

**VASSAR  
COLLEGE  
LIFELONG  
LEARNING  
INSTITUTE**

**NEWSLETTER  
ISSUE 13 JAN 2025**

Issue 13, January 2025

## VCLLI and the Sharing Instinct

*Sharing knowledge...is a way you can give something without losing something.*  
--Richard Stallman

A feature of our human nature is that we like to share what we love. If food tastes delicious, we offer a forkful and say "Taste this!" If a sunset is spectacular, we say "Look at that sky!" If we've been transported by a book, we say "You've got to read this!"

This sharing instinct is highly evident in teachers. LLI presenters have it! Why else would they give their precious time and energy, without pay, to teach classes?

Last semester, in the courses I attended, I noticed:

**Christina DeMarco's** eyes sparkle when she demonstrated the process of Suminagashi. (See p. 21)  
**Gala Leganof's** smile widening when she showed us slides of Lviv in Ukraine where she grew up. (See p. 9)

**Brian Mann** playing the piano with gusto as he explained the rhythms of jazz. (See p.13)

I'm sure you've noticed this enthusiasm in your classes. All want to share what they know and love. And, as a result, we, the students, catch more than the facts of the subjects; we catch the passion of the instructors.

Sharing is reciprocal. Not only the takers, but the givers benefit.

*As we work to create light for others,  
we naturally light our own way.* --Mary Anne Radmacher



There is no doubt that LLI presenters find satisfaction and joy in what they do.

Many thanks to all the knowledgeable presenters that generously share their "loves" and enrich VCLLI. (See a list of the Fall 2024 Semester presenters on the facing page.)

**Thank you, too, to all those who contributed to this newsletter.**

Your input continues the sharing outside the classroom.

Special appreciation to our cover artist, **Marty Zlotkin**, an art-lover, (see p. 19)  
and to our proofreader, **Sandy Corwin**, a word-lover, for sharing their talents.

Jo Hausam, Editor, VCLLI Newsletter



Presenting the Presenters  
of the Fall 2024 Semester

Norman Abrahms	Ed Rosenberg
Alex Baer	Dan Peck
Richard Born	John Platt
Chris Calvano	Amanda Potter
Linda Cantor	Gary Quartararo
Paul Ciminello	Jaime Ransome
Anne Constantinople	David Roberts
Sybil DelGaudio	Nathan Rosenblum
Christina DiMarco	Roberta M Roy
Jacqueline Goffe-McNish	Judith Saunders
Marcy Heidish Dolan	Paul Sparrow
Bill Jeffway	Sandra Opdycke
Carolyn Keogh	Jeffry Urban
Gala Leganof	Zachary Veith
Elinor Levy	Lois Walden
Brian Mann	Tom Walker
John McCleary	Skip Weisman
John McGiff	Lyla Yastion
Chuck Mishaan	Joel Zaritsky
Frank Monaco	Ron Patkus
Denise Morett	Bob Ulrich

thank  
you

## Lunch for Members

September 20, 2024



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Many LLI members partook of the catered lunch that was offered in the Hospitality Room on the first day of on-campus classes. As envisioned by the executive council planners, the luncheon prompted conversation and comradery among the members, as is evident in the photos below.



## *History Brought to Life*

by *Tish Lange*

I attended the class *The Roosevelts: Race and Civil Rights 1932-1962* and it was an exceptional experience. **Jeff Urbin**, the presenter, is a masterful storyteller. He brought history to life by blending facts, fiction, and even a touch of folklore. His animated and humorous speaking style kept the lecture engaging and easy to follow, making complex historical events feel relatable.

The museum handout provided was incredibly helpful, giving clear insights into the exhibit and enhancing the overall understanding. Jeff's ability to connect the lecture to the exhibit was seamless. In the last class, we had a fascinating behind-the-scenes look at how the exhibit was created, resented by Herman Eberhardt. I learned putting together an exhibit is quite an involved process—it took three years to complete this one at a cost of approximately \$350,000.

A true testament to a great lecture is when the audience is not only paying attention but also actively asking questions, and that was certainly the case here. I thoroughly enjoyed the exhibit and lectures and highly recommend this class!

## *Vassar Connections*

by **Millicent Cox**

My mother, Ella Jean Standard, was in the Vassar Class of 1936, having been awarded a voice scholarship. I also have two other family members who attended Vassar, Jean Storke and Marian Day.

When I was working on my family genealogy, I thought it would be interesting to learn more about American history. I contacted Vassar's American History Department and asked about sitting in on a class as an alumni daughter. Professor James Merrell agreed and I was able to stay for two semesters taking Early America (1500-1750) and the American Revolution (1750-1830). I was especially interested in these courses because my ancestor, Robert Beverly, wrote *The History and Present State of Virginia*, published in 1705 in Italy.

While attending these courses I often thought of my mother sitting under the biggest tree on campus. In Vassar's beautiful library I even found her name among a list of donors.

When I later learned about the Vassar Lifelong Learning Institute, I joined immediately. I've been a class manager for Tom Walker. Lifelong Learning is the essence of enjoying learning for the very sake of learning—the spark that should never go away!



Photo source: <https://www.vassar.edu/admission>

## Do You Believe in Magic?

by Linda Rizzotto

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I always look forward to seeing the Vassar LLI catalog when it is first released. I pore through it, wondering what worlds will open up for me and this past semester wasn't any different. But I encountered a not unusual conundrum; three courses I was interested in all offered at the same time. Once I made my selection for that time slot, I looked for other options. Four-week sessions and zoom options still left me with an eight-week option. I zeroed in on *Magic for Seniors*.

The playlist that welcomed me as I entered the classroom put a smile on my face and that was only the beginning. The instructors, **Joel Zaritsky** and **Frank Monaco**, and the class manager **Sudhir Desai**, were open with their enthusiasm for magic and their desire to share it with all of us. As an introvert by nature, I was gratified it didn't take me long to open to the energy all around me.

What other class comes with a weekly goody bag? On the first day we all got a quarter for our initial venture into coin tricks followed by cards, ropes, and silk scarves. Magical. (Fortunately, there were no boxes with swords but maybe that is next semester.)

My manual dexterity is no better now than in elementary school when my piano teacher told my mother she was wasting her money giving me lessons. Joel, Frank, and Sudhir had incredible patience as they circulated amongst us neophytes, demonstrating the tricks repeatedly, watching us, offering suggestions, and celebrating when one of us was successful (very often it was Dave).

The real magic for me is how this class makes me feel. For an hour and twenty minutes each week I relax, I laugh, I haven't a care in the world. The coin tricks might not be my cup of tea but with practice (it always comes down to practice, doesn't it?) I might be able to pull off a card trick or two at Thanksgiving. Do I believe in magic? Yes, I do.

### *Magic for Seniors was "Magical"!*

text and photos by Nancy Severns

We had so much fun every week. The laughs just kept multiplying.

Kudos go out to Joel Zaritsky, Frank Monaco, and Sudhir Desai who obviously enjoy sharing their craft.

It was really intense. It took the three of them the entire class period working with us to execute some of the tricks, let alone master them. This class was a joy.

Class practicing "cut & restore rope" illusion.



Class photo

## Can You Name a Famous Female Artist?

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Article and photos by **Jo Hausam**

Instructor **Jaime Ransome** asked the students in the course *Feminist Art History*: “Can you name a famous female artist?” The list was short.

Although women have always made art, many have gone unrecognized. It is only since the 1960s that a new genre, ‘Feminist Art’, has surfaced. It refers to art by women that intentionally engages with feminine issues, often countering male perspective which has dominated the art world. The classes looked at the history of feminist theory, how it emerged in art, and how women were seen and depicted by men in art. The subject is Jaime’s specialty. She lit up as she spoke.

In one of the sessions, Jaime highlighted the art on the walls that surrounded us at the Trolley Barn Gallery, featuring two women artists whose works explore the uprooting and scattering of people from their native lands.



I was particularly captivated by one of the works, an interactive piece titled *Broken Monarchs*. (See photo below.) In the program notes, Marielena Ferrer wrote: *I use monarch butterflies as a metaphor for the fragility and resilience of the more than five thousand migrant children and infants separated from their parents during the “zero-tolerance policy”, whose stated purpose was to break up families to deter migrants from entering the United States.*



Each butterfly is hand-printed and torn around the edges.



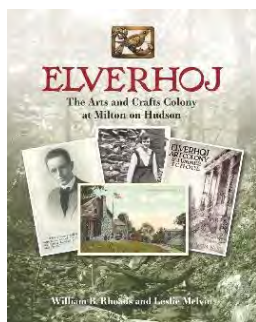
*Broken Monarchs* by Marielena Ferrer, exhibited at THE DUO SHOW, Oct. 10 – Nov. 8, 2024, at the Trolley Barn, Main Street, Poughkeepsie, NY

**Jaime Ransome** is the Manager of **The Art Effect at the Trolley Barn Gallery**. It is the first youth-led gallery in the Hudson Valley. Its mission is to train youth as leaders who engage community members and visitors in transformative arts experiences that they curate alongside established professionals.

## A Shared History: A Craft Colony, A College, and A Community

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by Jo Hausam



In 2022, William B. Rhoads and Leslie Melvin, shortly after publishing their book, *Elverhoj: The Arts & Crafts Colony at Milton-on-Hudson*, asked Ron Patkus, Head of Special Collections & College Historian at Vassar College, if Vassar was interested in housing the Elverhoj collection. After learning there were many ties between the colony and the college, Vassar decided to keep the collection. During Vassar's Fall 2024 semester, the library exhibited some of the holdings from this collection.

On the afternoon of October 20<sup>th</sup>, I, along with other VCLLI members, attended a presentation at the Vassar Library about the colony. Fascinated by what I heard and saw, I felt compelled to do further research and share Elverhoj's story with all of you.

**Ron Patkus** (photo on right) introduced **William B. Rhoads**, Professor Emeritus of Art History, SUNY New Paltz and **Leslie Melvin**, Manager of Academic Technology Services at Bard College.



Professor Rhoads (photo on left) spoke about the origin, goals, and success of the colony.

*Anders Andersen, a Danish American artist, sought an alternative to industrial production by organizing independent arts and craft workers to make beautiful objects [metalwork, jewelry, textiles] by hand in a setting away from urban centers. Elverhoj (Danish for "hill of the fairies") was established at Milton on the west shore of the Hudson River in 1912. (William B. Rhoads, from the Introduction to the exhibition catalog.)*

(Source of Rhoads' photo: <https://www.recordonline.com/story/news/local/2019/09/27/dr-william-rhoads-speaks-at/2680315007/>)

Elverhoj's main building was a house that had been the home of Sherborne Sears, a whaling captain. Artists were housed in cabins. One of the most elaborate was featured in a 1915 postcard. (Image on the right. Source: *Ulster County, New York: The Architectural History & Guide*, by William B. Rhoads, Black Dome Press, 2011.)



Elverhoj established a presence in Poughkeepsie where its crafts were featured in The Peacock Shop at the E. S. Leggat & Co. department store on Academy Street. Later, the colony opened its own showroom and art shop on the corner of Market and Cannon Streets. And Elverhoj had close connections with Vassar College. President Henry Noble MacCracken and some faculty were colony patrons. Vassar students were visitors and customers. Andersen designed rings for Vassar classes, and etcher Ralph Pearson designed Vassar bookplates. (p. 8 of exhibition catalog). And two of the artists taught crafts at Vassar. (See next page.)

In the 1920s theatrical productions became an important aspect of the colony. Rhoads said "the projects of the twenties were brought low by the Depression of the thirties". Anderson called upon Eleanor Roosevelt, well-known for her crafts at Valkill, for help in saving the colony. Despite Eleanor's best efforts, Anderson lost the colony in 1938.

The site was purchased and owned until 1947 by the followers of Reverend M. J. Divine, a preacher. Today the land is privately owned.





Leslie Melvin's part of the lecture focused on two artists, sisters Bessie and Henrietta Scott, the younger siblings of James Scott, the colony's leading painter and a jewelry maker.

The sisters joined the colony in 1912. By 1917 they were described in a *Poughkeepsie Evening Enterprise* article as "weavers, who live in a cottage by themselves and ply their hand looms making tapestries from Norwegian design." (p. 12 of exhibition catalog)

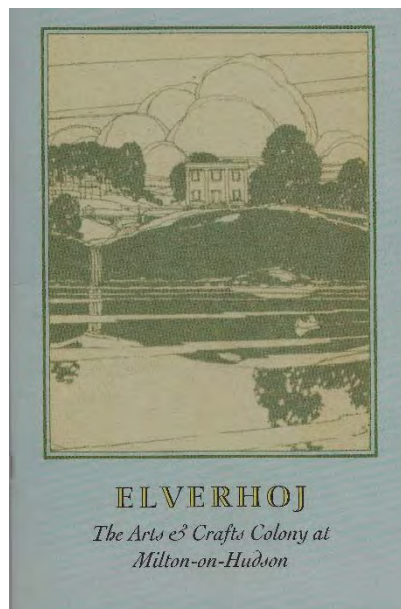
In the early 1920s Bessie began taking courses in the newly emergent field of occupational therapy and then worked as a therapist at the Bloomingdale Hospital in White Plains, NY.

In 1929, Bessie was hired by Vassar College to offer craft instruction and oversee the new basement studio space in Blodgett Hall. There the sisters offered students and community members instruction in various crafts. The sisters also became active in Dutchess County service organizations. They helped to coordinate fundraisers and exhibitions. Ultimately this led to the formation of the Dutchess County Art Association. A few decades later, their brother James would become DCAA's president.

When Bessie left Vassar in 1935 to assume a post with the New York State Commission of the Blind, as an advisor of industrial art work for the blind, Henrietta took over. When Vassar closed the craft studios in 1941, Henrietta began offering classes in metalwork, fiber arts, and bookbinding at the Poughkeepsie YWCA.

Melvin pointed out that despite careers in craft and craft instruction, no known examples (or even photographs) of work by either Bessie or Henrietta Scott have been found.

After the lecture, we examined the exhibition, which included photographs, brochures, postcards, silver teaspoons, watercolors, and a letter from Eleanor Roosevelt. Below are photos of two exhibition items: a watercolor of a hand-wrought pendant and a brochure cover, c. 1919, used as the cover of the Vassar Library exhibition catalog, published by Vassar College Library, 2024 (from which much of this information was taken).





## Spotlight on Gala Leganof

by Cary Auerbach

The painting on the right is by VCLLI member and presenter, Gala Leganof. She calls it 'Self-portrait'. After spending time with Gala, I find the resemblance remarkable!



Gala's life, full of adventure and culture, has spanned continents.



She was born in Lutzk, Ukraine. At the age of only two months she was bound for the Russian Far East aboard the ocean liner pictured on the left. (The photo was taken in 1957 at Golden Horn Bay, Vladivostok.) She spent her early school years there on Kamchatka peninsula—the land of fire and ice, so-called because of the abundant geysers and active volcanoes. In her mid-school years she moved to Lviv,

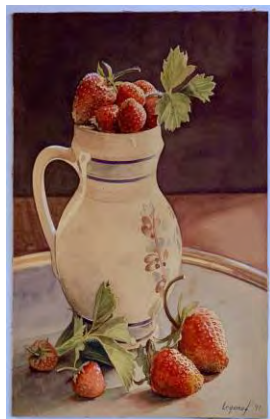
Ukraine, briefly lived in Daugavpils, Latvia, and Leningrad (St. Petersburg), and Moscow in Russia.

Gala moved to the Hudson Valley shortly after the collapse of the Berlin Wall before the USSR's dissolution. She studied international law, philosophy and human rights at Marist, graduating with honors in Political Science and Russian History. She completed graduate studies in American Geopolitics at McGill University in Montreal, Canada.

McGill-Queen's University Press published her academic book: *Understanding American Democracy in the Concept of Empirical and Normative Evolutions*. She wrote a number of case studies on the UN Security Council and authored *Russian 2014 Invasion and Annexation of Crimea* while at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs.



(Gala is on the far right in this photo taken in 2014 at the UN with the General of Peacekeeping Operations.)



Gala's artistic talent was discovered back in Kamchatka but, despite her mother's efforts to enroll her in Lviv Art Academy, she didn't rediscover her love of art until she met Ann Wilson (1960's Vogue Photographer) who introduced her to visual arts at Marist. Since then she has pursued all manner of visual arts and become a knowledgeable collector of art and fine objects.

She has been an avid and active VIP member of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts for over 20 years as well as an active member of The Frick Collection art museum. She is looking forward to the official reopening of its historic Gilded Age mansion this April.

*Jug with Strawberries* 1998, watercolor

Last fall, Gala taught an introductory course on the culture and history of Ukraine, introducing the class to the 'Seven Wonders of Ukraine', 13 'Lavras' [large monasteries], Ukrainian folk dance, embroidery, red-coral jewelry, egg painting and textiles. Hopefully she will share more of her rich life in future courses.



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Here are student comments on the course *What is Ukraine Known For?*

### **A Memorable Course** by Gail McGlinchey

**Gala Leganof** is an empathetic, engaging educator. Her four week course was truly memorable.

I especially appreciated Gala's emphasis on her birth country's diversity: its geography, religions, fashion, and art. This overview encouraged us to further explore these topics.

During the third class, we clapped as we watched videos of traditional dance.



Most importantly, Gala respected and honored our questions. It would be wonderful if she would lead a more in-depth eight-week session in the future.

### **What I Learned about Ukraine** by Millicent Cox

Ukraine is the largest country in Europe and is the bread basket for most of the world!

It is the intersection of both Eastern and Western cultural influences as evidenced in its religious history.



Artistically, Ukraine is sophisticated as seen in its opera, rich folk art, and its outstanding architecture.

The use of underground space in cities and religious centers is amazing, in contrast with the many gold domes and tall, rooftop spirals.

Regional dress is most elaborate for men and women...decorated in bright colors and repeated patterns which have been passed down for generations. The designs are also used to decorate the exterior of the homes.



It was wonderful to enjoy the wonders and beauties of Ukraine via this course!

Thank you to Gala Leganof.

*Diane O'Leary is a retired area attorney. As such, writing is not new for her. However, the transition to the writing of fiction proved to be a challenge resolved through three semesters of participation in the VCLLI course **Writing Fiction with Other Writers with Roberta M Roy**. Below is a chapter from a novel O'Leary is currently writing.*

## A Nice Cup of Tea

by Diane O'Leary

Still in her pajamas, Carol sat on the edge of her bed staring at the dress she'd be wearing on the Saturday after next when she would marry Stan, Pvt. 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Stanley Nowak.

"How did I ever get here?" she wondered. "And with Joe as best man." Carol sighed..." Probably as it should be...they're best friends, after all. It's all happened so fast."

Carol trembled. "I'll be a good wife. Stan deserves a good wife. I must stop thinking of Joe. It just wasn't meant to be." Lost in her thoughts Carol jumped, startled, as her mom swept into her room and promptly set about opening the blinds.

"Oh Sweetie, whatever are you doing sitting here in this dark room?" her mom asked much too cheerfully. "I've been waiting all morning for you to come down for breakfast. The florist needs your final decisions so he can go ahead and put in the order. I have the brochures on the table. It'll be so much fun choosing!"

"Mom, whatever you choose will be great."

"Now Carol, you must be part of this. You're just tired with all that's been going on. Come on. You'll feel better after a nice cup of tea."

"Maybe I just need to sleep a bit more Mom."

"Carol, what is it? I know your honeymoon will only be a few days because Stan must go back to Fort Dix. Are you afraid... knowing he'll be sent overseas sooner than you thought? Or...is it...you can talk to me honey, is it the wedding night? the sex?"

"No Mom, I'm not afraid. I'm just fine."

"Carol, you're not acting just fine.... It's Joe, isn't it?"

Carol's words tumbled out like marbles from a jar, hard, succinct, more words than she wanted to spill. "Mom, Joe has made his decision. His parents pressured him for years, you know that. He's entering the Seminary and that's that." Carol paused and then confided, "I don't think he really wants to go. But all his life he's tried to please his dad. It's no matter that ever since we were kids I thought I would marry Joe someday. Even Stan thought it would be me and Joe. Poor Stan, he knows he's second choice. He doesn't deserve that. Anyway, I'm marrying him. It's the least I can do. He's going to war."

"Carol, I don't know what to say to you or do to make this better. Dad and I always thought it would be Joe too. He's Irish and Catholic. He fits right in." Carol's mom did not see her daughter roll her eyes, but she couldn't have missed the hard sigh. "There's nothing you can do, Mom. Why don't you go and put the kettle on. I'll be down in a few minutes."

As her mom was going through the door and into the hall Carol added, “Oh, you know Stan is Catholic. The Polish Church he goes to is Catholic” (Carol dropped her voice) “and, for all I know, his family probably wishes he’d marry a Polack and not a Mick, and in their church, not ours.” Her mom probably didn’t hear that. Just as well.

Meanwhile, just four blocks away, Joe Quinn was sitting on the edge of his bed holding a child’s paper Valentine, absently rocking to and fro, asking himself, “How did I get here? How did this all happen so fast?” Since early that morning he had been going through the physical remnants of his eighteen years, so many memories scattered about. Among them were scout medals and patches, grammar school report cards, a trophy for coming in first in a spelling bee in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, and perfect attendance certificates for the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>. There were model airplanes he used to put together in the solitude of his room. He wondered why he kept the birdhouse he made in Cub Scouts considering the memory it carried. He never forgot how he felt when all the other fathers arrived at the den meeting to help their sons, and, when his mom came instead, how the boys asked him if his father had died in the war. “Dad was at Jimmy’s football practice. It wasn’t even a game,” he muttered as he dropped the tiny dwelling into the wastebasket. Then, from the highest shelf in his closet, Joe gently removed that silly wobbly hula girl prize Carol had insisted he keep from the dance contest they won at a CYO sock hop. It was a treasure, along with more treasures in a shoebox full of photos. There was a picture of him and Carol together with Stan and his date on the boardwalk in Asbury Park the day after their Junior Prom. What a time that was! Carol was crowned Prom Queen, and he was her escort! Ah, and there was a red construction paper heart glued to a paper doily from Carol, made in their third-grade class. His face broke into a whisper of a smile. “I wonder if Carol kept the one I gave to her.” His room was full of Carol. But what sent him back rocking was his high school yearbook, with its good luck notes, silly rhymes and signatures. Carol’s was right there on the inside cover. “Dear Joe, I’ll miss you. PLEASE DON’T FORGET ME, Love, Carol. “

While lost in his memories and clutching the Valentine, Joe’s mom entered his room, startling him. As she flitted about, raising the shades, she tittered. “Well Joe, I see you’re cleaning out. Getting ready for the big day? I still can’t believe it. My sweet son, off to the Seminary to become a priest. We’re all so proud of you!”

Joe felt compelled to speak. “Mom, I know you are. But what about dad? He hasn’t said much.”

“Oh, you know your dad. He doesn’t share his feelings...Of course he’s proud of you. And thank God you’ll be nearby and as safe as you can be. The Seminary may save you. We haven’t heard from your brothers since they were sent to North Africa under General Eisenhower. To tell the truth, dad and I were concerned that Carol would talk you out of entering, but now with the wedding, I guess it was her and Stan all along?”

“Is that a question, Mom? You know better. From the time Carol and I were kids we used to talk about getting married to each other someday. Funny how it all turned out, isn’t it Mom?”

“It turned out so well, didn’t it Joe? We always knew you had a vocation.”

“How did you and dad know that? It’s not like I prayed all the time. Was it because I didn’t want to play football? Dad thinks I’m queer, doesn’t he?”

His mother quickly turned her eyes from him and headed toward the door, “Oh, Joe, don’t be silly. What makes you say that? Come down for breakfast. I’ll put the kettle on and we’ll have a nice cup of tea.”

When she was gone Joe got up, shut the door, pulled the shades down and sat back on his bed still holding the Valentine. He looked up to the Crucifix hung over his bed. “Jesus, is this really your will? How did I get here?”

Here is a spontaneous, originally handwritten sample of a fictional story completed within fifteen minutes of class time in *Fiction Writing with Other Writers*. It was suggested by one of six picture prompts shown to the class by presenter **Robin Roy**.

## Amphibious Thoughts

by **Linda Rizzotto**

My God, it's so hot I can barely stand it. It is cooler under this tree, so I'll just wait for the sun to set a tad more then I'll make my way to the window; that's the best place to be...what with the smorgasbord of food. An added bonus is how perfect the window is for my isometrics and breathing. It is incredibly smooth on my little webbed feet.

Good grief! What is that beacon shining on me? I'll have to wait for my eyes to adjust before I can take a closer look. It appears to be one of those giants that stands upright, most likely the girl I've seen in the yard, but I can't be sure because of the backlighting.

She's practically got her nose pressed to the window. Has she never seen a tree frog? Now she's waving over someone else to take a gander at my underside. The two of them are quite amused.

I'm not complaining, I'll milk this for all its worth. When they leave that table lamp lit, the selection of moths and gnats rises exponentially. It's almost more than I can handle.

It's getting colder these last few nights. Soon I'll exit stage-left and return to my favorite refuge and go into my deep winter freeze. I wonder if my audience will miss me.

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## The Pizazz of Jazz by Jo Hausam

*How to describe jazz? Well...it bebops in your soul--with its spontaneity, enthusiasm, passion, rhythm and rhyme, pulse and pizazz.* Posted by Siobhan  
<https://a-poem-a-day-project.blogspot.com/2013/05/day-287-jazz-band.html>

Having attended **Brian Mann's** concerts at Skinner Hall, I knew about and experienced his passion for jazz. His enthusiasm was evident as he traced the evolution of this uniquely American musical genre in the course *The History of American Jazz to 1945*.



In Thekla Hall, a recital room at Skinner, we heard Sousa's marches, Scott Joplin's "Maple Leaf Rag," "I Got the Blues", Boogie-Woogie, "Sugarfoot Stomp" and many more recordings—all musical variations that coalesced to become jazz. We learned the stories of the innovative musicians, like Eubie Blake, Fats Waller, and Duke Ellington, who played this improvisational music. We tapped our feet and rocked in our seats.

Brian Mann, Associate Professor Emeritus of Music, taught at Vassar for 37 years.



*It's everywhere! No one can catch a fish without catching a trace in it, or wish the microplastic surge away somehow. Only civilization's relics lack it now: old statues, ruins, pyramids consigned to memories in the progressive mind. Imagine, if you can, part of our life without it. Everything from fast-food knife to human body, auto part, and phone has it, in Death Valley or Arctic zone. And once these non-organic parts are made, their substance, kept or dumped, can't biodegrade.*



--excerpt from the poem "Our Plastic Legacy" by Roger Roloff, 2024

### **A Challenge & A Need to Change** by **Roberta M. Roy**

*Plastic Love Affair* was taught by **Paul Ciminello**. He had researched the different kinds of plastic, how they are used, and which and to what degree each is recycled.

The presentation described the inescapable way in which nano plastics permeate the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the food we eat. To date, only black plastic has been found to be a carcinogen, however, nano plastics are invading our bodies and plastic pollution is killing our sea life. The growing use of plastics is becoming an ever increasing challenge.

The effect of the information Ciminello presented encouraged me to lessen the use of plastic in my food storage and cooking, to recycle plastics according to the number on them, and to look to organizations such as *Beyond Plastics* for ways in which we, as a society, can advocate to lessen their use and the pervasive pollution they cause. I would recommend this course to anyone who cares about their family and the greater society.

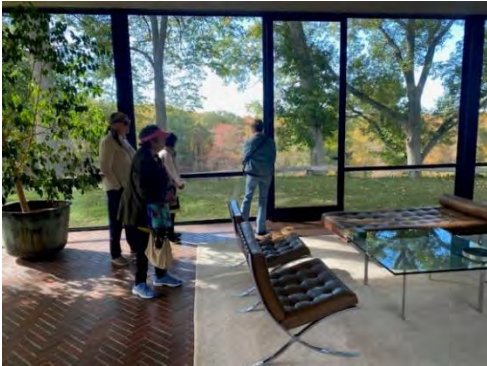
### **Eye-Opening Course** by **Millicent Cox**

The course *Plastic Love Affair*, was an eye-opening course. I learned that the word "plastic" is of Greek and Latin origin. It meant *able to form* or *mold*. It had noble origins in sculpture and art. But now, it refers to man-made materials that pollute our bodies and our world.

Plastic objects are very useful and do give us instant freedoms, but one must balance the need for plastic with the bigger picture of the pollution of our beautiful planet. The global footprint is everywhere and is slowly killing our world. Plastic is most definitely a substance that will be on the earth forever.

Humanity must recycle every SECOND. It is the hidden cost of recycling plastic that appears to be the most immediate problem for the 21st century. These costs of recycling should be placed at the point of production! An excellent course. Thank you Paul Ciminello.

**VCLLI Trip to the  
Glass House  
New Canaan, CT  
October 17, 2024**



The bathroom is inside a brick cylinder.



Photos by **Diana Salsberg** and **Carole Wolf**







The Glass House, built in 1948-49 by architect Philip Johnson, is a house museum, designated a National Historic Landmark in 1997. Johnson passed on its ownership to the National Trust for Historic Preservation. It opened to visitors in 2007.

The pastoral 49-acre landscape includes fourteen structures designed by Johnson over his career. He called them his “follies” because they were unusable. It also features a permanent collection of 20th-century painting and sculpture, along with temporary exhibitions. <https://theglasshouse.org/> and [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glass\\_House](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glass_House)



Sculpture Gallery

## Dutch 17th Century Influence on the Hudson River School

by Nancy Severn

Over six weeks we learned the connection between 17th century Dutch painters and the styles of the Hudson River School artists of the 19th century.

Our instructor was **Alex Baer** whose grandfather, Curtis Baer, taught 16th & 17th century Dutch Landscape at Vassar in the 1960's. His knowledge inspired her to study art history and eventually she became a professional sculptor.



<https://www.nga.gov/features/slideshows/dutch-landscapes-and-seascapes-of-the-1600s.html>

Seventeenth century Dutch painters had a significant impact on the Hudson River School in the 19th century. Their meticulous attention to detail, use of light, and landscapes of serene beauty inspired American artists like Thomas Cole and Asher Durand.

The Dutch focus on naturalistic depictions and perspective (see painting above) resonated with the Hudson River painters (painting on the right), who sought to capture the sublime and pastoral essence of the American wilderness. Their compositions and ability to render the transformative qualities of light were significant components of the Hudson River School's landscapes.



*View on the Catskill, Early Autumn* by Thomas Cole

In the final session we discussed the progression of industrialization which minimized the Hudson River School of Artists and how an artistic movement can initiate another development such as conservation. We also discussed the meaningfulness of natural beauty in our surroundings, where we live, in the Hudson Valley,

Many thanks to Alex Baer for her preparation and insights for this class.

## Class Managers Keep the LLI Gears Moving

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THANK YOU to those who volunteered during the Fall 2024 Semester.

Rob Cohen

Sarah Kennedy

Susan Fink

Maureen Potter

Skip Weisman

Muriel Horowitz

Rosealice D'Avanzo

Miriam Tannen

Bill Davies

Kathleen Crampton

Madeline Cole

Denise Murphy

Rachel Reisman



Maureen Potter

Sudhir Desai

Christopher Baltus

Sara Thompson

Gala Leganof

Patricia Fitzpatrick

Cary Auerbach

Celia Seronsky

Nancy Severns

Linda Rizzotto

Theresa Bracchi

Mary Anne Williams

## Consider Volunteering

Share your passions and consider instructing. VCLLI is always looking for **Presenters** to share their knowledge to teach a class—whether it be a single session, or a four, six, or eight week course.

Hop aboard as a **Class Manager**. Orientation sessions provide tips for on-campus managers on how to run a class smoothly. Those managing Zoom classes learn the mechanics and tricks for using Zoom successfully.

Give a helping hand to the **Hospitality Committee** in the Kenyon Club Room to prep food and beverages, arrange tables, monitor pantry inventory, and cleanup. Time commitment: 2 hours/week.

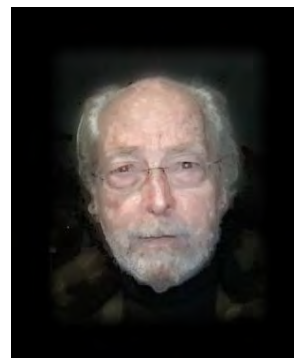
Join the **Curriculum Committee** by soliciting presenters to develop courses, reviewing applications, communicating with presenters, and assisting in editing the course catalog.

Write or take photos for the **VCLLI Newsletter**.



## Spotlight on Marty Zlotkin

*When I assumed the position of newsletter editor, I was introduced to and helped by Marty Zlotkin. Marty is a multi-faceted artist and over the years has shared his talents with VCLLI by designing brochures and the early newsletters. His striking artwork has graced the covers of all the newsletters. I thought it was time to share his story and his art with our community. -- J.H.*



### In his own words...

I was born a long time ago, in the Bronx.

I have been involved in art since early childhood. I began as a painter with a strong art history education— at the Art Students League, the High School of Music & Art, and Queens College School of Visual Arts—eventually finding expression constructing large scale steel sculpture.

Retired from my graphics based marketing business, I found my voice through digital media and the manipulation of photographic images. These last few years I have been incorporating wet and dry media into my photo work (see Artwork 4\*on next page), along with working in CAD [computer-aided-design] and the construction of maquettes of my sculpture.

For several years, I was privileged to be a visiting artist at Lafayette College, Easton, PA. Working along with staff and senior studio art honors students allowed me to share my experience, my passion, and technical knowledge of art. I was also the featured artist for the New Jersey Council on the Arts.

Most recently, I was accepted as an Associate Member of WAAM, Woodstock Artists Association and Museum.

*Here are some examples of Marty's striking artwork, copied, with his permission, from his website, <https://www.mz-artworks.com/>*

On Paper



Painting ("I am that I paint.")



Primal Bursts

("Direct expressions of the formless ambiguities that reside within the shadows of our consciousness.")

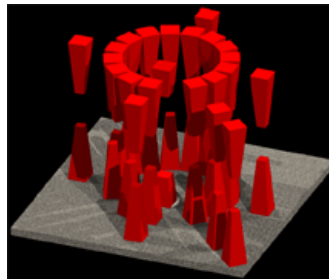




ZLOTKIN NATURAL EXPRESSIONS  
LIMITED EDITION PRINTS  
THE PHOTO PRINTS ARE A COMING OF AGE AND MATURE AFFECTION FOR  
NATURE AND THE WORLD AS WE KNOW IT. THE WATER SCENE PRINTS ARE 18" x 12" 100%  
MUSEUM QUALITY. BIRKENHEAD, NEW JERSEY 100% 100% 100%



New Sculpture



\*

Artwork 4



### Seeing Is Too Often Taken For Granted

I find that we tend to see what we know rather than what we are looking at.

We impose lines and edges to our view rather than probing to understand what we see.

We accept learned notions to what it is we think we see.

I strive to always see for the first time, to see without the encumbrance of what it is I think I know.

Seeing is discovery.

Seeing explores the relational symbiosis of masses and the spaces that contain and surround, defined by light's reflection, refraction and absorption at that moment.

--Marty Zlotkin

## The Wonder of It All

Photos by Valerie Carlisle

The photos show the joy and awe that students had in the ***Suminagashi, Ink on Water and Japanese Bookbinding*** class, taught by **Christina Di Marco**. (Center photo.)

*The beauty and variety are magically surprising. Each person's style will be different and blossom.* C.D.



## SPRING 2025 SEMESTER DATES

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**Zoom courses** will be held on the following Tuesdays:  
March 18, 25; April 1, 8, 15, 22, 29; May 6

**On-Campus courses** will be held on the following Fridays:  
March 14, 21, 28; April 4, 11, 25; May 2, 9  
(No classes on Good Friday, April 18)

Note: Tuesday classes begin **after** commencement of our Friday classes.

**The CATALOG OF SPRING 2025 Course Offerings**  
will be available on or about **February 11<sup>th</sup>**.



Photo by Diana Salsberg

**REGISTRATION** for the **SPRING 2025 SEMESTER** will begin  
**February 17<sup>th</sup>** for those members who are entitled to early registration.  
**February 20<sup>th</sup>** for general registration.

A session on **Classroom Technology** will be offered on Friday, March 7<sup>th</sup> @ 11:00 AM.

**As a THANK YOU to all our Presenters and Class Managers, please come to our  
PIZZA PARTY on FRIDAY, MARCH 7th @ NOON.**  
Meet your fellow Presenters and Class Managers, and share thoughts and ideas!



Photo by Sarah Kennedy

**Vassar College Lifelong Learning Institute**  
124 Raymond Avenue, PO Box 160, Poughkeepsie, NY 12604  
**Office:** Blodgett Hall, Room 115  
**Phone:** 845-437-7220  
**Email:** [lli@vassar.edu](mailto:lli@vassar.edu)  
**Website:** <https://pages.vassar.edu/lifelonglearning/>