

**Danny Spencer**

*"Window View 2 Close Up"*  
AgeSong Laguna Grove

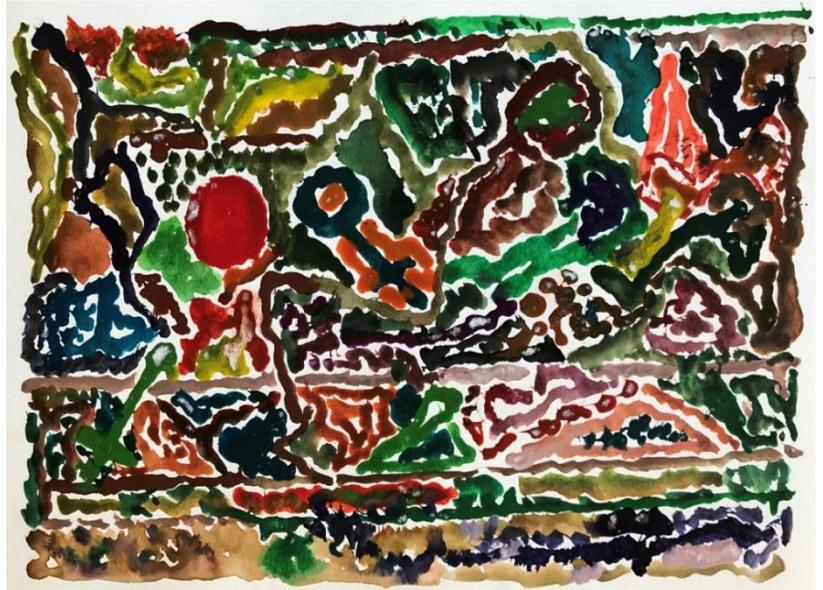
"If art were straight lines, we'd all be boring," says this professional drummer, turned artist. Danny asserts that the AWE class he attends weekly is his "favorite two hours of the week."

Danny turned to drums at the age of nine, studying with a drummer who played with John Philip Sousa. As a teenager he played in the J.W. Sexton High School Band, one of the best in the country, in his hometown of Lansing, Michigan. Unfortunately, his studies at Michigan State University suffered from his six-nights-a-week nightclub gigs.

Danny has played in every major city in the U.S. and Western Europe with the likes of Freddie Hubbard, Joel Henderson and the Contemporary Jazz Quartet and recorded on Blue Note. And he'll never forget the night he met Duke Ellington in a Paris bar.

Once an avid bike rider, he still practices Tai Chi, belongs to the walking club, and fills in periodically on the drums at AgeSong musical performances. He describes himself as a curious and social person and believes in the importance of getting exercise and practicing – be it your music or your art.

**ART WITH ELDERS**  
*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



## **Ted Finkelstein**

*"Abstract"*

AgeSong (Laguna Grove)

Ted is someone who always balanced his creative side with his penchant for the hard sciences. Born in Vienna in 1925, he escaped the Nazis by fleeing with his family to Palestine in 1938. During his teenage years on a kibbutz, he learned many skills, including repairing clocks, growing plants, and fixing machinery.

Ted married in England and had three children, and moved to the U.S. in 1959 after the birth of his daughter, Carol. He loved California, especially Los Angeles, where he lived for 40 years with his second wife. An inventor with a Ph.D. in mechanical engineering, he was recognized as a world expert in the Stirling engine, an external combustion engine, and made other patented inventions as well. Drawing and sketching were part of his engineering process.

Whether gardening, building, or working as a professional, Ted always exhibited great creativity and loved to use his hands. A non-conformist, Ted was often referred to as an "iconoclast" and a real "original." He travelled extensively and spoke several languages fluently. He loved listening to music, visiting museums, and experiencing all kinds of live events.

Ted painted many large oil paintings in the '60s and has enjoyed painting as an occasional hobby ever since.

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



## **Hanns Kainz**

*"Abstract"*

AgeSong Laguna Grove – The Village at Hayes Valley

Hanns was born in Vienna, Austria in 1943 into a family of one brother and three half-brothers. He graduated from the University of Vienna in architecture and engineering and came to San Francisco in 1972, obtaining additional degrees from both Stanford and UC Berkeley, where he was an assistant professor in the late 1970's.

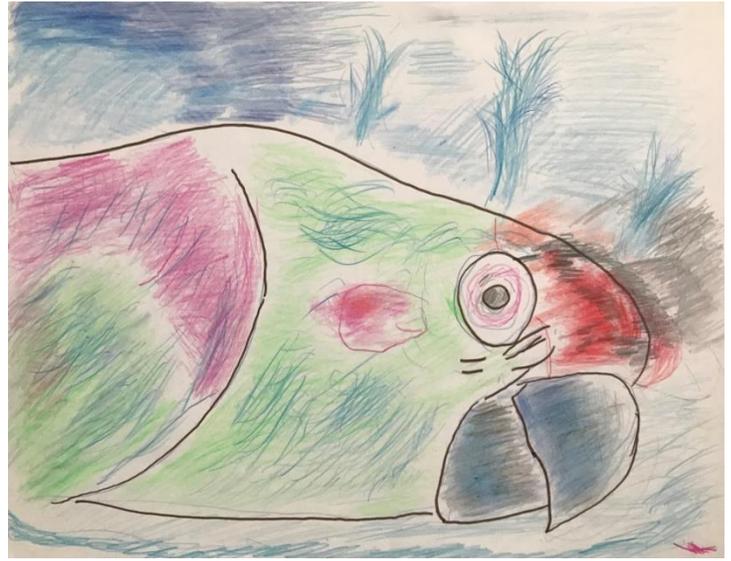
He later opened up his own firm, Hanns Kainz AIA, specializing in commercial buildings. He primarily designed projects for the garment industry in the San Francisco Bay Area and Los Angeles, including the headquarters for the Espirit Clothing Company. In the 1980s Hans was honored as the "best architect in San Francisco," and also designed many private in Pacific Heights. He later worked on the Hamm's Building, finishing his last project on King Street near the ballpark.

Hanns loves San Francisco, and was an avid tennis player and lover of the outdoors---camping and boating. He has two daughters, and four grandchildren--three girls and a boy.

Always loved for his creativity, in his younger years Hanns hung out with his artist friends and played piano in Heart, a local band. He also was an avid builder of things (burning man style) and designed furniture for fun. In his AWE classes he creates his abstracts with watercolors. Of his life he says, "I did it my way."

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



**Toula Caloyanides**  
*"Hungry Parrot"*  
AgeSong Laguna Grove

ART WITH ELDERS  
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## **Rose London**

*"Neighbor Girl and her Dog"*  
Brookdale Vallejo Hills

If you want to catch up with ninety-year-old Rose London, you may find her playing violin with the Solano County Symphony. A talented musician and music lover, Rose took after her mother, who graduated from The Julliard School of Music. "Rose," short for "Rosa May", was named after her parents' mothers.

Born in Spokane, Washington, Rose was raised in Alameda, California with her two brothers. She has happy college memories at the University of the Pacific (UOP), where she studied education and music when the school became co-ed to accommodate the returning GIs. It was there that she met another musician, Willard, who became her husband. The couple was married for 45 years and had two children, Jay and Dana, who now live in Texas.

After Willard's sudden passing, Rose remarried in 1996, welcoming Ted's three children--Claire, John, and Charles--to her own family. Fifteen years later, Ted died from complications of Alzheimer's.

Despite her losses, Rose continues on with remarkable energy and resilience. In addition to her busy musical life of practice, rehearsals, and performances, Rose is expanding her creativity with her recently-acquired drawing skills in her AWE class, where she's learning and improving quickly. After class and a round of hugs, off darts Rose, with the energy of a teenager.

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



## **Susan Madeiros**

*"Hawaiian Sunset"*

Brookdale Vallejo Hills

The appreciation and expression of beauty has always been at the heart of Susan Medeiros's life. She was drawn to ceramics in high school, while growing up with her sister in Vallejo. After starting a family at age nineteen, raising two daughters with Paul W., she enrolled at Long Beach State College as a ceramics major. She recalls early jobs waitressing at the "Beatnik clubs" in Hollywood.

Susan later remarried to Lee Medeiros, her partner for 41 years, until his passing in 2016. The couple lived in Vallejo, before retiring to a small town near Hilo, Hawaii, where Susan enjoyed and nurtured the beauty of nature on their remote property. As a member of the group, Wise Old Women (WOW), she painted, created pottery, arranged flowers, and learned the art of "Healing Touch," which she practiced for over twenty years.

Susan, born in Oakland in 1936, has returned to Vallejo to be near her sister Mary Ann, two daughters, Lisa and Carla, and four grandchildren. Now a resident of Brookdale Vallejo Hills, she enjoys the sense of community there. She has become a dedicated member of the AWE class, celebrating natural beauty with seascapes in oil pastels, and recently, with acrylic paint and palette knives. Fellow classmate and now partner, Larry M., says of his new love, Susan, "She's an artful soul!"

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



**Aurora Gamboa-Spikol**  
*"Pacific Coast Tree Study"*  
The Carlisle

As vibrant as the colors she loves, Aurora was born in Manila in 1937. The youngest of five, she left in 1964 to work with the Philippine Foreign Service, spending six years in Rome -- where she became fluent in Italian, two years in Toronto, and then thirty-four years with the World Bank in Washington, D.C., where she met her husband, Ade.

Aurora began studying art in 1990, and became an active member of the World Bank's art society. She especially enjoys painting landscapes and still lifes. She also enjoys music and French and Italian film from the '50s and '60s.

"I'm 80. I'm happy at this stage of my life. I had the opportunity to do what I liked to do, to discover life. They say we have no time, but if you want something, you have to give time to it. The more you paint, the more you discover yourself. It's always a challenge, but at the end, you feel so good. I see the artwork of other people here, and it's wonderful. Everybody has their own talent. If you're challenged, try and try. You'll find that you have the talent; you just have to develop it!"

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## **Bob Nelson**

*"California Beach"*

The Carlisle

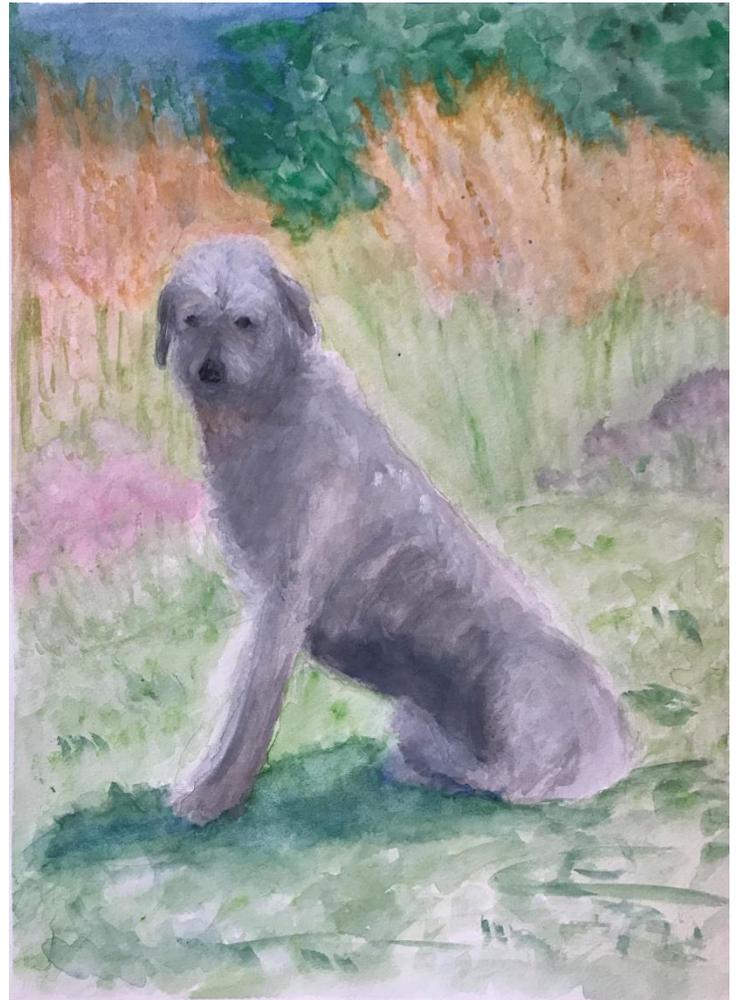
Bob was born in Milwaukee ninety-five years ago. The oldest of two sons, he has fond memories of his warm, loving mother. After graduating from Michigan State, he worked for the U.S. Forest Service from 1943 to 1947, near Mt. Lassen, living on a tent platform with his beloved late wife, with whom he had four children. "Jill shared all of my adventures and successes, and she learned to love the outdoors as much as I did."

Always drawn to water, they lived on Pewaukee Lake, Wisconsin after returning to work for his family's film processing business. Upon retirement, the couple moved to Marco Island, Florida, becoming avid sailors. "Jill was the first woman elected Commodore of a racing yacht club," he says proudly. Bob also started painting in earnest, mainly watercolor landscapes.

Bob began losing his eyesight in 2009. He moved to San Francisco four months ago and dove right into Carlisle life, joining the art class, the foreign policy discussion group, and the food and dinner committee. Now legally blind but undaunted, he's trying acrylics and oils. True to his indomitable spirit, Bob advises, "The first brushstroke is the most difficult. You never know if it will turn out well, but you never know until you try. Just do it!"

ART WITH ELDERS

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## **Jayne Ross Matsuda**

*"Riley"*

The Carlisle

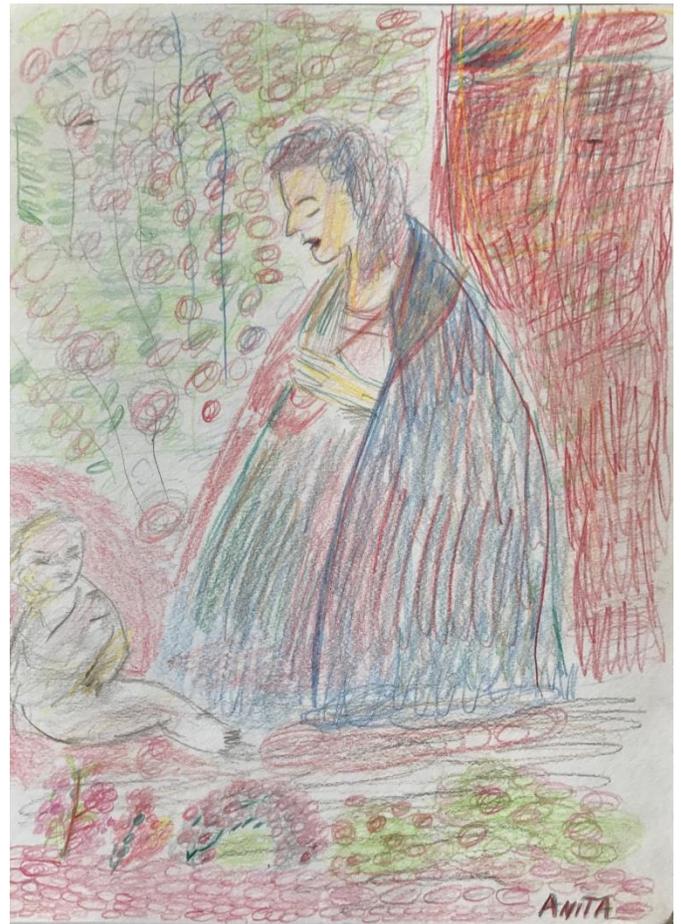
Sure that she was destined for a more-than-average life, Jayne Ross fled her childhood base in New Jersey for New York City as soon as she could. Her father was willing to pay only for post-high school courses that would provide "practical skills". No college for her. The first class she took? HOW TO BECOME A PBX OPERATOR! But working the switchboard for several Manhattan-based companies infused her with a life-long fascination with business and launched several careers that eventually landed her in upper management positions at CBS. It was also in New York that she married George Matsuda.

Daily immersion in the broadcast business led Jayne to take acting lessons which she then used to land roles in TV commercials. From there she went into actual television programming where she especially enjoyed being part of the cast of "Law and Order." After forty years in New York, a timely sale of real estate (George's area of expertise) prompted a move to Seattle and from there, just a few years ago, to San Francisco.

By her own admission, Jayne has had a long-time but erratic interest in the visual arts. It has only been at The Carlisle, in the Art With Elders class, that she has found a teacher who can instill the discipline required to learn the skills that result in a deeply satisfying art practice.

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



**Anita De Jesus**  
*"Mother and Child"*  
Central Gardens

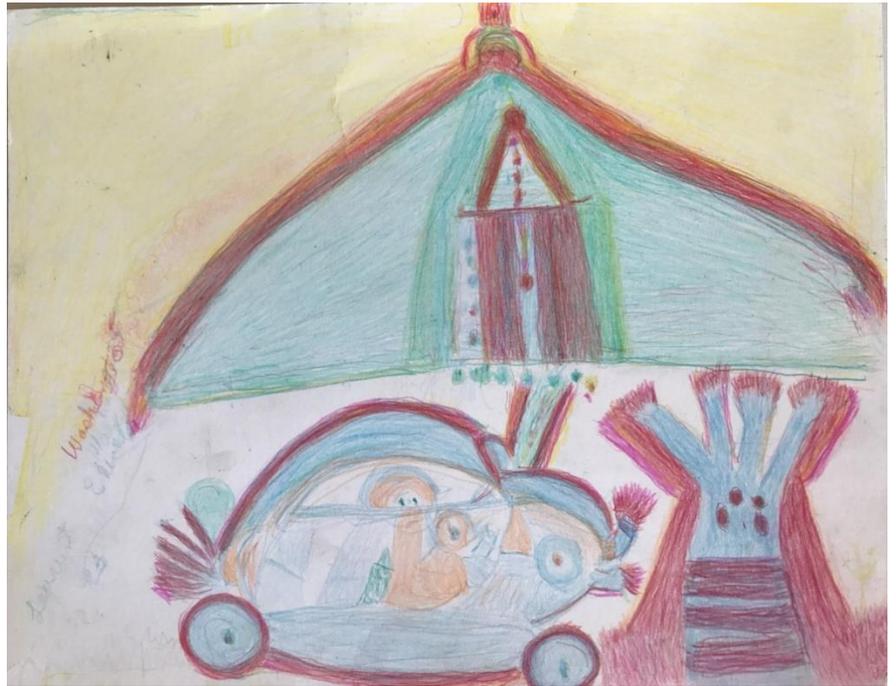
Anita was born in Indianapolis, Indiana, an only child. The kids she played with in the neighborhood became substitute siblings for her. When she was eleven, her family moved to the Philippines--her father's native country. It was there that she went to high school and first met her six cousins. Anita loved the warm weather there. "You only needed one blanket in the Philippines," she recalls, with a smile.

At the age of twenty, with the outbreak of World War II, Anita returned with her parents to San Francisco. She studied typing and shorthand, and eventually worked as a landlady in her parents' apartments in the Mission District. She was always thankful for nice tenants.

Anita has always loved animals. Her only previous exposure to art was in high school, where she mainly did copying work.

"I go to church on Sunday and read my Bible," she says, "and that's plenty." Now 91, she's learned an important lesson in her long life: "It's what's inside that counts."

**ART WITH ELDERS**  
*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



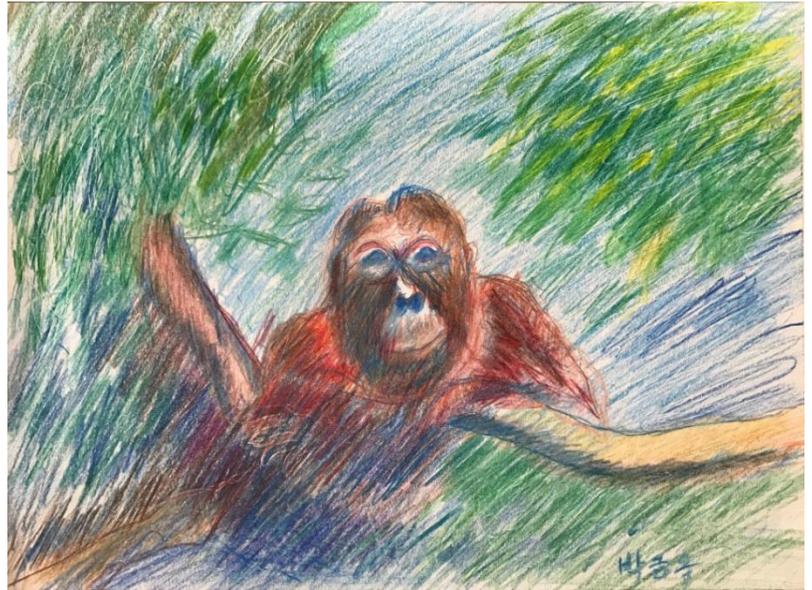
**Evelene Washington**  
*"To the Smoke House"*  
Central Gardens

Evelene Washington was born on a Louisiana farm in 1928. Her father was the son of a slave. "That's where the name 'Washington' comes from," she says. "My father's father was brought over on a boat with no clothes." As a child, she played in the fields and made her own toys. Recalling a pet pig who protected her from snakes, she laughs heartily. "You have to have strange pets when you live in the country!" She attended school until third grade, leaving to do housework at \$4.50 a day.

Evelene's 21 year old brother was seriously wounded in combat in World War II. As he was being evacuated from the war zone aboard the USS Drexler, the destroyer was attacked by kamikazes on May 28, 1945, and he perished. She actually made a picture of it in art class. "I've never seen the ship in my life, I just thought about it and that's how I painted it," she explains.

After a stroke, Evelene moved to San Francisco to be with her two children and four grandchildren. She is extremely proud of how much they all have achieved. Evelene's advice for a productive life: "Do whatever you can now. If you want to do it, do it, because if you never try, you'll never learn."

**ART WITH ELDERS**  
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**Keum Ok Kim**  
*"Jungle Fun Life"*  
Central Gardens

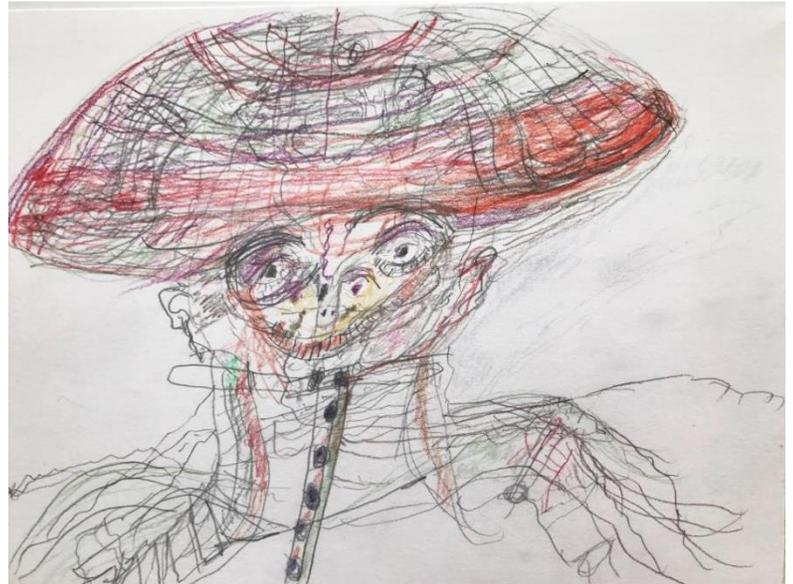
Born in 1922, in what is now North Korea, Keum Ok Kim spent most of her life in South Korea, separated from her parents by the war and the subsequent division of her country. The devoted mother was very involved in raising her one daughter and five sons. A former teacher and talented seamstress of women's and children's clothes, she owned a successful dress shop in Korea for many years, before coming to the U.S. over thirty years ago.

Keum's art has taken many forms. Skilled in the art of Korean decorative knot work, she has led knot-tying workshops at the Oakland Museum's Lunar New Year's Celebrations. She is a skilled calligrapher of Chinese characters and her decorative gourds have been displayed in Bay Area museums.

Keum, and her cooking, are well known in the San Francisco Korean elder community. Driving into her eighties, she delivered food to the sick and aged, helped organize a clean-up brigade in Golden Gate Park, and for fifteen years she enlisted her family to cook Thanksgiving turkeys for elderly Koreans.

This generous and strong-willed woman remains proud of her family.

**ART WITH ELDERS**  
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## **Velma Clay**

*"Brother in the Service"*

Excell Health Care

Velma was born in Pine Bluff, Arkansas in 1926 into a family of seven girls and four boys. She had a very special relationship with her twin sister. Her happiest childhood memories centered around the holidays, when everyone in the family gathered together.

After graduating from high school, Velma attended cooking school. It was there that she found her passion and her career. When she moved to California in 1947, she found a job cooking in the cafeteria of Capwell, Sullivan and Furth, the well-known San Francisco department store. There, her specialty became peach cobbler. She also enjoyed singing as a soprano in the choir of the Second Union Missionary Baptist Church.

Velma was married to her second husband, Matthew, for fifty years and is the proud mother of two children. Though her baking days are over, she's discovered weekly bingo games at Excell, where she plays three cards at a time! Looking back at her life she says, "I tried, even if I didn't always succeed."

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



**Frances Jew**  
*"What's New"*  
Excell Health Care

The only girl in a family of 13 children, Frances was born in San Francisco in 1930. In her youth, she was an excellent baseball player, a talent she attributes to many hours playing the game after school with her brothers. In high school, she spent her time watching over her younger brothers, painting and "chasing after boys." But wanting to live on her own while still in high school, she moved out of the family house to live with her girlfriends.

After graduation, Frances began working as a typist, but soon switched to taking care of elders. Her grandparents had lived with the family when she was growing up and she discovered a wonderful cure for the loneliness she witnessed in her clients—singing to them.

She married and has five sons and one daughter. She is now the proud grandmother of 35 grandchildren!

Frances used to love bowling and cooking and now enjoys doodling and painting with watercolors. She describes herself as a funny person who makes friends easily and loves to laugh. "You shouldn't be too serious," she says with a twinkle in her **eye**.

**ART WITH ELDERS**  
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## **Percy Osibin**

*"Chaos"*

Excell Health Care

Percy's life has not been an easy one. Born in Fresno in 1945, when he was four his family moved to Oakland, where he, his brother and sister were placed in foster care for eight years--a time in his life with only bitter memories. At fifteen he was expelled from high school, became a heroin addict, and ended up in prison for bank robbery.

It was there, in prison, that his life finally changed for the better. After earning a high school diploma and a BA in Psychology/Sociology, he began writing plays. "Black Montage," his piece about people striving to rid their community of drugs, was performed in prison.

Upon his release, Percy received a grant to bring "Black Montage," with the Black Light Project, to the community in the late 1970s. He later became a community organizer, working on the campaign to protect the Oakland community from lead-based paint.

He is proud of his son and daughter and of his art, which lines the walls of his room. It's in his art, he says, that he finds spirituality. At last, he says, "I've learned to find the balance, work for a peaceful outcome, and look for justice and truth."

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



## **Nancy Pittman**

*"Untitled"*

Excell Health Care

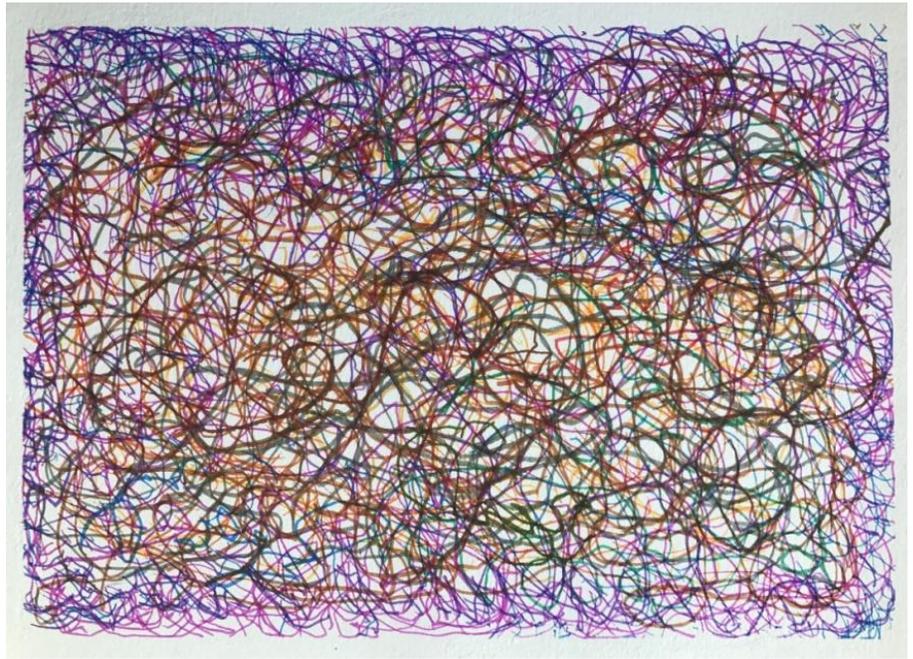
Nancy was born in 1938 in Altoona, Pennsylvania, the oldest in a family of three girls and one boy. Creative at an early age, she liked art, sang in plays and musicals, and learned to sew.

She attended nursing school and had one daughter, using her skills as a seamstress to sew all her daughter's clothes. But at the age of twenty-four, Nancy's life changed forever when she suffered an aneurism. After an extended hospital stay, her parents and siblings brought her home, helping her through a long period of rehabilitation. Never again able to frame words, she lived with her parents for many years.

Upon her parents' death, Nancy moved to California in her late forties to be close to her daughter Rhonda. She has four grandchildren, one of whom followed in her grandmother's footsteps, attending Nancy's former nursing school!

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



## **Emilie Schulken**

*"Abstract"*

Hayes Convalescent

Emilie was born in San Francisco in 1927 to a family of native San Franciscans. She

graduated from high school during World War II, and went to work at the Hibernia Bank. Throughout her life, she was obsessed by sports and was an excellent basketball player.

After she left her bank job, she managed three Victorian flats in the Mission district that were owned by her family. She handled most of the maintenance on her own and the tenants became her friends, especially appreciating her practice of rarely raising the rents. Emilie also loved babysitting for children in the neighborhood, developing very close relationships with them. They remember her as a wonderful storyteller.

Her art teacher, Rafael, describes her painting technique as automatism, which involves an inner rhythm and expressing oneself in a meditative state. Her works, he says, resemble Jackson Pollack's paintings.

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



## **Maria Grazia Addiego**

*"Abstract"*

Hayes Convalescent Home

Born in Verbicaro, Italy, in 1929, Maria grew up on a farm. Life high in the mountains of Calabria was not easy. She had to walk two hours to get water, and then carry it back home atop her head.

Not allowed to attend school, she never learned to read and write, but she didn't let this stop her. Maria traveled abroad to create a better life for her family, working in Liguria as a florist. She moved to San Francisco with her husband and daughter in 1968, where she had an emotional reunion with her eldest brother, whom she had never met.

Maria is a curious, determined, and resourceful elder. Not caring for the coffee she found here, she learned to roast her own. She made her own ricotta, loved to bake, and did her own canning.

And now, though she never learned to hold a pen and write her own name, Maria has happily learned to hold a brush and paint. "Keep learning," she advises. "The more you know, the better it is." She summarizes her life like this: "There was a 90-year-old woman who didn't want to die because she still wanted to learn."

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



## **Robert Gee**

*"Abstract"*

Hayes Convalescent Home

In 2018, Robert will celebrate his 95th birthday. The only son of a Toisan Chinese family, he excelled at mathematics and literature in school. But his dream of becoming a doctor was cut short by the wars in China.

After immigrating to the United States in 1957, Robert learned the hard way how to become a chef--by working every job in restaurant kitchens. For years, he supported his growing family, taking only half a day off weekly from work. Eventually he opened his own restaurant--the Lucky Grill--where he worked 12-hour days. His final job was as the meat chef for the Presidio Club. During all his working career, he never missed a single day of work.

Robert, an avid sports fan, has loved the SF Giants & 49ers for fifty years. He prided himself on reciting the baseball stats of all Giants players, and cheered them on to three World Series championships. He also enjoys walking daily.

Robert has been married to Mei Fong Yue Gee for over seventy years. They have five children, seven grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren. In his AWE class, he started out drawing birds and landscapes and has now graduated to abstracts.

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



**Patricia Bixby**

*"Oink, Oink"*

Heritage on the Marina

Patricia was born in Woburn, MA in 1928. Her father was a mechanical engineer, and her mother was a housewife. An athletic child, she was always active playing tennis, roller skating, softball, and swimming. Art surrounded her as she grew up, but she only drew, never painted. "I looked at it in awe," she recalls.

When she moved to San Francisco in 1969, she never expected to stay here." It was quite the opposite of Boston! A drastic difference," she laughs. Patricia was very satisfied with her career as a Jungian psychotherapist, working directly with patients. "It's a healing profession. And dreams are fascinating to me. I liked helping people become more self-aware through their dreams." She enjoyed attending the theater and the ballet, continued to play tennis (until she was 65), and also took two years of figure drawing classes at City College of San Francisco.

Patricia, who recently had an exhibition at Heritage on the Marina, began painting after her retirement. She enjoys figurative work, portraits especially, and her favorite medium is charcoal, although she also likes working in oil and acrylic. "Be as creative as possible," she says. "Make use of your talents."

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



**Gloria Learned**  
*"Through the Trees"*  
Heritage on the Marina

Elegantly ebullient, with a warm, self-deprecating sense of humor, Gloria is 91 years old. Born in Tucson, Arizona, she grew up in Santa Barbara with her brother, Mark, and still has fond memories of a playhouse her father made for her, which even had a sink with a brass faucet and running water.

For their honeymoon, Gloria and her husband bought one-way tickets to Europe. In Paris and Darmstadt, she taught English to U.S. soldiers who did not speak English, while he was a journalist for the Stars and Stripes. They had four daughters.

Gloria loves the outdoors and enjoyed hiking by the lakes in Marin. She is still very active, attending Hardly Strictly Bluegrass, movies, and other outings with her daughters, granddaughter, and great-grandson. Always creatively inclined, she studied calligraphy, and also loved knitting and embroidery, but only began taking art classes five years ago. Recently, Gloria was enthralled by perspective drawing exercises taught in class, and she is excited to master this new challenge.

"The greatest thing in the world you can have is a sense of humor," Gloria says. "Sad things happen to everyone, but it will get you through anything, if you can manage to laugh."

**ART WITH ELDERS**  
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## **Mary Roper**

"Fox"

Heritage on the Marina

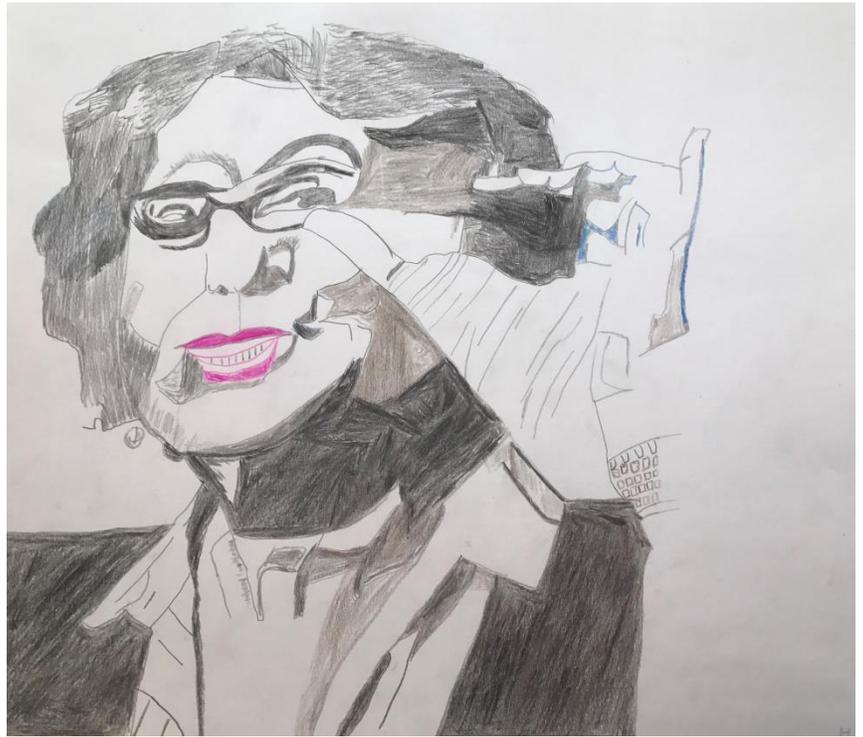
Mary Charlotte was born in Devon, England. When World War II began, she joined the British Auxiliary Territorial Services, the women's branch of the British Army. Though she enjoyed being in the Service, her happiest moment was when the war was over and her brother returned safely from Egypt.

Following the war, Mary worked for a while in England and after a few years, moved to Vancouver, Canada. She has had a variety of occupations. She has done secretarial work, bookkeeping, and taught pre-kindergarten and elementary school children. After finishing work in Canada, she and friends came to San Francisco for a visit. She hasn't left since, except to visit family in England.

In earlier years she was an avid tennis player. Now, in retirement, her hobbies include art (acrylic painting), reading, and knitting. She is amazed at her long life, as no one else in her family has been long-lived. Around the Heritage, Mary is known as an easy-going and pleasant person, with a sharp sense of humor.

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



**H.K. Cheung**  
*"Ms. Librarian"*  
Kindred Golden Gate

Mr. Cheung was born in Hong Kong in 1947 and has seven brothers and sisters.

A very quiet and easy-going person, he's happy to do all sorts of activities at Kindred and especially likes to read, watch television with his roommate, and play Chinese checkers in the day room. He also enjoys eating. "Anything goes" is his philosophy of life.

In his art, Mr. Cheung is now moving from drawing animals into portraits. He is very focused and concentrated on his art in class and gets to work immediately.

**ART WITH ELDERS**  
*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



**Willie Shipman**  
*"Pop Up Abstract"*  
Kindred Golden Gate

ART WITH ELDERS  
*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



## **Nina Ng**

*"Untitled Abstract"*

Kindred Golden Gate

Ninety-five-year-old Nina speaks only a little English, but she's still learning. "I like to learn," she says. "Learning makes me happy."

This gentle elder artist, born in Hong Kong, worked as a teacher and has three daughters, one son, and two grandchildren. Her happiest moments came when studying in college, and she still revels in the times she's been able to return to Hong Kong.

Nina also reportedly likes to eat. Once she gets up in the morning, she enjoys reading the Chinese newspaper at Kindred, and her caregivers report that she's never given a mean look to anyone.

Nina's philosophy is "just try," and that's what she's been doing in her art class. Though Nina doesn't think her art is good, her teacher Rafael disagrees. "She's a rookie," he explains, "who started with scribbles and has developed her own language of line and movement."

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



## **Yi Te Chien**

*"Abstract"*

Laguna Honda Hospital and Rehabilitation Center

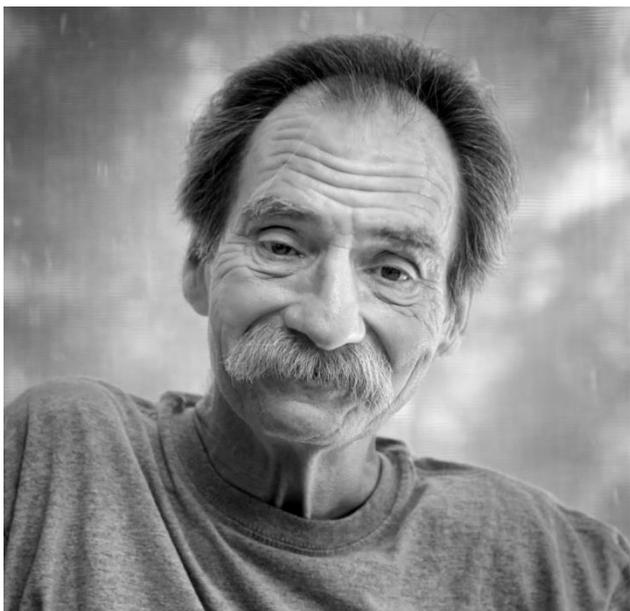
Yi Te Chien was born and raised in the Guangdong Province of China. He came to the United States fourteen years ago to visit family in San Francisco and decided to stay, working in construction until he became ill.

It's not until arriving at Laguna Honda two years ago that Yi Te Chien has had the time for artistic pursuits. Since he began attending the Art With Elders classes he has discovered his own sense of aesthetics, even pursuing drawing on his own. The staff provides him with art materials for his personal use outside of class and he applies his artistic skills to decorating his room, where he keeps his collection of stuffed animals. His favorite subjects for his art are animals and fish, some of which have inspired his mosaics, another craft he enjoys.

Yi Te Chien enjoys listening to Chinese music and watching films in his native language. He is also still able to exercise on his own.

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



## **Mike Busfinton**

*"Hummingbird Flower"*

Laguna Honda Hospital and Rehabilitation Center

Mike was born the youngest of seven children in South San Francisco. His early life was not an easy one. His father labored in the ship yard and Mike would race home from playing with the neighborhood kids, following orders to be there before dad would return from work. Too often Mike would miss the deadline and reap the often heavy punishments.

Family life took a devastating blow when his beloved 16 year old brother drowned while swimming in Lake Merced. Mike says things were never quite the same after and he escaped to Haight Street to get away. He feels the street was different then, more loving and like a family.

Despite finding new friends and a sense of independence, it wasn't long before he reunited with his mom and they took off to Nenana, Alaska where his aunt ran a bar. Not too long after his adventure up North, Mike returned and has lived in San Francisco ever since. His prior experience with art was in tattoo work, but since moving to Laguna Honda, he is a regular at the Art With Elders class, learning to express himself through acrylic paintings.

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



## **Dorothy Clancy**

*"Visiting"*

Laguna Honda Hospital

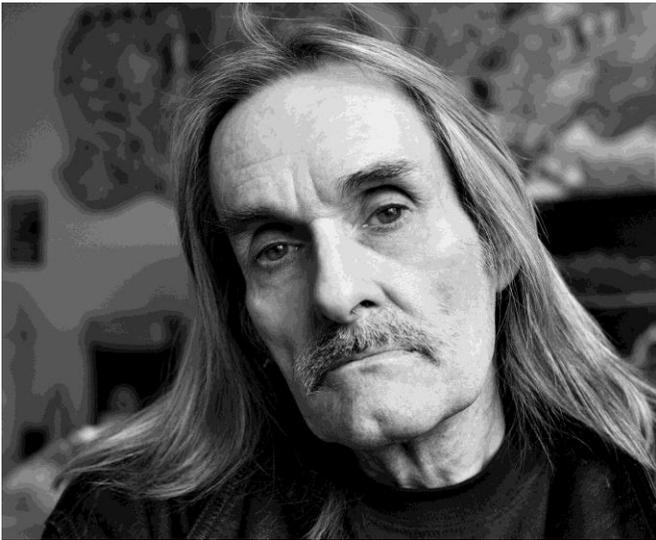
"Every time I moved away, I always came back home," Dorothy says of San Francisco, where she was born on Father's Day in 1954. Despite the tragic death of her father when she was ten, she has a personality as bright as the colorful Mardi Gras beads she wears regularly around her neck. She married at eighteen, lived on Treasure Island with her husband, and has two daughters and one son.

Dorothy has had many jobs. She worked with her brother for years, sharing newspaper routes with him as well as waitressing in the same Mission District restaurant where he cooked. She has kept score in the local bowling alley, where she herself bowled 300, and cared for senior citizens, including her own mother. Now at Laguna Honda, she helps out at the General Store.

She enjoys theater arts and has fond memories of singing and playing the guitar with her girlfriend. Dorothy has been doing art since childhood and explains, "I have to do art. It takes away the pain." Of herself, she says, "I'm still a kid at heart. We've got to maintain our joy; otherwise we're not going to make it."

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



## **Jesse Brown**

*"Swirls"*

Laguna Honda Hospital

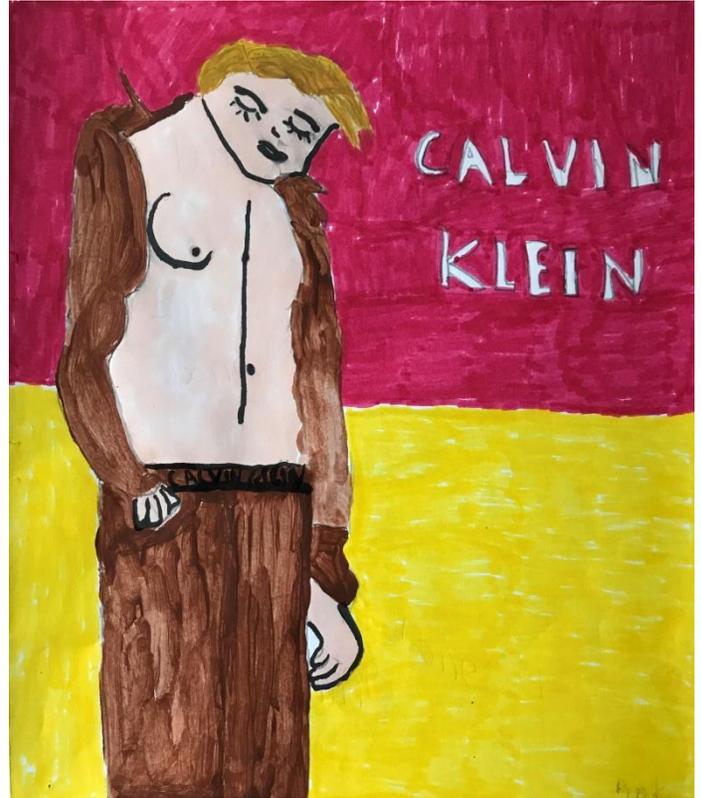
A man of many skills and experiences, Jesse loves to tell stories—of his time working as a cook for the Children of God cult, surviving a near drowning in Cozumel and shootings in Manhattan, and laughing with his parents at live performances of comedians Phyllis Diller and Mort Sahl. He's been in the Bay Area ever since his friends in New York convinced him he was "cut-out for San Francisco."

Jesse has been involved in art in some form since his childhood, when he used to draw with colored pencils on the wall. It was his childhood experience antiquing with his grandmother that sparked his interest in interior decorating. And he still laughs when describing a room he once outfitted in the worst possible taste-- complete with lava lights, Mexican velvet paintings, and fuzzy leopard print. It was "tacky, tacky, tacky," Jesse admits with pride.

To the comment--"You've had quite a life," Jesse will respond, "I still do have quite a life." Through all his adventures, this gentle and spiritual person, who describes himself as "independent, optimistic, and semi-fearless," has learned some important lessons: "If you put good stuff out," he says, "good stuff comes back."

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



## **Ida Marksman**

*"Bieber"*

Laguna Honda Hospital

Ida's easygoing charm, sunny smile and vibrant spirit make clear why her nickname is "Beautiful," as she blushingly confides. Born in San Francisco in 1940, a stroke paralyzed her right side when she was two years old. However, Ida declares, "I don't feel like I missed out on anything. I did everything a normal person would do."

Her parents immigrated from Northern Italy, and she grew up in North Beach "when it was special." She cherishes memories of summer evenings when children would play kickball on Telegraph Hill as parents chatted on their front steps and of leisurely Sunday strolls with her family to Fisherman's Wharf and Union Square.

One of life's high points occurred when Ida was asked to sing for a benefit at the Fairmont Hotel. A fan of Doris Day and Al Martino, she still sings in the shows at Laguna Honda.

Ida always liked art and loves to color. Even her wheelchair is decorated with a pink butterfly and violet flowers. "I can stay here in the studio all day and draw," she laughs. "I always wanted to and never got the chance. Now I have that chance." Her advice: "Don't quit. I never quit when I felt I wanted something."

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



## **John Lindgren**

*"Desert Plateau"*

Laguna Honda Hospital

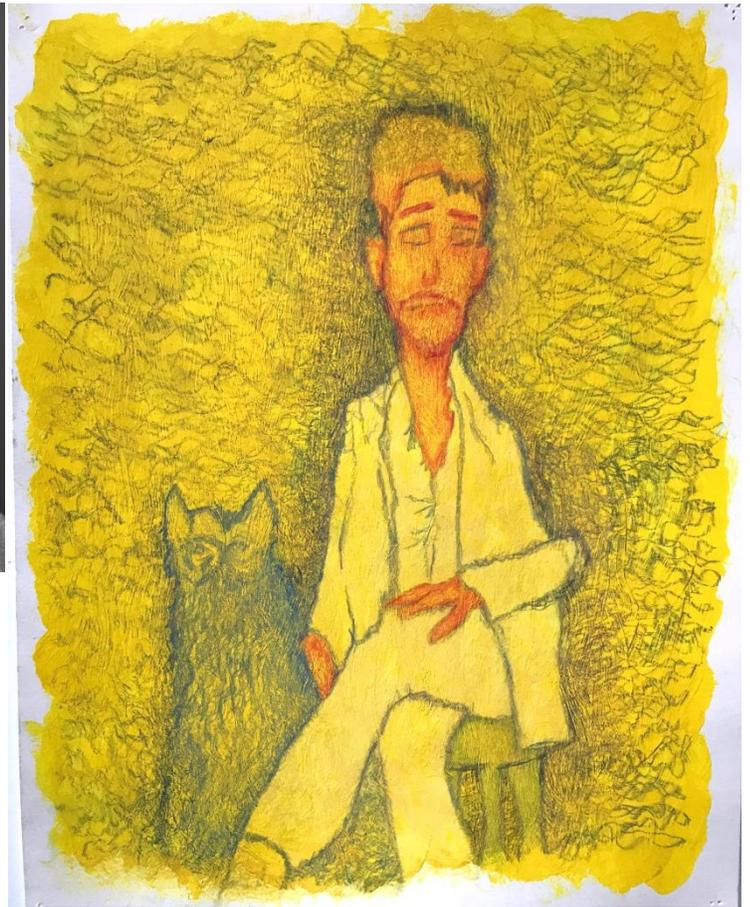
John's wardrobe exemplifies just how much color is important to him. The green of his shirt and baseball cap complement his green eyes perfectly and highlight his gaze, which is warm, alert, and intelligent. After a stroke four years ago that impaired his ability to speak, art is now his primary means of expression. He enjoys creating his art in any medium available.

Born in Saudi Arabia forty-nine years ago, where his father worked for the Saudi oil company Aramco and his mother was a housewife, John moved to Washington state when he was fifteen. The second oldest sibling, with three sisters, he recalls a happy childhood. John lived in Seattle for thirty years, where he worked as a file clerk and contract paralegal. As an adult, he especially enjoyed food, with barbecue as a particular delight, and travel, having visited Thailand, Scandinavia, and Germany among other places.

John's debilitating stroke also made him unable to use his right arm. He has taught himself to use his non-dominant left hand to paint, thus demonstrating two of the qualities he values most in himself and that he believes have been of most help in his life: patience and curiosity.

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



**Jeff McFarland**  
*"Man's Best Friend"*  
Laguna Honda Hospital

It's difficult to catch up with this loving, big-hearted artist with an infectious childlike spirit. He might be painting in art class or down at the end of the hall playing a game with volunteers. And he'll definitely be greeting everyone with a smile and an "ah-oh-ah," and receiving a smile and a "hello" in return.

Jeff's vivid imagination comes out in his art and his language inventions. Over the years, he has developed his own distinct style, often reflecting a surreal and stylized interpretation.

Wherever he is, Jeff makes people happy, comfortable and inspired, just by being in their presence.

**ART WITH ELDERS**  
*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



**Joyce Jones**  
*"For You"*  
Laguna Honda Hospital

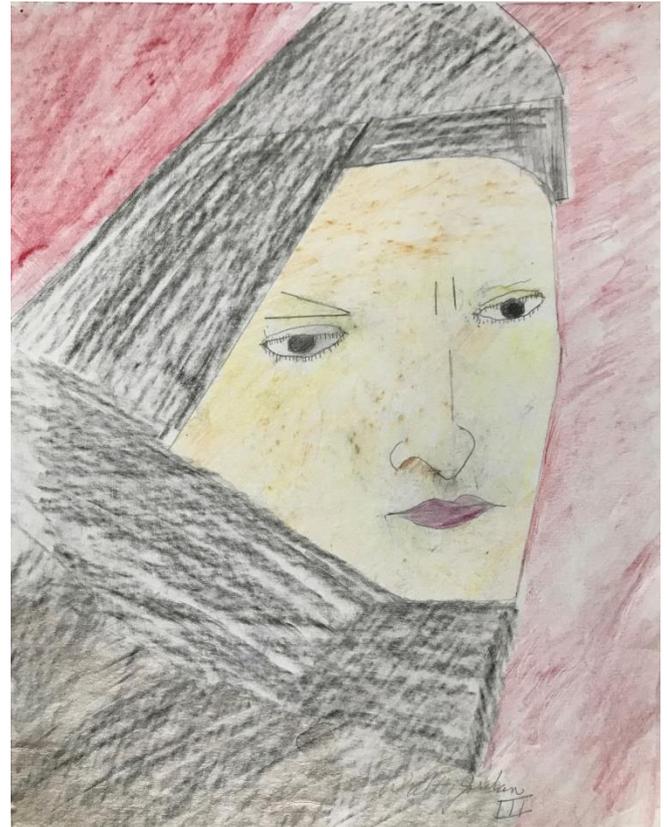
Born in New York City in 1947, Joyce Jones worked at Bellevue Hospital in various roles--as a nurse's assistant, receptionist and medical transcriber, work she continued when she moved to San Francisco in her mid-twenties to join relatives here. She married and divorced and has ten children.

Joyce loves music of all kinds. She used to play violin and the saxophone--an instrument her father still plays, along with drums, piano and organ, as a professional musician in Los Angeles.

After a hard life, she likes to be around people who are happy, and the ones that are sad, she tries to make happy. Doing art also helps. "It makes me feel good. I try to do better and better." Joyce, who did art in high school and went to art school at SF State, likes using watercolors, pencil, crayons and markers. She especially likes to draw women, "ones that have been victims."

And she's happy right now that her art has been chosen for this exhibit. Joyce says, with a gentle smile, "I hope people understand my art. I'll tell them, 'Reach out and look deeply in the picture and maybe the picture will reach out to you.'"

**ART WITH ELDERS**  
*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



**Walter Jourdan III**  
*"Overcoming the Odds"*  
Laguna Honda Hospital

"This old body ain't down yet," Walter declares. Diagnosed with hydrocephalus in his youth, after fifteen surgeries and many health challenges he asserts that he is "on a journey to keep going no matter what. I'm not giving up now."

Born in Many, Louisiana, Walter came to the Bay Area as a young child, attended both City College and San Francisco State University and received a business degree. He credits his mother, an important inspiration and voice in his life, with instilling in him a strong sense of determination.

Walter was employed by the Hydrocephalus Foundation for ten years, worked as a teacher's aide in sign language and ran a catering service at San Francisco City College. He's particularly pleased with his Cajun catfish jambalaya and German chocolate cake. Walter plays piano, speaks conversational Tagalog, Cantonese and Mandarin, and loves to sing.

He is "flattered and flabbergasted" by the attention he receives for his artwork. Walter enjoys the AWE classes and believes they have a positive impact on his goal of getting well.

**ART WITH ELDERS**  
*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



## **Insung Lim**

*"Church"*

Laguna Honda Hospital

The first thing you notice about Insung is his smile, which lights up a room. Born disabled at birth in Seoul, South Korea in 1953, Insung was never able to attend school. His mother took care of him and in 1990 his younger sister brought him to San Francisco. In 1996 he underwent surgery on his right arm and hand, which gave him greater flexibility. He proudly became an American citizen in 2001.

He loves to watch all sports-- basketball, baseball, tennis and volleyball—as well as adventure and cowboy movies. Insung, who also plays bingo and Mexican dominoes, hones his poker skills by watching tournaments on television.

Art is his passion, and he's been taking art classes at Laguna Honda since 2014, painting with his left hand. This painting depicts the Korean Church that his family attends in Sacramento.

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



**Geraldine McCowan**  
*"Lady with Red Flower"*  
Laguna Honda Hospital

"Mama G," as Geraldine is known around Laguna Honda Hospital, greets everyone with a wide smile and they all smile back. Born in Texas in 1942, she admits being spoiled by her brother and sister as the baby. Her father owned a large farm and she grew up feeding the fifty goats and caring for the vegetable garden and fruit trees. The family also raised chickens and hogs, sharing the "mess of meat" with their neighbors after butchering the hogs.

Mama G graduated from high school in 1959 and stayed on the farm plowing, hoeing, cutting trees and working on cars. In 1962, she came to California to visit her mother and ended up staying, supporting herself by babysitting and later cleaning the Officer's Quarters in The Presidio.

In later years, she studied at City College and became a library technician. During her eight years working at the San Francisco Main Library, Mama G loved meeting and helping out the patrons. She has a daughter and son, ten grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. She paints, sculpts and creates ceramics and has begun painting a series of Mexican masks.

**ART WITH ELDERS**  
*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



**Louise Gibler**  
*"Still Life After Matisse"*  
Lytton Gardens

Louise has lived a life "centered in art." Born in New Jersey in 1937, she and her two sisters and a brother had a happy childhood. She attended Catherine Gibbs School, a secretarial college and finishing school, and became a legal secretary.

She and her husband Dick met when they were both working for a Superior Court judge. Dick was a landscape painter and she began painting with him, often taking their easels and oils outside to paint together.

While living in Morristown, New Jersey, they began attending classes at the well known Arts Students League in New York at the time when Jackson Pollock and Georgia O'Keeffe were there. The couple worked and painted together until Dick's death at the age of 75. She moved to Canada near Toronto where her son was living and joined an art community. "Art," she says, "saved my life."

Louise has lived for fifteen years in Palo Alto, where her son teaches at Stanford and she's able to enjoy her three grandchildren. Her philosophy of life is to "accept everyone, but take care of yourself by putting yourself first."

**ART WITH ELDERS**  
*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



**Zhi Ming Wu**  
*"Water Lillies"*  
Oak Center Towers

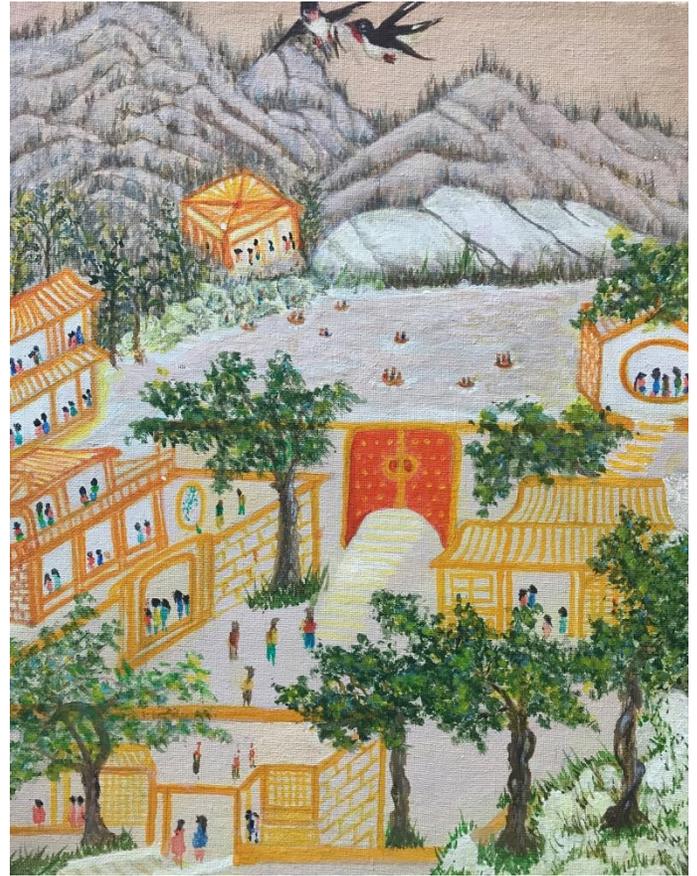
Zhi Ming Wu was born in 1937 in the Wu region of Central China, on the south bank of the Yangtze River. Because his family was poor, he raised birds as a child to earn money to go to school. Today, he smiles widely, saying he never imagined that one day he would live in the U.S. or have the experience of being picked up in a limousine at the airport when he visits his two daughters in Shanghai.

Prior to his AWE class, he had no formal experience in art, though he's always liked to paint flowers. As a teenager he taught himself how to draw faces, copying photos to make portraits.

Mr. Wu retired from his work in hydraulic engineering and came to the U.S. fourteen years ago to attend his son's graduation from college and help raise his grandchild. He now has six grandchildren.

He describes himself as a quiet man struggling to improve his English. His advice: "Pay attention to your health, be sure and eat breakfast, and take a bath before going to bed." And finally, don't interfere with the lives of your children or grandchildren.

**ART WITH ELDERS**  
*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



**Yun Ke Liang**  
*"New Year Festival"*  
Oak Center Towers

Art is something to hold on to for Yun Ke Liang. After years of serious health issues and the death of her husband in 2006, she admits she doesn't know what she'd do without her art class, which helps relax and calm her. She now picks up her pen and brush for two hours on her own almost every Saturday.

Born in China in 1939, in her youth Yun loved singing, music, dance, reading and anything related to the arts. A heart problem limited her life to the responsibilities of being a housewife and caring for her son and daughter.

She came to the U.S. in 1997, where she was able to embark on a new life following heart surgery in 2005. She is now able to practice tai chi once a week.

Yun is happy with her children and grandchildren, one of whom was crowned KTSF's Miss Chinatown. When they visit they often even bring her art supplies. As she says, "Art makes me appreciate my life."

**ART WITH ELDERS**  
*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



**Yong Kang Pan**  
*"Village in the Spring Time"*  
Oak Center Towers

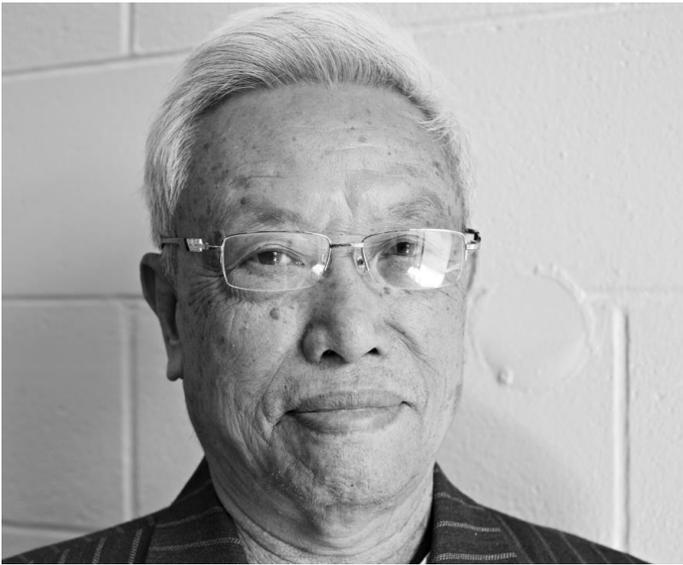
A 79-year-old native of central China, Mr. Pan still has happy childhood memories of enjoying the sights of nature as he walked to school. His only remembrance of having done art before attending Art with Elders classes was in the third grade.

Mr. Pan, an electrical engineer, worked for many years as a safety manager in a factory. He first came to the U.S. in 1999 to visit one of his two sons, who was working in San Jose. He prefers the good weather in California to that of Canada, where his other son lives.

His friends at Oak Hill Towers describe him as a perfectionist and wonderful caregiver. This calm and modest man says he'd rather receive advice than give it.

Until now, Mr. Pan never knew he could draw and recognizes that "to draw a picture you need patience" and the ability to work step by step. Watercolor is his favorite medium. He also enjoys surfing the internet and working on the computer. His greatest source of happiness has been his two sons.

**ART WITH ELDERS**  
*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



**Ying Biao Guo**  
"Alcatraz"  
Oak Center Towers

Ying Biao was born in Canton province in China in 1940. He worked for many years as a farmer and also in the family business, which made custom traditional Chinese dresses for women. He came to the U.S. in 2006.

Two of his new passions these days are ballroom dancing and his English class. He describes his dancing as "so-so," and enjoys writing in a new alphabet. He also continues practicing his garment-making skills.

A relaxed and happy person, with a great sense of humor, Ying Biao feels grateful for his stable family and to be living without worries. "I can relax and enjoy life," he says. The secret to a long life, he feels, is the good DNA he inherited from his family, his helpful siblings, and keeping healthy through exercise.

Ying Biao has four children and fourteen grandchildren, one of whom even joins him occasionally in art class.

**ART WITH ELDERS**  
*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



**Gui Juan Song**  
*"Washington D.C."*  
Oak Center Towers

Though she comes from a family of farmers, this 74-year-old native of Shanghai now loves to paint landscapes with houses and buildings, including landmarks like this one in Washington D.C., inspired by a photo from a travel magazine. When she was young, she loved art, music and dance, but didn't have the opportunity to enjoy them until coming with her husband to the U.S. in 2003. But, she says, "I love to learn," and that's what she is doing in her AWE classes.

Gui Juan has one daughter, two sons, and two grandchildren, whom she likes to babysit. A quiet and easy-going person, she enjoys travelling with her sons, one of whom lives in Canada.

She believes in the importance of team work, showing respect, not saying anything negative, and having a positive outlook---advice she'd like to pass on to her grandchildren.

**ART WITH ELDERS**  
*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



**Kekun Ouyang**  
*"Amazing Grace"*  
Oak Center Towers

Though she comes from a family of farmers, this 74-year-old native of Shanghai now loves to paint landscapes with houses and buildings, including landmarks like this one in Washington D.C., inspired by a photo from a travel magazine. When she was young, she loved art, music and dance, but didn't have the opportunity to enjoy them until coming with her husband to the U.S. in 2003. But, she says, "I love to learn," and that's what she is doing in her AWE classes.

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**ART WITH ELDERS**  
*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



## **Wan Shan Ning**

*"Sailboat"*

Oak Center Towers

Born in Beijing in 1935, Wan Shan has spent most of her life raising her family, and now that her three grandchildren are grown, she's making a life of her own at Oak Center Towers. Wan Shan and her husband, raised two daughters and a son in Canton, and she came to the U.S. in 2009 to assist her daughter during her pregnancy. She's happy that all of her family now lives in the Bay Area.

She believes "you don't need to be successful, but it's important to have a good heart." As Wan Shan ages, she wants to be of service. She picks up trash to keep the environment clean and helps take care of people in need. She also enjoys hanging out with her friends over coffee and listening to Chinese folk music.

Wan Shan's only memory of doing art in her past is having used crayons as a kid. But she has always enjoyed going to art exhibits. Now limited in her ability to travel, she says that her AWE class "keeps my brain working." Her teacher, Insio, describes her work--mainly landscapes and flower scenes--as "calm and delicate," done with small brush strokes, which fit her personality.

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



## **Canzanetta Lofton**

*"Portrait"*

Oakhill Springs Care Center

Canzanetta, known as Kansas, likes to recount how she received her unusual name. When she was born, her mother, undecided on what to name her, consulted another new mother across the room. The woman, a stranger, suggested the exotic name. But Canzanetta's great grandmother, who lived to be 105, insisted on nicknaming her "Kansas," since it was easier to pronounce.

Born in Sacramento, the first of three children, Canzanetta later moved with her family to Oakland. She has worked in an educational guidance center and various libraries stocking books, as well as at the Salvation Army and in convalescent homes.

Canzanetta has suffered from seizures and headaches most of her life, and was often bullied in school for not "talking right." At the age of 18, with the help of Rev. Thomas Compton, she was fortunate to find a place where she could be herself—at the Berkeley Mt. Zion Baptist Church.

She enjoys the slow music of radio station 102.9 and gospel music. And her AWE classes offer her an unexpected benefit: she never gets a headache when she's working on her art.

"I didn't have any past experience with art," Canzanetta says. "I paint from what I feel. It just comes naturally."

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



**Julie Kwok**

*"Rhythm"*

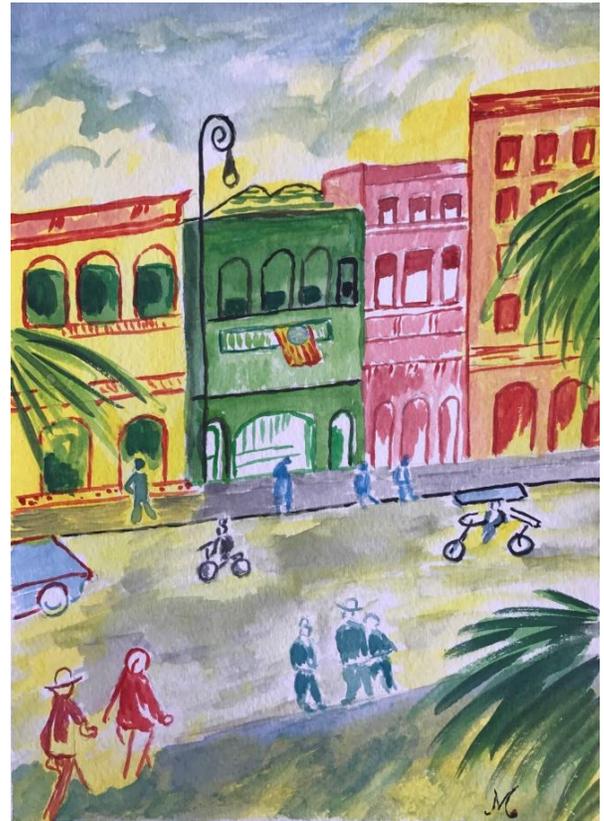
Oakhill Springs Care Center

Julie was born in 1947 in Hong Kong. She married when she was 21, had three daughters, and devoted herself to her busy family life while her husband worked six days a week. Her daughters still have many happy weekend memories, taking the bus to their grandmother's house, where they would lay mahjong, share meals, and have a good time. They always found time to go to the park and walk around the mall. The whole family came to San Francisco in the 1990s, and she now has one grandchild.

Known as a loving and caring mother, Julie likes talking to people. A strong person, she has a very deep faith. As her daughter states, "She has Jesus in her heart." Julie practiced Tai Chi, and now, for the first time, she has the time to do art and drawing, which she loves.

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



**Sister Madeleine Chi**  
*"Street Scene"*  
Oakwood Atherton

Born in Shanghai, China in 1930, Sr. Madeleine was raised in a family with mixed Catholic and Buddhist spiritual traditions that are reflected in her artwork. She grew up in the midst of war, with conflicts between China and Japan, World War II and civil war between Nationalists and Communists.

She first came to the U.S. in 1952, where she received all her higher education, including a Ph.D. in modern French history from Fordham and M.A. from Columbia. Sister Madeleine has done research in London and Tokyo, and taught at New York's Manhattanville College and Taiwan's Fugen University.

"Even though my study is in history," she says, "I have an artistic temperament." She developed her love of watercolors in her Chinese high school. She has a great passion for visiting art museums and taking photographs. In her art she likes using bright colors and contrast.

Sr. Madeleine believes in the importance of silence and practices "centering prayer" for an hour each morning, feeling "in union with the whole universe." She prays intensely these days for suffering children in war-torn countries.

She believes silence is helpful for painting also: "The Zen masters meditated for a long time, then picked up a brush and in one minute they finished their masterpiece."

**ART WITH ELDERS**  
*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



**Mary (Be) Mardel, RSCJ**  
*"Sunflower After O'Keefe"*  
Oakwood Atherton

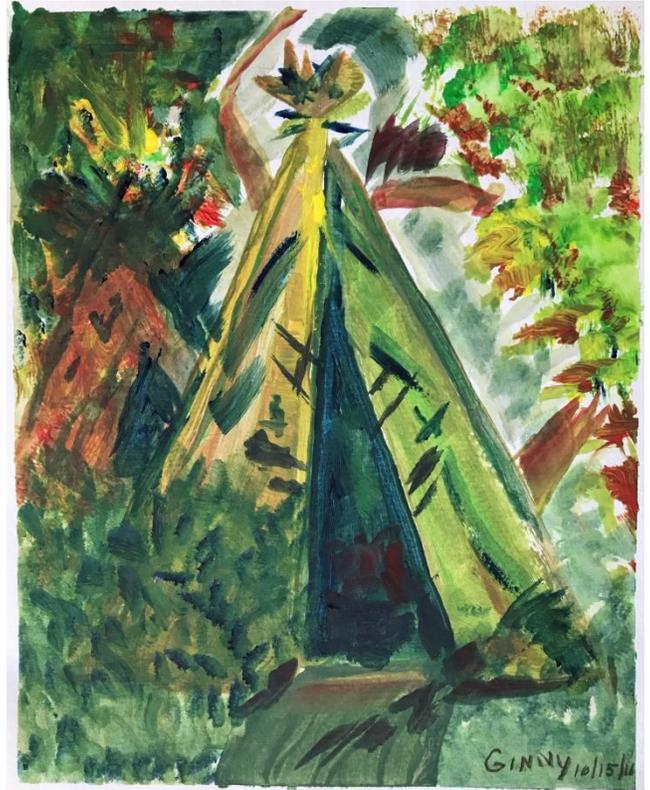
"I love to create things," says Sister Mary (Be) Mardel, who completed an amazing 99 years of life this year. Born in Seattle and raised in the Bay Area, she still remembers, as a sickly child often confined to bed, the pure joy of opening a box of crayons. She's loved color ever since.

After her last two years of high school at the Convent of the Sacred Heart in Menlo Park and college in San Francisco, Sister Be went on to follow her vocation. Earning an English M.A. from Stanford, she has served as a teacher, principal, superior, and Director of Schools at the Convent of the Sacred Heart in San Francisco for 40 years. Sister Be was religious provincial for six years, ministered to AIDS patients in San Francisco, and founded a school for children with developmental disabilities in El Cajon. She also spent a sabbatical year in England and the Holy Land.

It's only in retirement that Sister Be has taken time to do art. She has studied oil painting at SF State and created and furnished seven doll houses, auctioned off for fund-raising. Her AWE classes continue to give her "a sense of creation."

She considers her vocation and her long life to be a "gift of God" and advises: "The best way to thank anyone and God for the gift of life is to enjoy it."

**ART WITH ELDERS**  
*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



**Virginia (Ginny) Dennehy, RSCJ**  
*"Potawatomi Teepee"*  
Oakwood Atherton

In her youth in Chicago, Ginny used to beg her mother to take her to the local golf course, where she'd play alone and watch the sunset. It became a lifelong passion, which included playing competitive golf. It was getting out of sand traps that she enjoyed the most--a lesson in learning to take the good with the bad. Golf, she says, "made me who I am."

After entering the Society of the Sacred Heart at the age of 21, Ginny worked in the Chicago area for many years, working as a teacher, dean and principal at Sacred Heart Academy, doing life career planning at Barat College and co-teaching with Matthew Fox at his Creation Centered Spirituality program at Mundelein University.

She came to the Bay Area on sabbatical in 1980, and received a Ph.D. at the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology, where she taught and specialized in trauma. She also worked as a psychotherapist and spiritual guide and counselor until retiring at the age of 80.

Now, at 83 and unable to play golf, she has turned to art, joining the AWE class just a year ago. After attending a celebration of the Potawatomi in St. Louis, this image arose from her "gut." With a special attachment to Native American culture and music, she considers this Potawatomi teepee a symbol of rootedness.

**ART WITH ELDERS**  
*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



**Socorro Romero**

*"Untitled"*

On Lok Lifeways 30<sup>th</sup> St.

Socorro admits that she's had a tragic life. The 84-year-old native of Nicaragua was orphaned at the age of eight. "All I did was work," she says, taking care of her fourteen children on the hacienda where she lived, and later cleaning houses. She left Nicaragua following the earthquake.

She's thankful to be in the U.S. and especially for the sense of community she feels at On Lok. With most of her children in Los Angeles, it has become like another family to her. She appreciates the medical care and the compassion of the people there.

Realizing the importance of keeping her mind busy, Socorro loves to do handiwork like making jewelry and embroidery. She likes to do many kinds of art at the same time and paints at home. "Thanks to God," she says, "now I can rest."

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



## **Maximina Lozano**

"Mi Casa el Santo de Juanacatlan (My House in the Saint of Juanacatlan)"  
On Lok Lifeways 30<sup>th</sup> St.

One of seven children, born in Guadalajara, Mexico, Maximina used to help her parents gather wood, run to the store, and milk the cows on the rancho where she was raised. She never had the opportunity to attend school and her family had no money for pencils. She used to think her destiny was to be a runner, but now having broken a leg, she jokes, "I feel like 15 from the waist up, but from the waist down, I feel old."

Maximina married, raised nine children and now has 40 grandchildren and 29 great grandchildren! She's grateful for all of them--and for the opportunity to live in the U.S. At 81, she still remembers the exact date of her arrival here—Nov. 24, 1999.

"I'm always doing something," declares this positive elder with a big smile. She enjoys singing Central American music, sewing and doing embroidery, and has taken classes in cooking and nutrition. And, of course, there is always her art, which she's doing for the first time both in class and on her own at home. She enjoys painting images from her childhood, like this memory of Juanacatlán. Her AWE class, she says, was the first time she had picked up a pencil.

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



## **Jennifer Kuo**

"Season of the Flowers"  
On Lok Lifeways 30<sup>th</sup> St.

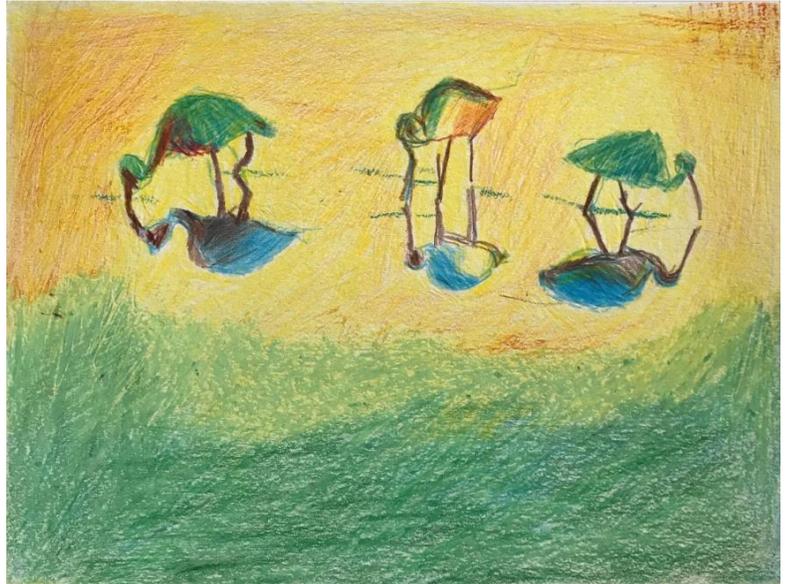
Jennifer was born in 1935 in Vietnam and grew up with four brothers and three sisters. Shortly after she began school at the age of seven, her family home was destroyed by fire and her father, injured in the fire, became a paraplegic. The family then moved into a relative's house. It was there that she learned to speak both Vietnamese and Cantonese. In her youth, Jennifer worked in her father's store, selling food and clothing.

She married at 24 and had four boys and a girl. At the age of 47, she was able to come to San Francisco, financed with the gold her family had saved. She learned English, and got a job doing filing and copying for a large company. This was the happiest time in Jennifer's life; at last she didn't have to worry about how her family would survive. Later, as the Vietnam War devastated the country, she was joined here by her sisters and brothers.

Jennifer says that she had to "make her own life" and recognizes that luck played a role as well. Now she enjoys spending time with her four grandchildren.

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



## **Nava De Cardenas**

*"Las Garzas"*

On Lok Lifeways East San Jose

Nava de Cardenas has endured a lot in her 82 years of life. Born in Zacatecas, Mexico, she spent her life washing clothes, making meals and cleaning house for her husband and their ten children--nine boys and one girl. But she says, "I never tired of working." In those days, she explains, there were no schools for women. She spent only three months in school, and still managed to learn to read and write.

Nava says she's always been happiest when she's with her children. Her greatest gift has been to see her children here again in the U.S. Seven of them were here when she arrived forty years ago. She now lives with her son.

Though Nava now struggles with a vision problem, she enjoys putting color in her pictures and drawing animals, especially dogs and cats, and flowers.

"I thank God daily," she says, "that my kids come and fill my house with children. She has thirty grandchildren and 22 great grandchildren.

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



## **Frank Ortega**

*"A Warrior"*

On Lok Lifeways East San Jose

Born in Stockton, California in 1943 to a family of five brothers and two sisters, Frank overcame learning problems in his youth, eventually completing high school and college. He graduated in electronics and worked at Honeywell in San Jose for eleven years, followed by a career as a real estate appraiser.

An avid gardener, he grows tomatoes and flowers at home and prides himself on watering the plants on the patio at On Lok. Frank's face lights up when he talks about the biggest joy in his life--his grandson, Frankie Ray Ortega, who is following in his father's footsteps, studying electronics in Texas.

Frank's first exposure to art was at On Lok. He is fascinated by the art of Mesoamerica, particularly Aztec culture, and his drawings include the fierce and colorful masks that were used to keep the spirits away. His pencil drawings also mirror the varied faces of people he encounters on the street: the homeless, the confused, and the depressed. In his art, Frank captures their lives.

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



## **Sara Melendez**

*"Fearless Fox"*

On Lok Lifeways East San Jose

A native of Honduras, 65-year-old Sara finds her strength in her faith. "God gives me the understanding," she says. "I don't have money or a bed, but I have a great God."

Sara came to the U.S. thirty years ago, with only the clothes on her back. She studied English and even once wrote a letter to President Obama. She has also studied some law and loves working with computers. Her wide variety of jobs includes working as a seamstress, cook, and teaching assistant. "Teach me once," she asserts, "and I learn it." She's happiest when she's working.

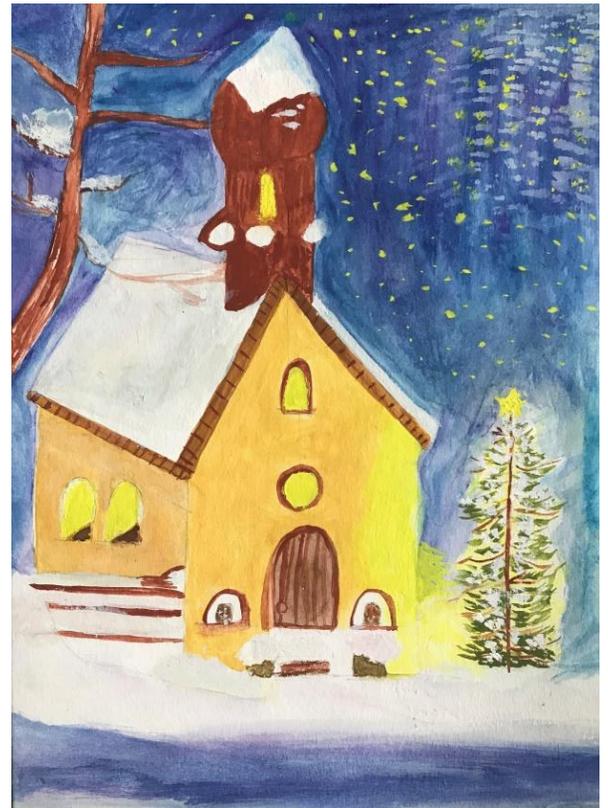
Helping other people is her passion. She especially enjoyed the challenge of teaching reading and writing skills to kids who didn't want to be in school. Sara has two sons, one of whom lives in Atlanta, Georgia, and four grandchildren.

Sara's AWE teacher, Dmitry, compares Sara's "vivid, naive and simple style" to that observed in folk art.

Her teacher Dmitri recognizes Maria's natural talent with color, as she uses vivid colors and sees color in intense ways.

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



**Karen Schneider**

*"Warm Wishes"*

On Lok Lifeways East San Jose

Karen, who considers herself a "natural comedian," was born in Rome, New York in 1949. As the middle sister of three, she describes herself as having been "diplomatic but slightly delinquent." Her family moved to San Leandro, where she graduated from Chabot College in Hayward and worked as a medical transcriber for surgeons. She proudly notes that she was among the first to take a CPR class in 1975.

Her passions are the warm waters of Hawaii and singing country music karaoke. During her visits to On Lok, she enjoys reading the newspaper, exercising, and interacting with the community.

Karen began drawing cows and horses when she was young—a pleasure she has rediscovered in her AWE class. As she says, "You never think you can do things until you try."

Words of wisdom from this mother of two daughters: "Follow your passion and your dreams."

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



## **Andy Banh**

*"Road Trip"*

On Lok Lifeways East San Jose

Andy was born in Vietnam in 1951 after his grandparents, who were Chinese, had emigrated from Fukien. His grandparents and parents escaped to Vietnam as political refugees. When the communists took over South Vietnam in 1975, an unsuccessful attempt by the family to escape from Vietnam led to their homelessness. Four years later, Andy's uncle sponsored the family, which eventually immigrated to U.S in 1987.

Andy never dreamed of painting until he joined an art class at On Lok. He's been painting for three years, and enjoys copying pictures from old calendars. He also enjoys fixing things that he finds on the street. He will take apart a broken chair and then use the parts to create a new one.

As a Buddhist, he believes in benevolent kindness. He is always happy to help people, particularly the homeless. His philosophy of life is: "No matter what religion you are, if you believe in kindness you will find happiness and peace."

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



## **Maria Quiroz**

*"Estatua De Libertad"*

On Lok Lifeways East San Jose

Maria Quiroz knows what a hard life is. She was born in 1935 in the small rural town of Laguna Seca (meaning "dry lake") in the state of Michoacan, Mexico. There was no water, she says, and Maria had to walk two hours just to find a place to wash clothes for the family of ten children.

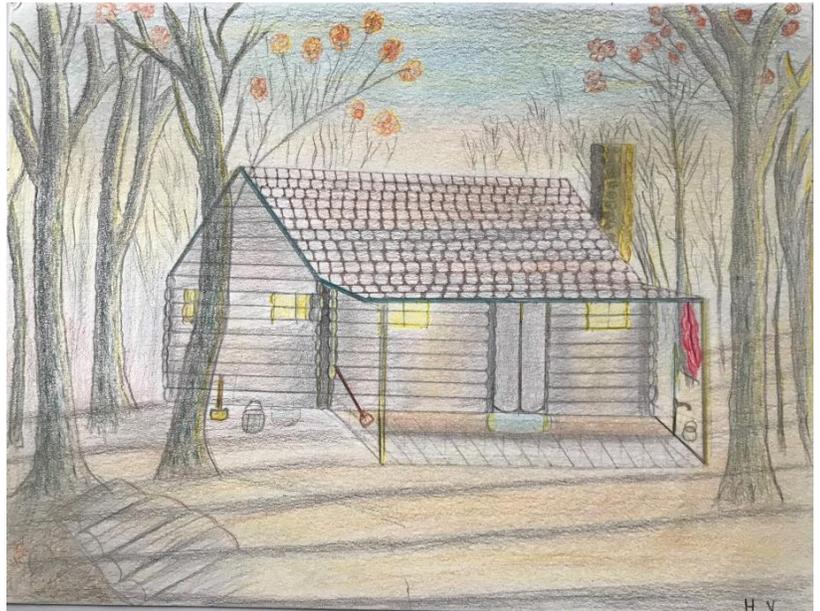
She regrets that her parents were unable to send her to school. Maria never learned to read or write. It's frustrating, she says, when you have to always ask questions and keep everything in your head.

Maria's entire life has been devoted to family. Widowed 35 years ago, she came to the U.S. twenty years ago to help her daughter, one of her three children. She's happier now that she has made friends at On Lok and has someone to talk to.

Her art teacher describes her art as largely "self-taught" and "emotional." He sees it as a way for her to express herself.

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



## **Vo Huong**

### *"Dream House"*

On Lok Lifeways East San Jose

Huong was born in 1946 in Binh Dinh, Vietnam into a small family. When she was twelve, war broke out in her hometown and she, her parents, and older sister migrated to Pleiku, located in the central highland region of Vietnam. She later married and had two children and remembers well a contest that took place in 1970 in Nhatrang to celebrate mothers who had raised beautiful and healthy children. She enrolled her son in the contest and he won first prize. It was one of the happiest moments of her life.

Huong, whose life was devoted to her children and now her four grandchildren, loves to cook and exercise. She describes herself as a happy person, who loves to laugh and care for others and advises: "Love all living things and don't ever lose your temper." She believes in the importance of hard work and patience.

AWE is her first experience with art, as Huong never had the luxury of doing art until now. She always does her best working on the scene that her art teacher Dmitry provides and feels content to pour all her emotions into her art. "It's like a therapy to me," she says.

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



## **Sister Marie Brent**

*"Baby Kit"*

On Lok Lifeways Fremont

This native of Oakland, born in 1934, started out her work as a Holy Family sister teaching religious education in San Francisco and San Antonio, Texas, but her big opportunity came when she was sent for six weeks to Juneau. The assignment turned into a 45-year adventure, which ended just two years ago upon her retirement.

Sr. Marie traveled to remote villages, witnessing marriages and performing baptisms. On the side, she learned to fly in the Civil Air Patrol, learned to endure 60° weather, became a paramedic and volunteered with the town rescue squad, and lived for awhile in the Aleutian Islands, a place that had been without a priest since World War II.

She has always loved art when she played as a kid with her brother's pastels and watched her mother painting. She's taken water color classes from the celebrated Alaska artists Rie Munoz and now paints regularly in her room, when she's not writing her memoirs.

Sr. Marie summarizes beautifully her experience in her AWE class: "Just the paint, the brush. I focus and I watch everybody at the table. You move on to a different planet. Everything falls away...Art is a wonderful way to remember, share your memories and find that quiet happy place."

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



**Marie Julie Casattas**

*"True Love"*

On Lok Lifeways Fremont

Sister Julie was born in Alameda in 1933, the youngest of three children. After attending local schools, at eighteen she joined the Sisters of the Holy Family, a teaching order founded in San Francisco in 1872. She has been a nun for 65 years.

She started her service teaching kindergarten in a day care center in San Francisco, worked in San Jose, and then continued teaching in Reno and Las Vegas. She also worked with families in a day care setting. One of her biggest adventures was going to England for three weeks to explore British schools.

A lover of music, Sister Julie has enjoyed singing and playing what she calls "semi-classical" music her whole life. She still recalls running off the stage as a child during her first piano recital. And she added gospel to her repertoire during her time in Las Vegas.

Sister Julie, who describes herself as very loyal and social, is now painting for the first time since her "budding art career" ended in kindergarten when her classmates laughed at her red pig. In her AWE classes, she started drawing flowers and sunsets in pastel chalk and now focuses on animals. "You gotta keep moving and try something different," she advises.

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



## **Xiao Ai Zheng**

*"Apples"*

On Lok Lifeways Gee

This 82-year-old native of Shanghai is living proof that it's never too late to learn. Her latest passion is sharing health research on aging and memory using social media, especially for her friends back in her native country. "Happiness comes from being healthy," she says, with a smile on her face and in her eyes, and that's what she hopes to spread in this unusual way of service.

Xiao Ai taught Chinese language skills in an elementary school while raising her four children—one daughter and three sons--before she came to San Francisco with her husband in 2009. She has three grandchildren.

She only started her art classes last year and believes in the calming effect of doing art. Her teacher Insio, who describes her work as "delicate," explains that she's like two different people: an introvert who takes her time quietly doing her art; but with her friends, very social and a person of service.

Xiao Ai also loves singing Chinese folk music and walking. Her recommendations for a good life: don't get angry or stressed out; work hard; forgive others and be genuine. All of these, she says, will make you healthier.

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



**Robert Sok**  
*"Chinese Lady"*  
On Lok Lifeways Gee

Robert Sok is not limited by his wheelchair. Although he is not as mobile physically, he travels widely in his mind to times and countries in his rich past. A polyglot, Mr. Sok speaks eight languages, including several dialects of Chinese, Japanese, Thai, Lao, Vietnamese, French, and English. An architect by trade, who was trained in civil engineering, he spent his university years in Cambodia, where he was born in 1946, and in Paris, where he received his Master's degree. "In two weeks," he says, "I became Parisien."

He came to the U.S. in 1973 with a work permit to do work on the Empire State Building. Later, after moving to the Bay Area, he used his skills doing jobs as varied as re-doing the ceilings of a Chinese restaurant to serving as a court translator in San Francisco. He has two sons, both of whom live in San Jose, and two grandchildren.

Robert describes himself as hardworking, independent, and helpful to friends. He's an avid reader of all kinds of books and, in his life in Cambodia he was a jazz drummer. He also likes painting alone in his room, which is full of his work. His art teacher explains that when doing landscapes, he frequently adds people to the scene and prefers bright colors.

**ART WITH ELDERS**  
*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



## **Irene C. Higgins**

*"Crane By the Shore"*

On Lok Lifeways Gee

Irene describes herself as "a goofy person, easily distracted and easily amused." She's done everything from being the band leader and vocalist in her band Spoonful of Blues in Bernal Heights to teaching art in afterschool programs in Visitation Valley and tutoring academic skills at City College.

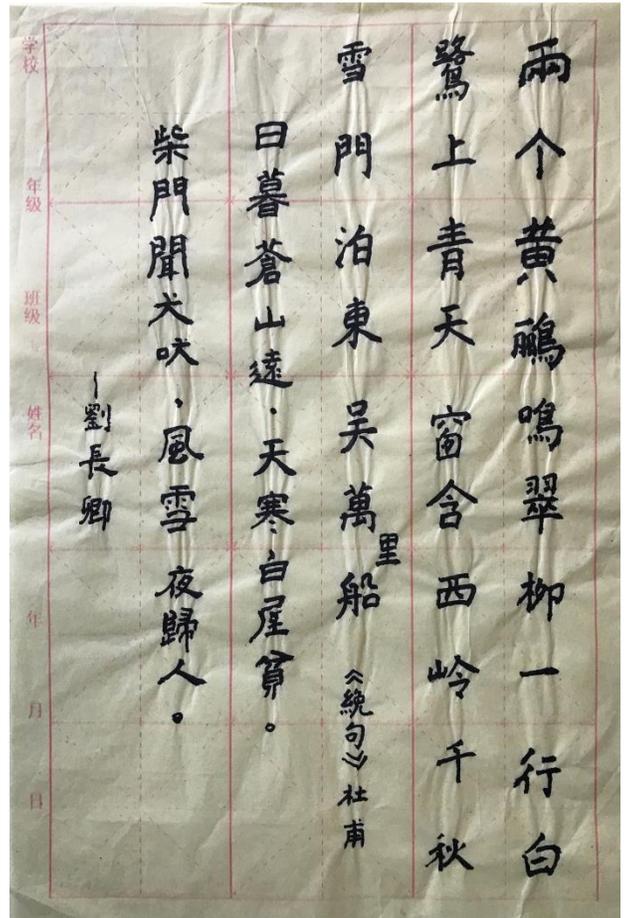
A lover of languages, Irene studied Spanish in high school and at UCLA as well as German, earning her Bachelors in Russian at SF State. Her interest in Russia was inspired by a 1972 film about Tchaikovsky's life and she vividly remembers getting lost in Gorky Park in Moscow and a train trip she took from there to Paris in 1989.

Born in Los Angeles, Irene came to San Francisco to expand her horizons. Now, at sixty and still recovering from a surgery in 2004, this colorful elder who was "art traumatized" at school early in life, is broadening her perspectives through art. She's worked in watercolors, is studying oil painting, and also enjoys doing ceramics. Right now she's preparing for Chinese New Year by planning to paint a photo of a Chinese woman getting ready to dance.

"I've been waiting to see if I bloom," she says, "and I think now I am."

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



## Zhiwen Luo

"Poems"

On Lok Lifeways Gee

Born in Guangzhou, Canton province in 1930, Zhiwen came from a traditional Chinese family that emphasized the importance of doing one's best and being humble and quiet. And she's certainly always done her best in calligraphy. Recognized as an excellent calligrapher as early as middle school, she was always asked to write for important school functions.

Zhiwen married and raised her children (one son and two daughters) while working full-time in a chemical factory. She and her husband came to the U.S. over twenty years ago to be with a daughter who lives in South San Francisco. Though her son lives in Canada and her oldest daughter in Singapore, she revels in the joy of finally having the time to enjoy her family, which now includes three grandchildren.

Doing calligraphy is like practicing music, she says---it demands perfection and patience. She now has to stabilize her hand to write her characters, and claims that her art is "only 1% of the master's." She continues striving for perfection in her art, working at home outside of art class, and advises: "Be serious in anything you do."

ART WITH ELDERS

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



## **Gloria Rojas**

*"Angry Cat"*

On Lok Lifeways Peralta

Gloria was born in the Philippines in 1935, where she was raised by her mother. She worked there as an elementary school teacher until she came to the U.S. in 2008 to be with her daughter and help her raise her two grandchildren here.

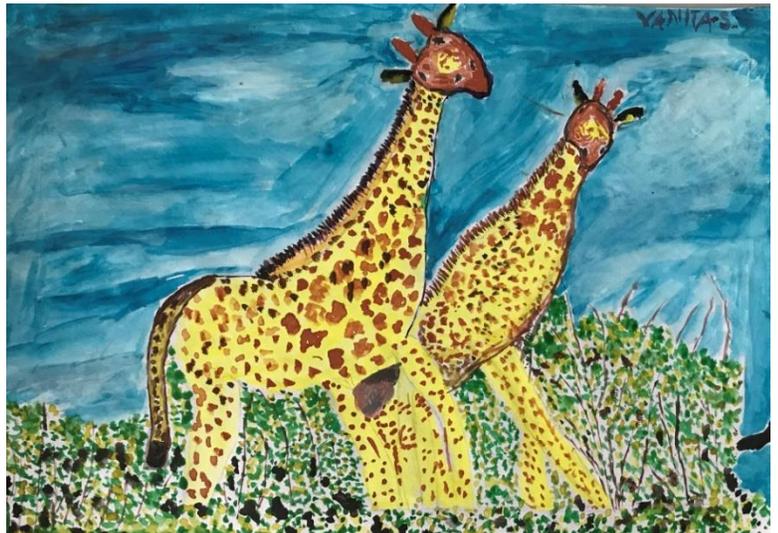
She's had her share of tragedies. After a 46-year marriage, her husband died two years after they arrived in the U.S. and she misses and worries about her son, who still lives in the Philippines with his three children. But as she puts it, "Sadness and happiness come and go."

Gloria's interest in art developed in college, where she first started going to art exhibits. It was there that she learned to appreciate abstract art, truly observe art, and find meaning in it. Now, as an artist herself, she likes the challenge of experimenting with different kinds of subjects and mediums, so she'll learn better. She believes that as we age, it's important to exercise the mind, and painting is one of the ways she does that.

Gloria likes to share her advice with people on her Facebook page. One of her most important pieces of wisdom: "As long as you still have hope, you are alive."

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



## **Vanita Shah**

*"Giraffe"*

On Lok Lifeways Peralta

Vanita was born in 1942 in Varavel, a city in the Gujarat province of India. She was the oldest of four brothers and a sister. She enjoyed art in school, but as was the tradition at the time, she left school after the eighth grade and entered an arranged marriage at the age of fifteen.

The couple had three sons and a daughter, and Vanita stayed at home caring for her children. She loved to cook, especially her specialties of samosas and shrikhand, a sweet dessert made of strained yogurt that is a Gujarati specialty. She is now the proud grandmother of seven grandchildren.

Vanita and her husband visited the United States whenever possible to see her children and she moved here after her husband's death to be close to them. She has returned to India to see her husband's family, as well as traveled to Dubai to visit one of her sons.

Vanita, who describes herself as a very good-natured person, feels that education is important and appreciates her AWE class. Her art teacher Dmitry says that she specializes in folk art and reports that, with her attention to details, her drawings take months to finish.

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



## **Su Li Ming**

*"Bird of Paradise"*

On Lok Lifeways Peralta

Su Li Ming, the oldest of four children, was born in China in 1936 in a small farming village in the mountains. After completing the sixth grade, she was expected to take care of her four younger brothers while her parents worked. She learned to cook at an early age and was never able to continue her education.

She married in China and stayed home to raise her two sons and two daughters. Later, when one of her daughters moved to the United States, Su Li would travel frequently between the two countries. She and her in-laws finally moved here to join their family, and she now lives with her daughter and grandchildren, often cooking for the family, as she did so many years ago in her youth in China.

Su Li says she enjoys this stage in her life because "I can do what I want." A generous person, she makes a point of always being there for people who need help.

Though she is self-taught in art, her AWE teacher Dmitry affirms that her background in traditional Chinese painting influences her art.

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



## **Susan Mitchell**

*"Children Having a Good Time"*

On Lok Lifeways San Jose

Susan was born in San Jose in 1945 and has one daughter and one son. She had always wanted to do art, but her parents had different hopes for her, so now when she comes to art class she is excited and happy. In fact, children and art have provided her with some of the happiest moments in her life. This piece is a reflection of that. Art, she says, "means everything to me. I am happy to have time to do art."

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



## **Dorelia Gordon**

*"Community Get Together"*

On Lok Lifeways San Jose

Dorelia, whose friends call her Dot, was born in San Leandro, California, in 1932, and grew up with one sister, two stepbrothers and one stepsister. When she was in her teens, she enjoyed doing commercial art and also learned to sew. She once won first prize for one of her clothing creations and second prize for a two-piece outfit.

Later in life, she volunteered at the Heart Association and worked at Goodwill. She remembers fondly her good life with her husband, whom she took care of for thirteen years.

Dorelia's happiest moments were when her mother took her to church. It was there, she says, that "I got saved," and she attributes her long life to having put her life in God's hands.

She's grateful for the doctors who have helped her over her lifetime, and to her art teacher Virginia, who has taught her a lot about contrast colors. Art for her, she says, means "accomplishment."

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



## **Dorothy Hickey**

*"Little Picasso"*

On Lok Lifeways San Jose

Dorothy, known as Dottie by her friends, has been a lover of the arts since she was a child. This New York City native, born in 1931, has acted on the stage in the Little Theater of New Jersey and published five books of poetry, while making a living as a cashier on Wall Street.

Some of her happiest moments are marrying her second husband and travelling around the world with him. She has visited 44 countries and done 66 cruises! She also loves visiting museums and decorating.

Dorothy describes herself as a happy-go-lucky person who enjoys everything and loves children. She has one daughter, two grandchildren and one great grandchild.

It's her sense of humor and love of life, she says, that have been her key to a long life. She advises: "Be yourself and do what's right for you." Dorothy loves to do what she calls "easy abstract compositions" and feels that art has taught her patience.

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



## **Ray Baggiani**

"Frog"

Pacific Care Home

A native San Franciscan, Ray was born in 1934 into a traditional Italian family that worked in the produce business. He remembers rising at 3 a.m. with his father to get to the produce market, which looked like "a big city all lit up." He also loved watching his athletic dad, who completed sixteen Golden Gate crossings, swim with the Dolphin Club.

After serving in the army, Ray worked over for 30 years as an equipment manager and later foreman for PG&E, affectionately called "Pigs, Goats, and Elephants" in those days. One of his most memorable jobs was replacing the gas main and services on Lombard Street. He also helped out in his grandfather's Christmas tree business, once delivering a sixteen-foot tree to City Hall.

Ray and his wife, whose family was involved in Half Moon Bay produce business, raised two daughters, Karen and Christine. After his retirement, the two enjoyed cruising, including trips through the Panama Canal, Mexico and Hawaii. He advises his grandchildren: "You've got to get out there and work."

Ray's father loved to draw and Ray did art at Burlingame High School. "I enjoy doing something with my hands," he says, which includes working in the yard, as well as doing his art, some of which adorns his room.

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



## **Barbara Emerson**

*"Valley"*

Peninsula Del Rey

Barbara was born in Long Beach in 1926. Her mother, an artist, introduced her two daughters to painting, sculpture and ceramics early on in life and she's been painting and taking art classes ever since. She worked in the advertising department at Bullock's Department Store, overseeing print ads for seven newspapers in the proof room and was also a photography and runway model for five years.

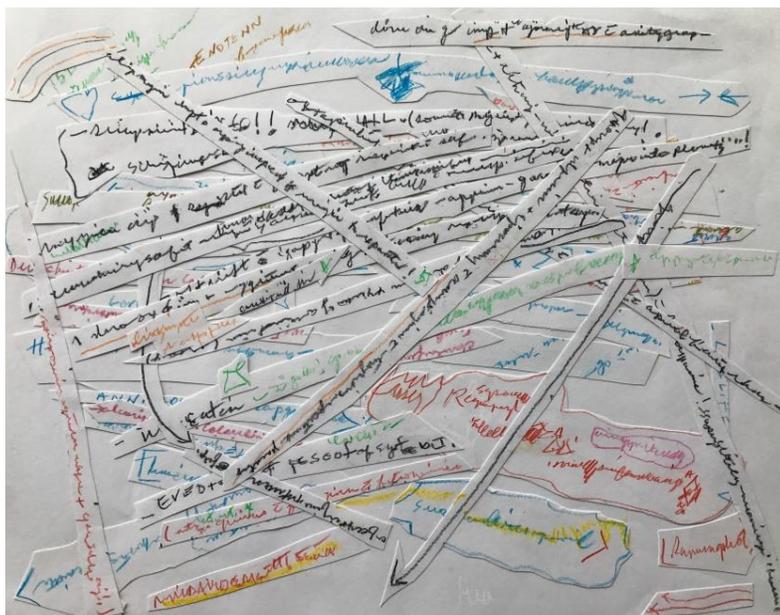
Barbara and her husband, who worked in the space program, had two daughters and she is now the proud grandmother of four. She still remembers the exciting moment when she and her husband met the astronaut Neil Armstrong before his moonwalk.

The couple shared a passion for golf, and after their children were grown, played at Scotland's famous St. Andrew's golf course on their first trip to Europe. With the goal of playing the most beautiful courses in the world, they traveled to Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Austria and New Zealand. Barbara, who attributes her long life to "good genes," continued to play until she was 82.

Now she enjoys reading, Tai Chi and exercise, and continues experimenting with her art. She has switched from watercolors to freehand drawing, and "Valley" is her first experiment with acrylics.

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



**Linda Hallman**  
"Dialogs III"  
Providence Place

Linda Sue, as her father called her, has always pursued her passion, followed her heart, and never worried about what other people thought. Born in 1939 in Olmstead, Arkansas, she grew up on a farm, watching her mother catch chickens and grow vegetables to feed the family. Her brother Jimmy caught and sold rabbits at the market and when things were really tough her mother Hazel would sell homemade stew from the trunk of her car.

In 1960 she started her studies at Hendrix College and later graduated from University of Texas Medical branch as an anesthesiologist to join the ranks of the 9% of women practicing medicine at the time. While still in school, Linda took up flying, got married, and had twins. She raised four children and later decided to become a psychiatrist, where she thought she could better help and serve others.

Now Linda enjoys living down the street from her daughter and wife in San Francisco. Though she now has trouble speaking, she creates artwork from her memories. In this work, she has included medical orders and names from the past, finding words through her art.

**ART WITH ELDERS**  
*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



**Muriel Greenhut**  
"Atlantic City"  
Raksha Care Home

Muriel, known as Mikki by friends and family, was born in New York City in 1928 and moved to California in 1976. She remembers well one of the happiest moments in her life—when a man called her with his finger and said: "Someday I'm going to marry you." He did, and they were married for 51 years. Muriel asserts with a smile that one thing she learned in life was "how to pick a man."

Besides raising one daughter, Muriel has always liked working with and around people. She worked as a legal secretary for many years and also has served as a crossing guard, polling place worker, and a filing clerk in a medical office. She admits that in high school she enjoyed drama and would have liked to have been an actress.

Muriel considers herself an "up person;" she is playful and has a great sense of humor. Her daughter, Marcy, describes her as generous, sweet and kind.

She loves music and dancing, especially square dancing, as well as playing mahjong. She also played handball and roller-skated in her youth. The only craft or art-related activities she engaged in before her AWE class were knitting and ceramics.

**ART WITH ELDERS**  
*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



**Jean Rankin**  
*"Two Men Arguing"*  
Raksha Care Home

Jean was born in Scotland in 1928, the fifth child in a family of four boys and two girls. At the age of eighteen, she came to the United States and worked as a nanny for many years. The remainder of her career was as a waitress, proud of being a fast worker who was rewarded with lots of tips.

With a sly gleam in her eye and the remnants of a Scottish burr, Jean explains that she met her husband Craig in a pub. They settled in Santa Monica, where he worked as an electrician, and they had a son. She's now the proud grandmother of a boy and a girl.

Jean began drawing when she was young. She specializes in pencil and ink and likes drawing geometric shapes such as buildings. She's also a puzzle addict, challenging herself with 1,000-piece puzzles.

This outgoing elder artist, who says she "loves fun," embraces life. When she was younger, she'd sing and dance in the streets during Scottish New Year and go to a friend's house with a bottle of beer.

**ART WITH ELDERS**  
*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



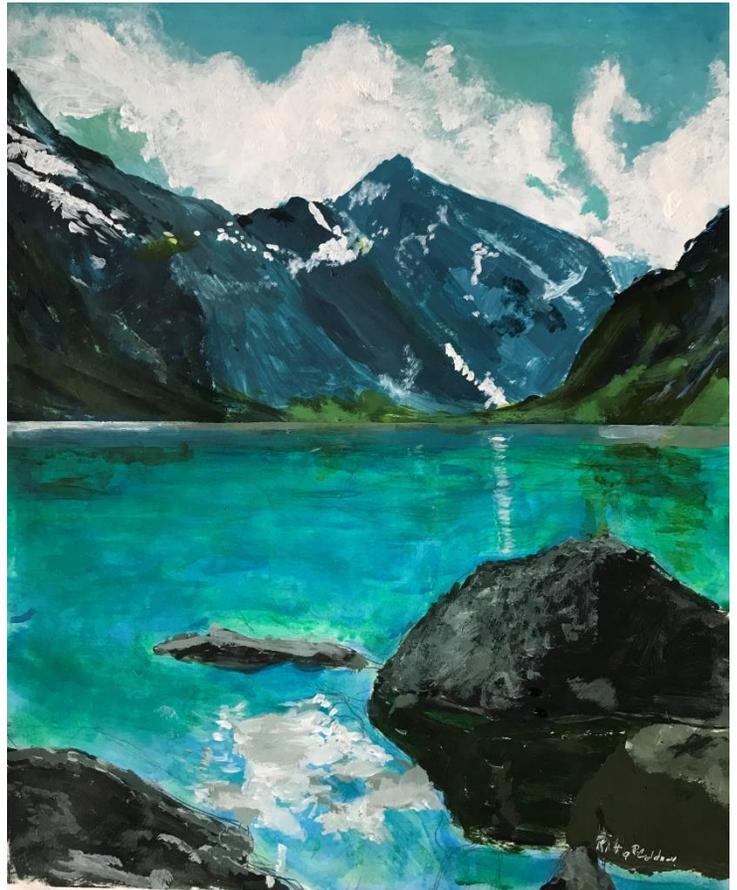
**Gretchen Klug**  
*"Telling Stories"*  
Raksha Care Home

Gretchen was born in Alliance, Nebraska, and lived in several Midwestern cities in her youth before the family moved to San Diego. Her German-born father, an osteopath, and her mother believed in the importance of healthy living and Gretchen was raised in a nudist camp from the age of 10-18.

After coming to Berkeley, she worked as a secretary, taking dictation for Chancellors Robert Gordon Sproul and Clark Kerr. She remembers fondly the sense of community in Berkeley at the time—the wine and spaghetti parties, poetry, meditation groups, and folk music. For years Gretchen helped raise her sister's children and she and her mother rented rooms to students who weren't welcome in other places. She has also worked for the California State Dept. of Vocational Rehabilitation, Workmen's Comp and an alcoholism clinic, her favorite job.

Gretchen has been interested in art since her childhood when she made art with the children she babysat, and despite serious vision issues continues to this day. What she describes as her best painting was a huge tiger, which she had to stop painting because it kept getting "bigger and bigger." She's a fan of Frida Kahlo and her AWE art teacher describes her work as "having a shamanic, Native American feel."

**ART WITH ELDERS**  
*24th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



**Rita R. Goldman**

*"Portrait of New Zealand #4"*  
Reutlinger Community

It's easy to spot Rita in the halls of Reutlinger. Known as the "Flower Girl," she'll be wearing a colorful flower in her hair that matches her clothes and her personality. But her life hasn't been as bright as she is.

Eighty-three-year-old Rita grew up in Washington D.C. in a family permeated by her Polish mother's losses during the Holocaust. Her early hopes to become a counterculture artist were quickly dashed by a Corcoran Gallery art teacher, who told her she'd never be an artist. But she managed to write poems for the local Jewish paper, and eventually became a school psychologist, married and had four children.

At the age of 49, Rita suffered a devastating stroke that left her wheelchair-bound, paralyzed on her right side and blind in one eye. Even after her stroke she finished a Ph.D., did volunteer work, including counseling and tutoring in the temple, and endured the tragic loss of her 33-year-old son, Shalom.

Now, painting with her left hand, the art program is "a shining light" for her. "I feel like my disability was an opportunity to do good deeds and learn," she says.

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



## **Maher Salama**

*"Water Willows"*

Reutlinger Community

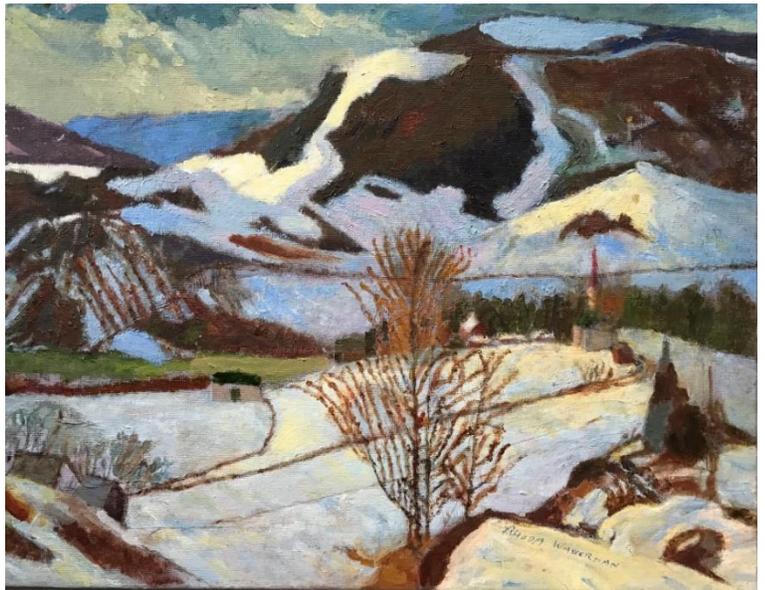
"God bless America, the land that I love" says this 86-year-old Egyptian, who came to the U.S. in 1970. Maher studied English in high school and graduated in business management from the American University, where his father was a professor. Before coming to the U.S., he worked in an accounting company, and was an avid swimmer and member of the Greek rowing club.

With a kind smile, his gentle blue eyes light up when he describes the months of dancing and dining that led to marrying his wife of 55 years, Therese. Maher found a job (and a passion for chess) at Bank of America two days after his arrival here, where he worked until his early retirement. He still feels most "accomplished" when helping the needy. The couple has a son and daughter and three grandchildren.

A lover of classical music, especially the work of Chopin and Tchaikovsky, Maher enjoyed playing the piano. "As I love music, I love paint," he says now, after his introduction at Reutlinger to making art. And despite vision and shoulder problems, he revels in learning "how to paint beauty and how to expose it to other people—especially so the blind can see."

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



## **Rhoda Wasserman**

*"Baby, It's Cold Outside"*

Reutlinger Community

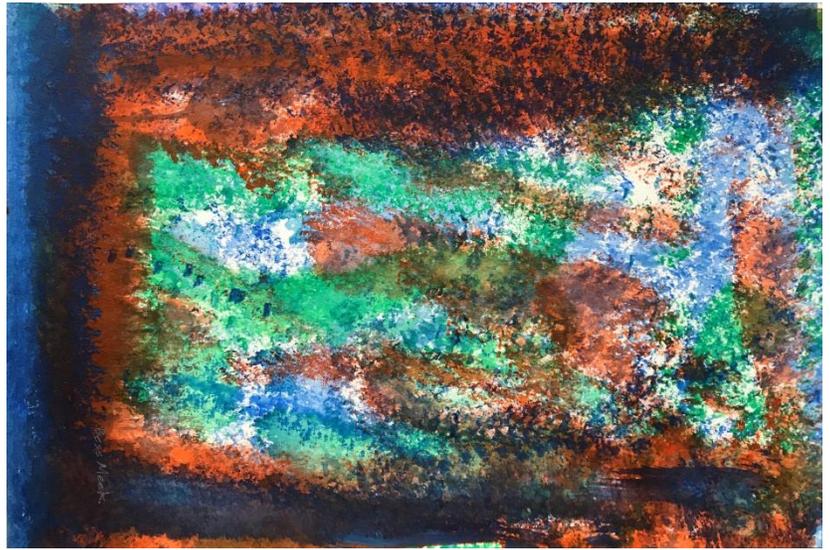
Rhoda was born across from the Hudson River on Riverside Drive, Manhattan, which she describes as the most beautiful place she ever lived. She moved to the Bronx as a child and lived there many years, marrying and raising her three children. Rhoda attended business school and worked first as an accountant for her husband, a contractor, and later for AT&T. When her children were grown she moved to San Diego where she lived for more than 30 years.

She started painting three years ago. "I never even knew I could draw before I started working with Betty and AWE. Now, after painting for several years, I see variations in size, color, depth, lights and darks, focus and originality."

Rhoda takes pleasure selecting books at the Reutlinger library and also enjoys movies and visiting museums with her daughter. She has a vibrant laugh and describes herself as a happy person, but admits, "I don't know if you make your own happiness -- if it's luck or what." At age 96 Rhoda has learned much from life and says, "Everything is a learning experience. You have to keep your interest in things and I do. I have a lot of fun painting. If it wasn't fun, I probably wouldn't be doing it."

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



## **Bess Meek**

"Birds Eye View of Paths in Central Park"  
Reutlinger Community

"The colors are ecstatic," Bess giggles, as she describes one of her colorful paintings that hangs above her bed. "That's my little lavender person – it's me. I call it 'Voilà!' When I paint, the colors have fragrance, a memory, a temperature and a feeling."

Bess is infectious, just like her art. "I've been happy since the day I was born," she says with a smile. She grew up in a family full of Pekinese and Pomeranian dogs, raised by her father, and reports proudly that she was frequently called on in class to read for the other immigrant students in the lower East Side of New York City, where she was born in 1932. Later she worked as an assistant bookkeeper for a giftware company, raised three children, and became intrigued with pharmacology.

Bess has read everything from Erma Bombeck to Lobsang Rampa and boasts, "I've learned how not to be a stick in the mud." She's a Gemini, loves German milk chocolate, and her favorite season is fall because "when you look outside, it makes you shiver inside."

Her wise advice: "If you don't laugh, you get in a rut. Life is here for the living."

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



## **Michie Takashima**

*"Trees in Snow"*

Reutlinger Community

Born in Loomis, California in 1917, Michie spent her childhood working on her family's fruit farm, where she and her six siblings helped to harvest peaches, pears, plums, and cherries.

After high school she enrolled in business classes at Placer Jr. College and later pursued her creative interests through classes and lessons in flower arranging, tea ceremony ritual, and dress pattern drafting.

As a Japanese American, Michie and her family were interned during the war at Tule Lake in Northern California, where she worked for the hospital's chief medical officer. After the war, she worked for the U.S. Maritime Commission in San Francisco. Michie married in 1948 and she and her husband moved to Oakland and raised their two daughters. A skillful seamstress, Michie made their clothes throughout their childhood and used the remnants for making outfits for their dolls.

Michie attributes her long life to always having taken care of herself. "I ate well and cooked for myself and never drank or smoked."

She first started painting at Reutlinger and is surprised by what she has created. Michie gets her ideas from magazines and periodicals and then recombines them into her own compositions. "I am deeply satisfied with the results," she says. "It brightens my whole life!"

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



## **Marjorie Cohen**

*"Layers"*

Reutlinger Community

When Marjorie, known as Margie by her friends, first saw the work of AWE artists hanging in the halls of Reutlinger, she realized that maybe her art could be up there too. She began attending art class this spring and is happy to be succeeding now in the one subject—art--she had trouble with growing up. She enjoys doing landscapes, especially blue sky and water.

Born in Albany, New York in 1940, Margie was an only child who involved herself in the world of art and music--tap dancing, playing trumpet in an orchestra, marching band, and female dance band as well as singing in the chorus. A former middle school English teacher, she lived in various East Coast cities and her happiest memories revolve around raising her two sons. She now has three grandsons. Having lost her husband, Ira, after close to fifty years of marriage, Margie has found art to be "a nice completion, occupying my mind and my senses" in the process of grieving.

Margie has been an avid baseball fan of both minor and major league teams since the age of eight, and loves music, especially jazz. She believes in the importance of not taking yourself too seriously and describes herself as an inquisitive person. At this point, she says, "Art completes my experience."

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



## **Sid Glickfeld**

*"Vicious Winds in Yosemite"*

Reutlinger Community

Ninety-one year old Sid Glickfeld was born in San Francisco. He and his British-born wife, Helen, met at a dance here, and have been married for 62 years. They had two daughters and one son, and now include their "grandcat" Bagel in their family. After retirement they enjoyed cruising and travelling together.

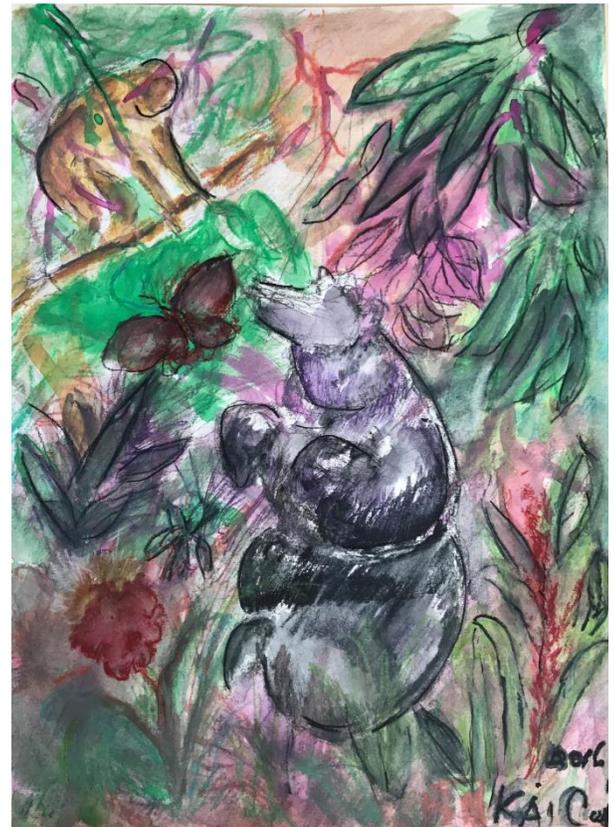
Sid, an avid stamp collector with an inquiring mind, taught math and history in high school and has a great passion for geology---all of which are reflected in his art. He started out painting geometric circles and rectangles and moved on to another fascination of his--the way rocks are structured. "I love to capture the intensity of colors in the mineral world," he says, and enjoys trying different backgrounds in his paintings.

His passion extends to the sky and the forces of nature also—to the power of thunder and lightning. "I wonder," he asks, "what the ancients thought of it," and hypothesizes, "Maybe someday we'll use the power of it for our own electricity."

Helen describes Sid as a "very kind and lovable person" with a great sense of humor, who is always helpful to other people.

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



**Kai Kuan**  
*"Animal in the Zoo"*  
Eden Villa

"I call my language 'chop suey language.' It's all mixed up," admits this 83-year-old retired waiter, who speaks Cantonese, English, and Spanish. He left his native China after the war, travelling first to Cuba in 1949, where he helped in his father's grocery store in Havana for 10 years before escaping to the U.S. He settled in the Richmond district of San Francisco.

Kai worked for 40 years at the famous Trader Vic's restaurant, where his favorite memories include the Post-Big Game banquets of Cal and Stanford fans. He takes great pride in his family--his wife Linda, who still visits him daily, two daughters and a son.

He has studied art for many years, especially landscape and portrait painting, and one of his proudest accomplishments is to have produced portraits of his own grandparents from photos.

Kai wears a smile on his face, something he learned from his profession. "When you're a waiter and you have a long face, customers don't like it," he explains. But he's also happy to have escaped from the killings and hunger in his homeland. "I hate war," he declares without a smile.

**ART WITH ELDERS**  
*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



## **Michael Tsukahara**

*"Buddha"*

Sagebrook Senior Living

Michael, known as Suki to his friends, was born in 1941 in San Francisco. During World War II, when Michael was four, his family was sent to a Japanese internment camp. Tragically, he, his parents and brothers were separated between two different camps. But he still manages to retain the treasured memory of catching striped bass in San Francisco Bay with his father.

After his release from camp, Mike went to high school, earning a perfect score of 800 on the math SAT's. He subsequently earned a math degree from San Francisco State, but unable to find a teaching job, moved to New York in his twenties and worked in investment banking.

It was there that he met his wife and had two daughters. Following a divorce, he stayed in New York for eight more years. The memories of 9/11 are still deeply etched in his mind, along with the joy of playing pick-up basketball games. I "live and breathe basketball," he says.

He returned to San Francisco to take care of his mother and lived in a housing co-op (St. Francis Square), where he served as President of the Board. Mike's art teacher, Santiago, describes him as a huggable bear, adding that his figurative work "flows."

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



## **Clement Fernandes**

*"4 Divisions"*

Sagebrook Senior Living

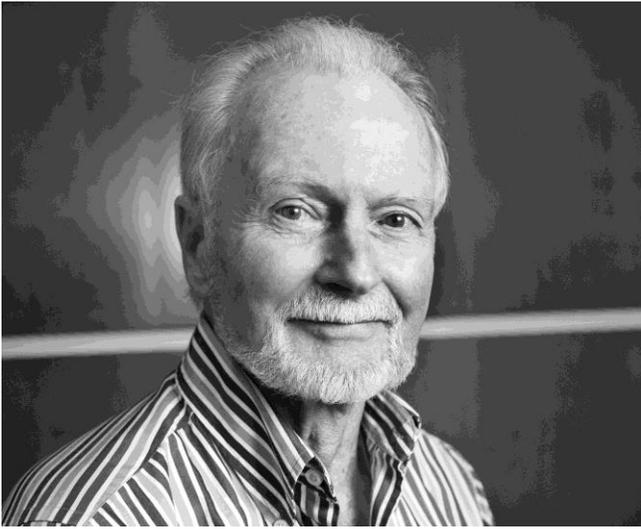
Clement, known as Clem by his friends, somehow manages to return "home" in many of his paintings, yearning for the simplicity and what he calls the "easy-going life" of Goa. One of his first drawings was of the family's summer house there, where his mother taught sewing to local girls on her classic pedaled Singer sewing machine. Another depicts the ship that transported him there, with the vessel named after his son and daughter.

Born in 1931 in Mombasa, Kenya, Clement is a man of mixed cultures who grew up in what he calls a "British environment" in Bombay. "Art has always been in me," he says. He loved art in school, despite the discouragement of his family and friends, and would give away his wildlife paintings as gifts. Painting for him was "like getting away on vacation," a feeling his AWE classes now give him.

Clem loves sports—anything from soccer and field hockey (as the goalie), to volleyball and tennis. He married in San Francisco, where he and his wife, who recently passed away, raised their family. He encourages people to find their talent. "What are you made for?" he asks. "It must be in your heart."

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



## **Richard Williams**

*"Sunset in Mythical Venice"*

The Sequoias

Richard has done a lot of travelling in his 82 years, and Venice is the place he'd most like to go back to. He has fond memories of doing all the sights there, and jokes, "Being Americans, I guess we also logged a fair amount of time at Harry's Bar!"

Born in Ypsilanti, Michigan, Richard grew up in Wisconsin, went to Northwestern University, and performed in live theatre, mostly comedies and musicals, for twenty years. His favorite character was playing King Arthur in Camelot.

His true passion is ceramics. After returning to school for an MFA in ceramics, he came to California planning to become a potter. He has worked in San Francisco's Castro district for over thirty years as one of the managers of a non-profit studio for ceramic artists – Ruby's Clay Studio – where he has his studio.

Richard, who describes himself as a generally positive person and a peacemaker, is excited about painting. "You're never too old to discover new things," he says and quips, "I doubt I'll develop into Grandpa Moses, but I'm having a great time in my AWE class."

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*24th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



## **Kay Matsuda**

*"Abstract Landscape"*

The Sequoias

Born in the northern rural area of the Big Island of Hawaii, Kay grew up on a sugar cane plantation. A trained nurse, she came to San Francisco in 1949--the only one of her six siblings who emigrated to the mainland--and worked for many years at St. Francis Hospital.

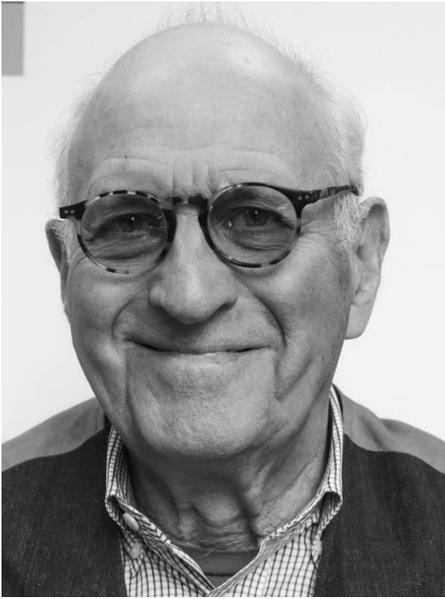
After over sixty years of marriage, Kay asserts, "The three things I live by are trust, respect, and responsibility." She believes deeply in keeping life simple. At the Sequoias, this articulate and independent 89-year old goes up to the roof at dawn to view "nature's gallery" and works out at the gym. She also draws, paints or thinks about her art daily.

May drew nothing other than stick figures before she took art lessons from a resident artist at the Sequoias and then joined the AWE class. Now, she says, "When I finish my drawing or painting, I look at it and say, 'Now, did I do this?' It's something I created and it's a moment I treasure."

One of Kay's art projects has included a series of drawings depicting her family history, accompanied by stories to pass on to her nieces, nephews and grand-nephews.

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



## **Curtiss Taylor**

*"Longing"*

San Francisco Towers

Curtiss, known as Curt by his friends, has learned some important lessons in his 85 years. "As people get older," he says, "they get less flexible and it's easy to get into a rut. You need to keep trying to improve and do new things." His AWE class has provided him with that opportunity.

Born in Buffalo, New York, Curt followed in his father's and grandfather's footsteps, working his whole life in the printing business. He had always been interested in art, especially in drawing realistic portraits using graphite pencil. "Longing" was inspired by the film *Testament of Youth*, starring the Swedish actress Alicia Vikander in a story about young love and the futility of war. He copied the image from a magazine and his teacher Rafael showed him how to add the clouds and mountains and use a blender.

Curt describes himself as "laid back" He and his wife T.J. Thelma-Jean, who have been married for twenty years, re-connected later in life after having been fourth grade classmates. They have a blended family of four children. Two of his favorite projects were drawing portraits of his wife and 90-year-old brother. He still hopes to draw the face on the statue of Greek goddess Hebe in the entry way to SF Towers. If he doesn't do a good job, he jokes, "she'll come back to haunt me."

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



**Barbara Rosston**  
*"Beach Umbrellas"*  
San Francisco Towers

Painting has been what Barbara calls a "sometime hobby" throughout her life. Her parents, she says, had "an artistic eye" and her sister has also taken up painting. Now, at the age of 91 she feels that art provides her "an outlet."

Born in Manhattan, Barbara, who describes herself as a shy person, moved to California sixty years ago. She did post-graduate work at Stanford in physiology and worked in medical research. She and her husband Jack raised two sons, both of whom still live close by on the Peninsula. She's feels lucky to have wonderful family support.

After retirement, Barbara was a dedicated volunteer reading for the blind. Now, suffering from macular degeneration, she admits that painting is hard for her. But she's found a temporary solution to help herself distinguish the colors better: she puts the paint first on paper.

"Beach Umbrellas" is actually based on a painting Barbara did years ago--of rain umbrellas. She prefers oils over watercolor, as she likes to be able to correct her mistakes and is very grateful for the encouragement of her teacher Rafael.



## **Lorraine Porter**

*"Woman With Hat (after Mabel Alvarez)"*  
Sutro Heights

Lorraine Porter was born and raised in Chicago, in a family of six girls and one boy. A person who's always loved to travel, she came to California to visit her sister in San Mateo when she was sixteen, during the war, and decided to stay.

Her first job was at J.C. Penney in San Mateo and after moving to San Francisco, she worked 37 years as a payroll clerk at PG&E. She traveled extensively with her husband, a San Francisco Muni employee. Together they took advantage of city-sponsored group tours almost every year, visiting Mexico, Alaska, Spain, Japan, Russia, and the Panama Canal. On their trips, the couple made lasting memories and friendships. Today, her travels finished, she enjoys reading mysteries and romance novels.

Of her art, Lorraine says, "I've always scribbled a bit, but never had a chance to really sit down and work at it. It's a miracle." Lorraine enjoys painting flowers and buds, because "they're the most colorful," but has begun experimenting with portraits and figures—like this one. She likes copying pictures, always changing some aspect of them to make them her own.

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



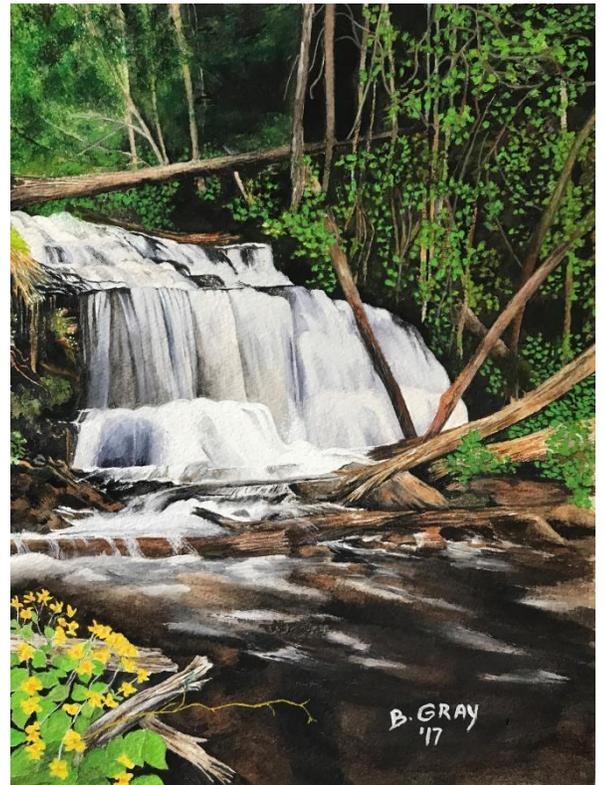
**Agnes Ko**

*"Enjoy the Sunset"*

Vintage Golden Gate

ART WITH ELDERS

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



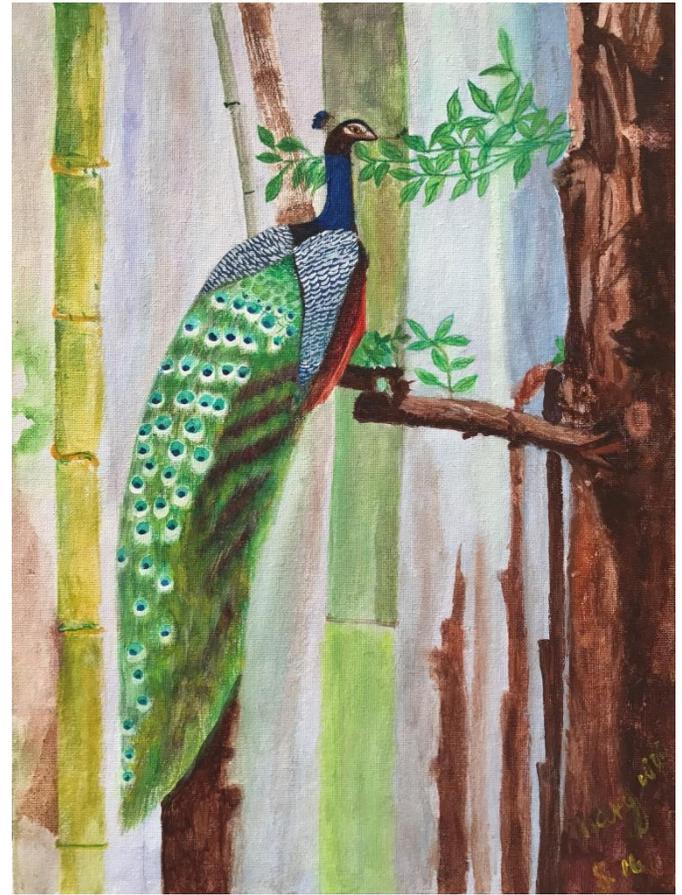
**Barbara Gray**  
*"Silence in the Forest"*  
Western Park

In words and paint Barbara Gray still describes with incredible detail the pre-revolutionary house in historic Monmouth County, New Jersey, where she grew up. "It was the kind of house that creaked and made noises," she says of her home of fifteen years.

Barbara comes from an artistic family. Her father, who died early in her life, was a pen and ink artist; her mother did all kinds of crafts, including colorful embroidery; and her grandmother made rugs of braided strips of material. Some of her happiest memories are of family holiday gatherings, including summer vacations spent on the shores of New England.

For a while, Barbara attended the Pratt Institute, where she worked in fabric design. She then went to night school to become a graphic artist, and art became a hobby. She's happy to be back painting, especially in her preferred medium of water color. Barbara advises: "You're painting for yourself, but it's important to let somebody else see it. They may see something you don't see."

**ART WITH ELDERS**  
*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



**Mary Woo**

*"Peacock"*

Western Park Apartments

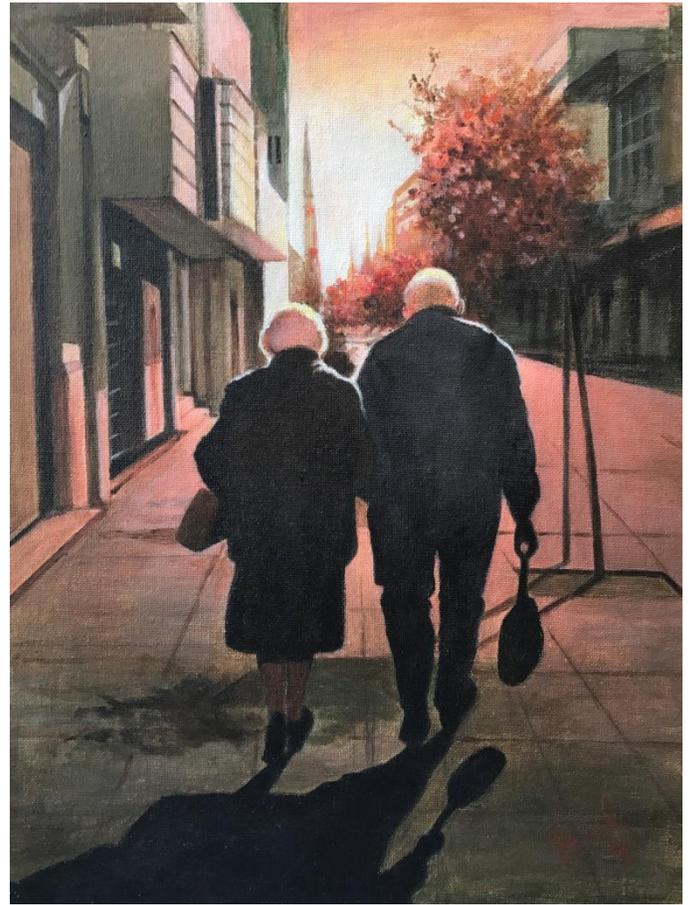
Crafts were a part of her family tradition in Shanghai, where Mary Woo was born in 1926. Her brother carved wooden boxes and Mary, the second child of five, sewed pillows and embroidered flowers on Chinese slippers.

After marrying at the age of eighteen, she moved to Hong Kong in 1953 with her husband and one of her four daughters. It took three years before Mary could be reunited with her other three children. She lived there for twenty years and received training in fine Chinese arts. When she and her husband moved to San Francisco at the request of their second daughter, Mary worked as a caregiver for elderly women, who taught her English and gin rummy.

Mary enjoys knitting and painting ceramic plates. Realizing the importance of maintaining use of her hands, for close to fifty years she has "prayed Tai Chi," and done a half hour daily of hand exercises in bed before rising. Mary is an AWE veteran. Her art was first exhibited in 2006.

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



**Pearl Yue**

*"Silver Thread Instead of Gold"*  
Western Park

"I have loved art since I was seven years old," Pearl Yue will tell you. "I spent a lot of time in my bedroom painting." Her sisters and brother also showed decided artistic talents early in life but their father warned them, "Artists only become famous when they're dead. Get work that will support you!" Pearl found a career as a microbiologist for China's Academy of Science.

Born and raised in Tianjin, in Northern China, Pearl's family owned an herb factory over a 300-year period that produced such high-quality products that the Emperor made it the royal pharmacy. Her father was the last of the family to manage it when the communist regime put an end to private property ownership.

Pearl and her husband moved to San Francisco in 1990 with their son and daughter and she quickly found work at U.C.S.F. Even then, though, she continued to make art – taking charge of holiday decorations at work and painting in the evenings and weekends at a gallery on Sutter Street. She retired in 2002 and moved into Western Park Apartments almost six years ago. She was delighted to find a thriving Art With Elders program there and takes advantage of the art studio as often as possible.

**ART WITH ELDERS**  
*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



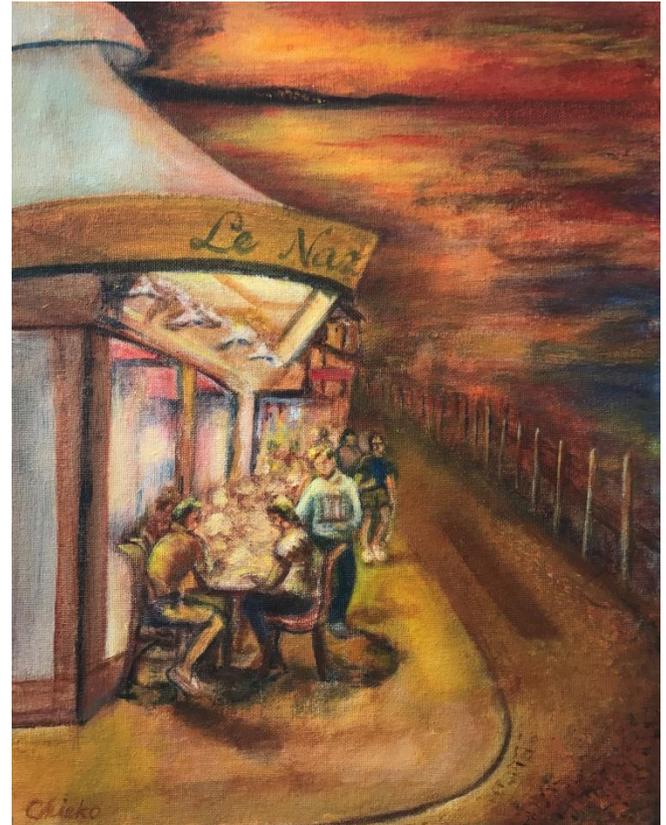
**Alice Gibbons**  
"Courtney's"  
Western Park Apartments

"In the legendary neighborhood of Montparnasse, the most celebrated painters and the most secretive amateurs come to the Academie de la Grande Chaumiere to practice the timeless art of painting" – *taken from the Academy's historical sketch*. After four years of study at the San Francisco Art Institute, majoring in printmaking, Alice Gibbons recalls fondly the spring of 1967 when she went to Paris to study at the Academy to improve her painting and drawing techniques.

Artistic inclinations surfaced early in Alice's life in her native San Francisco. And she has worked devotedly to achieve a high degree of competence – a devotion that has paid off handsomely in local, national and international exhibits of her prints, drawings and etchings. She is represented by galleries through the U.S. and abroad and her prints especially are in many private collections.

Alice loves entertaining a concept, image or idea and then grappling with just how to communicate this idea through art. When she gets stuck doing this, that's when she'll return to the classroom to perfect her techniques. She's determined to find a way to express herself. "I find I become quite peaceful in this process," she notes, "it's nutrition for the soul. I feel better physically, too."

**ART WITH ELDERS**  
*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



**Chieko Lafferty**  
*"Sunset Cafe"*  
Western Park

When Chieko first saw a AWE exhibit many years ago, she never dreamed that one day she would be looking at her own work here.

Born in Kyoto, Japan, she came to San Francisco in 1978 to study English and met her Scottish husband of thirty years, Jack, in an Embarcadero Center dance hall. Since then, she's had a series of jobs--working in a Japanese restaurant, as a house painter with her husband, and as a bookkeeper.

Chieko has always loved art. A trained accountant, she studied design, textiles and silk screen in Japan and later art for ten years at San Francisco City College. She filled the big Victorian flat she and her husband rented with her art, including a 24 x 30 inch painting of bok choy. The 69-year old, who likes to cook and eat, has created a series of paintings focusing on different views of the leafy vegetable.

Chieko is still very happy to be in her AWE class, which she began attending after ten years away from her art. "I have to bring back my own feeling through my art and it's happening," she says with a big smile.

**ART WITH ELDERS**  
*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



## **Francis Li**

*"Still Life"*

Western Park

This 80-year-old Shanghai native, whose work is frequently honored in the AWE celebrations, arrived in the U.S. in 1991 with his family, anxious for his two children to get a good education. He's proud that they did just that.

Francis smiles when recalling his younger days in San Francisco when, after working all day at the post office, he would hop on the bus to the local park to umpire for the city's slow-pitch softball games. He's been an avid baseball fan his whole life, as a coach in Shanghai, when he rooted for the Yankees and Red Sox, and now for the Chicago Cubs and the Giants.

Art, he says, has given him a new appreciation of nature. "Before, when I went to the park I would see only trees and a river. Now, after painting I see the green in the sky in the early morning and at sunset."

Francis uses his left hand to hold his impaired right hand to paint and he still insists on setting up his own work station in the art room. He says painting helps him forget his pain. And he has this wise advice: "Don't give up. Enjoy life every day. Pray; thank God and everybody for what you have."

**ART WITH ELDERS**

*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



**Yu Mei Lu**  
*"Dancing Tree"*  
Western Park

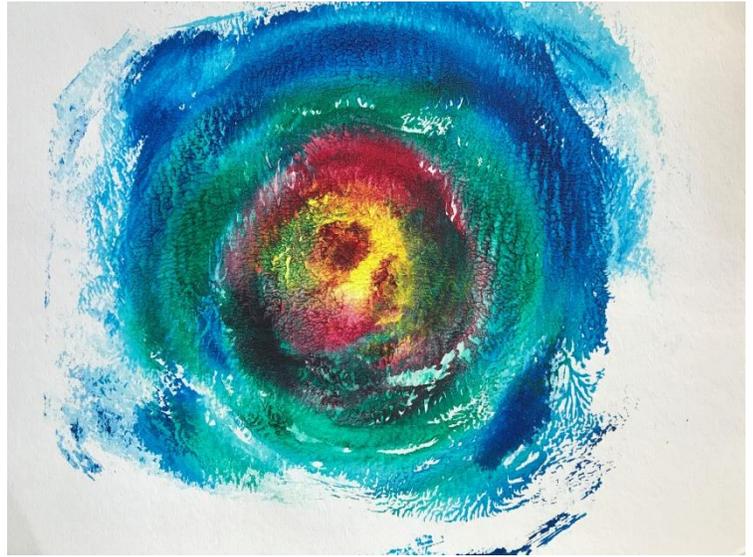
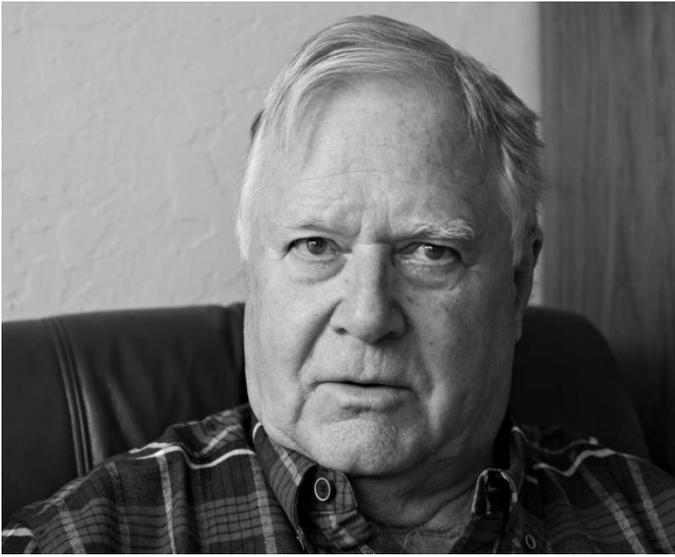
Born in mainland China, Yu Mei Lu grew up in a large family in rural Taiwan, where survival meant a lot of hard work. Her first visit to the U.S. was with her husband, a pastor, to Amherst, Massachusetts, where she studied English and art--useful skills for a kindergarten teacher. The two devout Christians returned to Taiwan, where she taught and did church work in a hospital.

Mei came to live in San Francisco in 2007 to be near her adopted daughter. She also has a son in Boston and three grandchildren, and enjoys playing piano, cross-stitching, and knitting.

The fall colors of the maple trees in Amherst still influence Yu Mei's work. "I appreciate those natural things," she says. The 75-year old loves the feeling of freedom that painting gives her, especially with acrylics. It took her awhile to learn that in art, "You don't follow. You just do what you want-- not like in China."

Art, she feels, increases your self-confidence, and "makes your life happy and peaceful." Her advice: "Art is from the inside--it's your idea. Don't let outside things cover your inside things."

**ART WITH ELDERS**  
*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



**John Cragin**  
*"Abstract"*  
Western Park

John embraces life; his motto is "Be outrageously funny!" He was born in Massachusetts in 1936, and then moved to New Hampshire, where his father bought a general store in a town of 1,000 people. Raised on a farm, he remembers milking cows, baling hay, and collecting maple syrup.

His career began with a stint in New York, studying acting. He then hitchhiked across the United States with his dog Charlie to Hollywood, where he became a stage manager at the Camino Playhouse, living in the theater's green room.

When John moved to the Bay Area, he took classes in photography and later graduated with a Master's degree in psychology from Sonoma State. He subsequently taught psychology classes for five years at the University of Maryland's campus in Munich, Germany.

After a pilgrimage to Israel, John returned to California, where he obtained a license in Marriage and Family Counseling. Unable to find a job in San Francisco's tight market, his career took yet another turn. He was hired as a gardener at the Presidio, where he worked for fifteen years until his retirement.

John started painting with watercolors, but is now doing abstracts in acrylics.

**ART WITH ELDERS**  
*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*



**Yelena Khristich**  
*"Under the Cherry Tree"*  
Western Park

If you're lucky, Yelena might sing you the Ukrainian folk song that is featured in this painting of her grandmother's house where she spent her summers in the central Ukrainian town of Poltova. Born in Kiev in 1948, she lost her father at the age of thirteen, but went on to study in the Polytechnic University, where she met her husband. The couple raised a daughter, who inherited Yelena's love of singing, and the family came to the U.S. in 1998.

Yelena began doing art with AWE five years ago, but a broken wrist interrupted her art-making. Her teacher Rafael gave her a series of exercises to help her brain recover from the trauma and on that same day, she was able to write her name for the first time with her non-dominant hand.

She likes to paint in what she calls "Ukrainian style," once adapting the work of a Mexican artist that inspired her into her own native style. A creative person, she also enjoys sewing, embroidery, and knitting--a skill she uses to make blankets for babies in the neo-natal unit.

As for the lessons she's learned: "Immigration is very hard, but if you like music and art it always helps you to recover and adjust. The deeper you go into a new culture, the better."

**ART WITH ELDERS**  
*25th Annual Art With Elders Exhibit*