does not sketch her ideas, but keeps it all in her head and changes and adjusts as she goes along.

One of her talents is painting and she knows the combination of painting and gardening helps bring it all together. She is frequently called on for special events to create a floral design, which she enjoys very much.



Valerie Story Warranton

Valerie Story from Warrenton is now taking part in her third Fine Arts & Flowers at VMFA. She has been a floral designer for more than 12 years and while still an amateur she now holds the office of president of the Shenandoah district of Federation of Garden Clubs.

She chose the Rembrandt Peale portrait of John Marshall because he was from Facquier County and the nearby town of Marshall, named after him. It takes many hours to come up with a concept and then many weeks to bring it to life. Then she sketches her ideas and modifies as she begins to work on it, often making many changes.

Valerie started as a garden club member doing floral design and then became a judge. She currently travels around a great deal as a judge – something she enjoys very much.



Di Cook Leesburg

Di Cook has been a member of the Garden Club of Virginia since the early 1980's and has participated in many Fine Arts & Flowers exhibitions. She thinks this will be her 7th entry.

Fine Arts and Flowers is a natural fit for Di. She studied flower arranging in Yokosuka, Japan, in the early 1960's and earned a teaching certificate from the Ichiyo School of Ikebana, which at that time was considered to be a modern school of flower arranging. The website for the Ichiyo School of Ikebana in Tokyo notes that the Ichiyo School was founded in 1937 by a brother and sister who "sought to create original ikebana that would be suitable for modern lifestyle and environments." Di is also a painter whose medium is watercolor, making the exhibition a perfect combination of her two passions.

Through the years, Di has taught flower arranging for several garden clubs. She has also served for several years as chairman of the Flower Show Committee for the Garden Club of Virginia.

Di's flower arrangements gravitate toward the abstract and the oriental. In choosing a piece to interpret for Fine Arts & Flowers, she always tries to choose an abstract work. Instead of trying to reproduce the piece of art in flowers, Di strives to capture the feeling of the work through color and line. To Di, flower arranging is an art form in itself.



Lisa Cresson Lynchburg

Lisa Cresson will represent the Hillside Garden Club of Lynchburg in the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts' upcoming Fine Arts and Flowers exhibition. She will be assisted by the president of the Hillside Garden Club, Shelby Crist, and her long-time friend and floral designer, Leigh Barth.

Love of the garden and flowers runs in Lisa's family. Her grandmother was a floral designer and her grandfather was a rosarian. Lisa's love of floral design evolved into a 20-year membership in her garden club where over the years she has enjoyed the group's encouragement, sharing of ideas, and collaboration. Through this long relationship, she has developed a traditional design style with a twist seen in the use of contemporary materials.

Last winter, Lisa selected the *Young Chevalier* by Frederick MacMonnies as her VMFA masterwork to interpret through her floral design. When asked how she began to build her design, she commented that first she studies the painting and the artist for linear perspective and flower books for color ideas. Then she selects a container as a foundation. Over the summer she developed the scale, dimensions, and linear form of her design.

Over the next month Lisa and her team will investigate several 'trial runs' before the exhibition begins on November 5th.



Marguerite Slaughter Reedville

Marguerite selected this Korean door panel to challenge her creativity in a new direction. When she saw it, she found it striking and felt she could interpret it florally beyond its physicality. The panel moved her, offering her thoughts of openings and closings, of shadows and light, of opportunities both physical and spiritual. Once she decides on a piece of art, she makes thumbnail sketches, fine-tunes them and leaves them for a time to allow the creative process to mature. Only at the last minute does she commit to a final plan. She feels that the joy of flowers is fluid. When things don't go as planned, she is then most creative.

She became aware of her talent in a 6th grade floral competition when her classmates submitted daffodils in a jar and she, at age 11, learned Ikebana techniques from her aunt. Since then, she has worked in and enjoyed many different floral styles. She is presently a wedding floral arranger and independent landscape designer.

Marguerite has participated in 11 Fine Arts and Flowers Exhibits, all but one, and believes this exhibit to be her favorite repeat event.



Jeannie Turner Charlottesville

Jeannie Turner will represent The Charlottesville Garden Club for the 2014 Fine Arts and Flowers at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. Jeannie has been a member of her garden club since 1958 and has participated in Fine Arts & Flowers for the past 10 events.

A love of the Orient led her to select Standing Guanyin for her floral interpretation. Guanyin transforms himself to suit the nature of those to be helped by him. He would often hold a willow branch to defend against disease. Jeannie plans to use plant material of long lasting quality and two lovely Asian containers as inspiration for the design. She has designed her arrangement entirely in her head!

Having been a Garden Club member for more than 50 years, Jeannie is now a master judge and her hobby is reflected in her love of pressed plant material.



Victoria Alexander Alexandria

Victoria selected her Pair of Folding Screens because she loves Asian art and Ikebana in particular. She always works with her friend Laura Francis. Preparing a floral design is a process. She looks first for an essence, a style, a feeling from the piece of art, then at shapes and colors. It is so important to get to the essence of a piece of art and not just an imitation. Then she tries to reflect colors, forms and proportion. It takes time to settle on a concept, ideas must percolate. For this piece, she thought she had her plan and then changed it midstream. She sketches with Laura to get the overall size and proportion down properly.



Betsy Carey Fredericksburg

Betsy Carey is leading a team of floral designers from the Rappahannock Valley Garden Club, part of the Garden Clubs of Virginia, in this year's Fine Arts and Flowers, a biennial exhibit sponsored by the Council of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. Chosen as one of 78 floral designers and garden clubs from all over Virginia, Betsy and her team chose to design a floral interpretation of the Baroque era painting *River Landscape* by Van Ruysdeal. They chose this painting for its muted colors and peaceful,



calming depiction as a relief from the turmoil of the world today. Inspired by her mother and grandmother, Betsy has been designing floral arrangements since childhood and now works part-time arranging flowers, in addition to her work with the Garden Club. Her work favors natural elements and composition. Betsy's Fredericksburg area team includes Carolyn Helfrich, a professional florist, Marion Zimmermann, also a professional floral designer who has volunteered to design flowers for over 25 years at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. among other venues, and Kathleen Glass, a horticulturalist who is now expanding her interests in floral design. The team brainstormed a variety of ideas and said the biggest challenge in developing their design was the choice of a container. Because the painting features a curving, flowing river scape and people in small wooden boats, they chose a curved wooden bowl with a partial overlay of special glass to reflect the water element as the base for their design. This is the fourth time the Rappahannock Valley Garden Club and its members have participated in Fine Arts and Flowers. Betsy Carey says the club likes to stay involved in community and arts activities.