

April 23, 2016 OBA Quarterly meeting - Notes

at Mary McCarty's community rec center in Oregon City

In attendance: Janet Parker
Karen Tillou
Janene Walkky Tina Lange
Jane Levy Campbell Dorothy Krogh
Kip Nordstrom Alice Debo
Mary McCarty Laura Shea
Aislinn Adams Dorota Haber Lehigh
Carol Putnam Kathleen McCaffrey

For photos and attachments, scroll to the last few pages of these notes.

Hope you enjoy!
-Janet

Announcements:

- **Potluck** - Thanks everyone, for stepping up and doing such a great job of contributing delicious food to the event!
- **Sketchbook Share** - several members exchanged their sketchbooks at the meeting, now in our 4th round of exchanges.
- The Lan Su Chinese Garden is interested in partnering with our group for regular art shows, and for events that involve our members coming to draw in the garden. More details to come soon!
- Janet's friend, Denise Barnes, president of a boutique Business to Business advertising agency (Babcock & Jenkins) in the Pearl, has offered us her new office space as a potential gallery for exhibiting our work. More details to come.
- Following up on Aislinn's mention of this in our last quarterly meeting, Janet, Jane, Kathleen, and Dorota met with Martin Nicholson, Curator at the Hoyt Arboretum, regarding ASBA's Call for Entries: "Out of the Woods" - Celebrating Trees in Public Gardens. **Submission Deadline is April 28th, 2017.**
Here's a link to more information - <https://www.asba-art.org/exhibitions/out-woods>
Martin talked about several trees that would make good subjects for this exhibit, and walked us to see a few. This is a great opportunity for our group to get involved in a local project with a long deadline. If any of you are interested in working on something for this, but are not sure how to start, please contact me, and at least regarding the Hoyt Arboretum, I can give you some guidance. **One of the great things about this project is that, like the David Douglas exhibit in Salem a few years ago, it's a project for our group to focus attention on, with an ample amount of time to work on it, towards a SHOW! The Hoyt Arboretum, and other local institutions will be more interested in exhibiting our work as a group if we have a number of pieces gathered around a local or area theme. So - whether or not your work is accepted for the larger ASBA show, there's a great potential for exhibiting here in Portland, and around Oregon. Think about it!**
- Cora Pearl is a local calligrapher who is interested in giving us an afternoon workshop at an upcoming quarterly, if we'd like, to show us how to apply hand-lettering to our artworks. I didn't really get a sense of people's interest in this at the meeting. If you are interested, please email me to let me know. Also, Cora will be conducting a day-long calligraphy workshop in Lake Oswego in June. Visit this website for more information. <https://www.artscouncillo.org>
- Janet is giving a botanical drawing workshop in Tryon Creek Park on 2 consecutive Saturdays, May 21st and 28th. From 10:30 until 3:30 both days. And a separate workshop in Lake Oswego on Tuesday, June 7th, from 9:30 until 3:00. For more information about both workshops, visit <http://www.tryonfriends.org/intro-to-botanical-illustration> and <https://www.artscouncillo.org>
- NOTE: For those of you who bring in work to display on the tables, unless you've asked me to schedule you as a mini presentation, we may not specifically talk about your work, as a group. I want to encourage everyone to bring in work to share, label it if you can, with your name and the plant name, and do make a point of talking to people about it. And feel free to bring it up during the meeting - we all really want to see AND hear about what everyone is doing!

Members' mini presentations:

Kip Nordstrom gave a presentation on her journey as an artist. Kip has found that one of the most helpful things she's learned in drawing and painting the plants she loves involves preliminary studies on tracing paper. Kip feels that it helps tremendously to take time to make a careful drawing first, then a tracing paper overlay studying the values, and tweaking any parts of the drawing that don't feel right. The result is a beautiful "finished" study in graphite. Only after she accomplishes this level of study is she ready to go on to make a watercolor painting of her subject. We all saw this play out in her sketchbook in the last quarterly meeting where the value study was completed on the left page, and her watercolor study of a pine cone (*Pinus strobus*) was beautifully displayed on the right page. A very good tip, Kip!

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Alice Debo and Karen Tillou brought in work they've done recently on black backgrounds to share and discuss their various processes. Alice experimented with painting on Yupo - (From Dick Blick's website: Yupo Watercolor Paper is a compelling and unique alternative to traditional art papers. It's a synthetic paper, machine-made in the USA of 100% polypropylene. It is waterproof, stain-resistant, and extremely strong and durable.)

Karen chose to experiment on Aquabee Black Bristol - a heavyweight watercolor paper. Her method was to try out several white pigments to create the white surface on which build up color - whether using paint or colored pencils. (I believe colored pencil was the main medium of color.) She made a great chart to track the various pigments and methods she used, (which is one of the photographs featured at the end of the notes.)

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Aislinn Adams talked a bit about dealing with stress. Of having the feeling of not making progress on her Silver Falls project (or not quickly enough), of normal life events getting in the way of finishing work, of the effect of the stress on her body - pain in her hands, loss of sleep, etc. It was a good thing to share with the group - along with the book she works in, to develop the drawings for the Silver Falls project. We saw some of her recent work on Oregon Grape - in graphite, in watercolor, and the most amazingly beautiful stippling in pen & ink. Aislinn uses a Rapidograph .18 for the delicate stippling work. I think we all feel this pressure to rush sometimes. As a group I hope we were able to convince her that her excellent work is proceeding just fine, and that it is a type of work that really can't be rushed and do it justice.

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Sketchbook Exchange (aka The Sisterhood of the Traveling Paints): Though we did not have a "formal" moment when the sketchbooks that were present got passed around, there were some beauties. Members - don't forget to post your work and comments to the OBA Facebook page, to share with the group, and get feedback!

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Afternoon workshop:

Dorota Haber Lehigh led us in a fun, fast-paced drawing workshop, designed to shake things up a bit. We each brought in a soft and a hardish graphite pencil, a small range of colored pencils, and a couple of Micron pens. Also, some inexpensive drawing paper, and erasers, sharpeners, etc. We started with the softest graphite pencil, making a variety of marks as lines traveling down the page. The idea was to vary each line, and use the soft pencil in a variety of ways, exploring all the this tool could offer up. Changing pressure, etc. Next we did soft concentric circles. Next we did circles using our non-dominant hand. Each of us brought in several small subjects to draw, and next we began doing timed sketches of one subject. Several 90-second sketches of changing subjects, sometimes switching to using our non-dominant hand. In one exercise, we chose a drawing subject and concealed it in our hand and traded with someone else (so we each didn't know what we were drawing). We felt the subject, then hid it from view, and sketched it without looking at it. Another exercise was to pick another subject - look at it carefully, but then hide it from view to draw it from memory. (We were allowed to peek once or twice if we found ourselves blocked, but were meant to really try to "burn" a memory into our brain, to call on it after the subject was out of sight.)

More - draw in pencil outline, then basic shapes, then ink, then details in either pencil or ink.

More - a monochromatic (repeated) gesture sketch on toned paper.

More - lay your subject on a piece of paper. Draw a box around it, where a part of the subject touches / breaks the box at some point on each side. Then, draw the same size box on a fresh piece of paper (for this we used a tinted paper). Use the points of contact to help you situate your drawing as you see your subject, and as you draw, use the negative spaces created by the box to help you fill in the outline shape of your subject. Use a white colored pencil to pick out the highlights of your subject, then add some darks, and then find a place to add one accent color only. (see some photos of work on last pages.)

It was a GREAT workshop, Dorota! Thank you so much for sharing these great techniques with us!

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A look ahead to the next two quarterly meetings:

Saturday, July 23 - Kip offered an idea we liked for staying in Portland for this meeting. (It's too hot at Mary's in summer) We meet for the early part at Kip's garden in Lake Oswego, and for the afternoon part, those interested could go for a hike at Tryon Creek Park nearby, or stay and sketch in Kip's garden. There'll be no official workshop in the afternoon on this meeting date.

Saturday, September 24 - Salem - the Straub Environmental Center. (Aislinn has an ok from Catherine Alexander for this date.) • Barbara Mason may be our afternoon workshop leader for this - on creating solar plate etchings from your drawings.

Be thinking of a subject you might work up for a members' share at one of the next meetings!

Sharing work and setting up for the day - top Jane Levy Campbell's branch with lichen, and below, Karen Tillou and Kathleen McCaffrey setting up for the day.



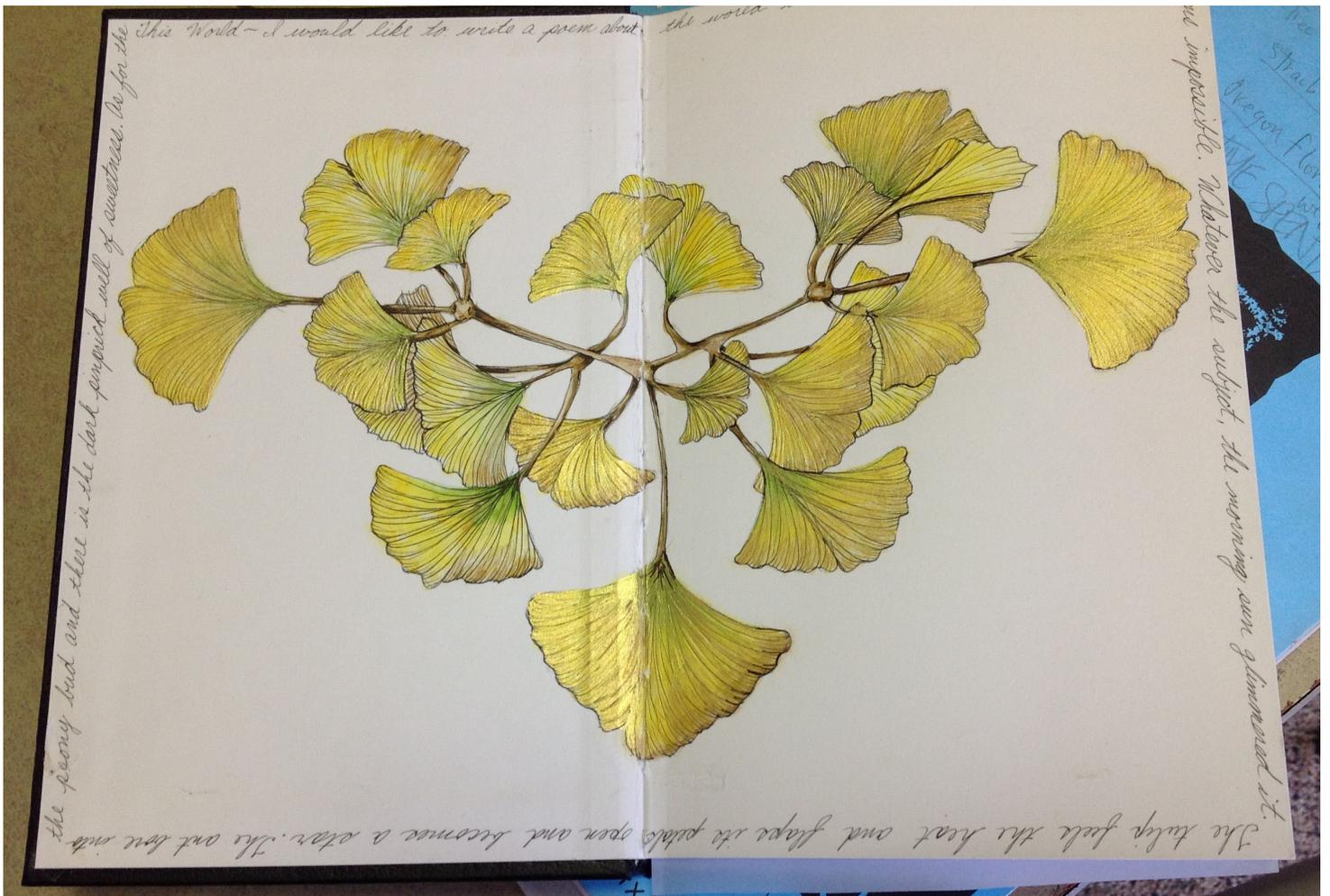
Kip Nordstrom checking out leaves and mushrooms painted by Dorota Haber Lehigh, brought in to share on the group's table display.



Showing some work done on black background - the pieces at left are by Alice Debo, and at right, Karen Tillou.



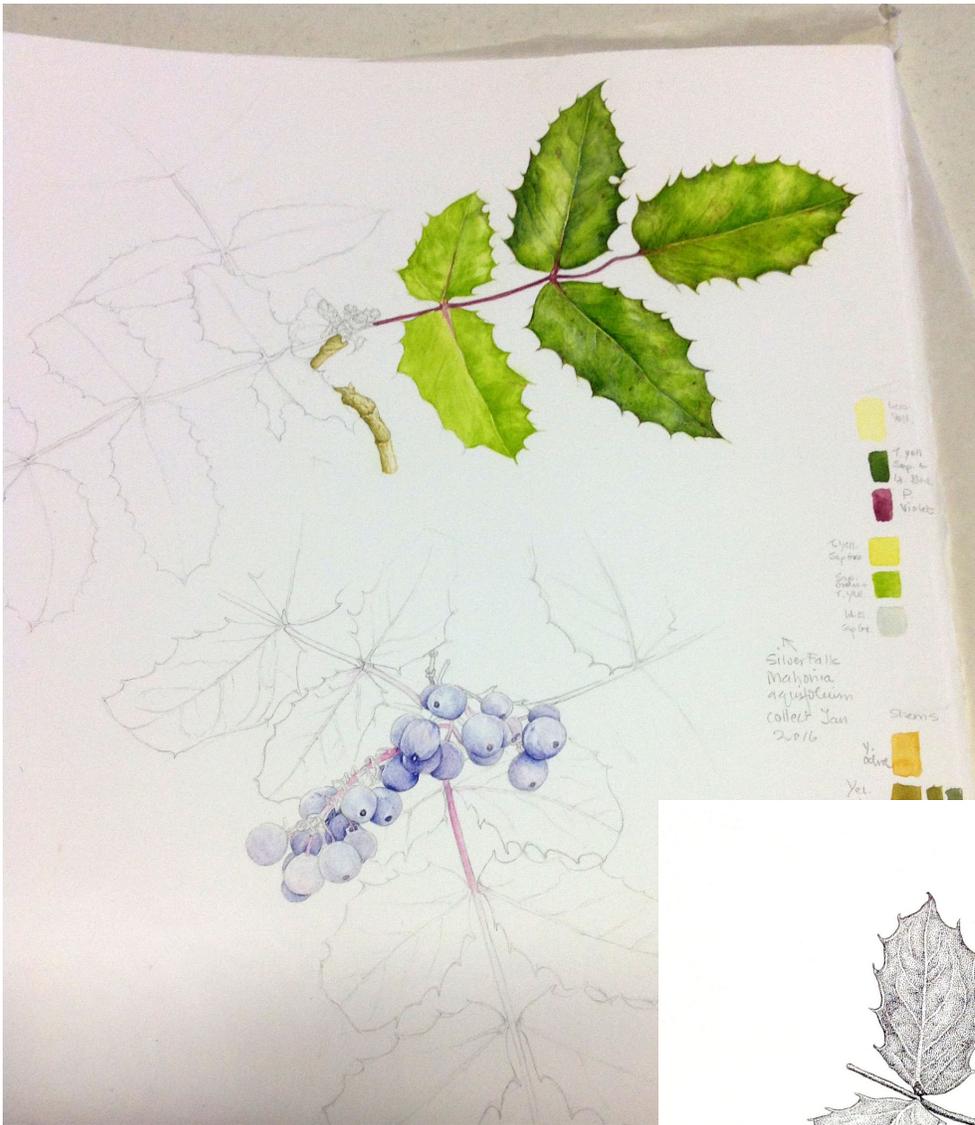
And Kathleen McCaffrey's beautiful Ginkgo study in a lucky someone's traveling sketchbook....



Karen Tillou's terrific chart documenting several methods explored for working on an existing black background. in this case an Aquabee black paper - [more specific info here?](#)



A couple of pages from Aislinn's beautiful studies for the Silver Falls park project. The pages include graphite studies, watercolor studies, and pen & ink stippling. The subject here is Oregon Grape.



Dorota's afternoon workshop on Shaking up Your Drawing Habits - here Dorota is demonstrating one of the last exercises - involving drawing a box around your specimen (allowing the specimen to break the border of the box at one place on each of the 4 sides). Then re-creating the box on a fresh piece of paper, for your drawing. Then using the box to help measure the subject - by noting the touching points on each side, noting the negative shapes created by the subject and its relationship to the box border, and filling in the rest as you observe it. We did our initial outlines in graphite, moved to white to put in highlights, moved to colored pencil to add an accent color, and moved to pen and ink or more graphite to emphasize outlines and add shading. A handy measuring device!



After the workshop - sharing what we each liked best among the many (fun! and challenging!) exercises, and why.

