

Lyrical Lombardics – Formal to Funky

A 2-day Workshop with Harvest Crittenden for All Skill Levels
March 1-2, 2014 at Jaycee Center for the Arts in Irving, Texas

Submitted by Sharon Schmidt



Harvest Crittenden proved to be an excellent instructor for this workshop, both as a fountain of knowledge for historicity of the art and also for more modern application. The workshop was designed (1) to acquaint us with development and structures of these decorative letters – usually seen at the beginning of pages of text in scripture or documents – and (2) to observe and then use some of the same elements of form and decoration with modern paints and tools.



shading, gold leafing and filigree. Historically, the initial cap of a page of text was hand-drawn double-stroke letters. The Lombardic region of Italy in the Middle Ages, specifically the scriptoriums set

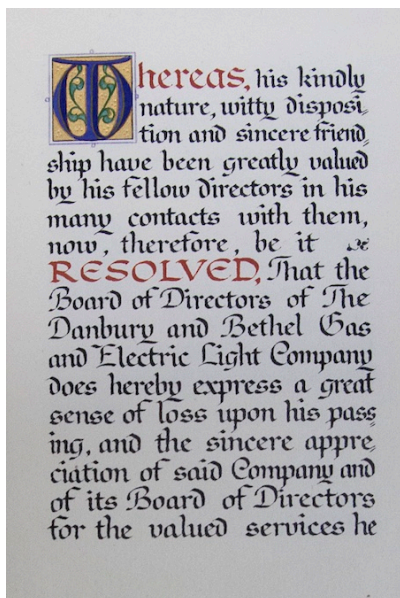
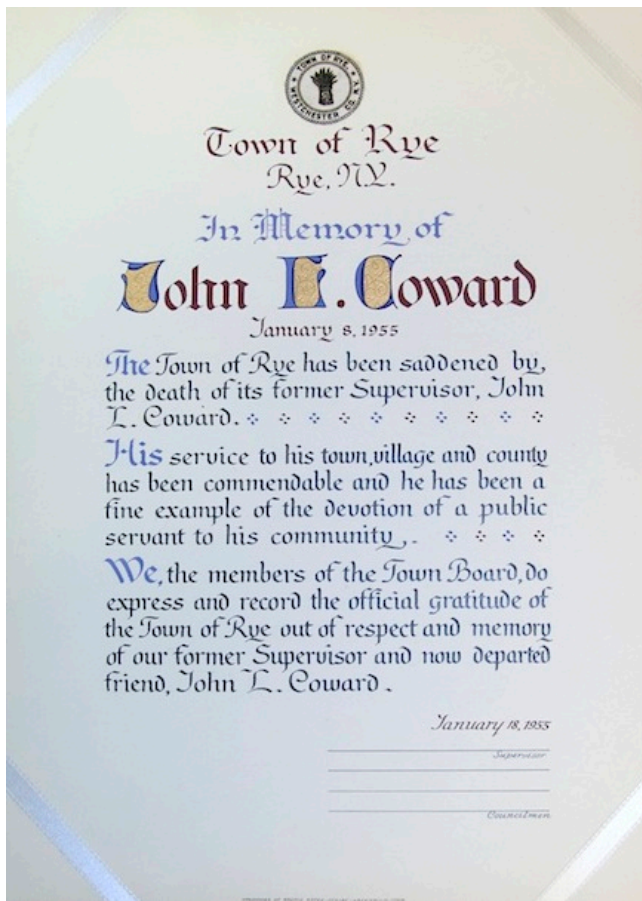
up by Charlemagne, generated these drawn letter forms. The variety of subjects depicted were interpretive. Literally, no two letters were the same because each was designed and flourished by a different scribe on a different day under different conditions for different patrons. These were the scribes' play times.



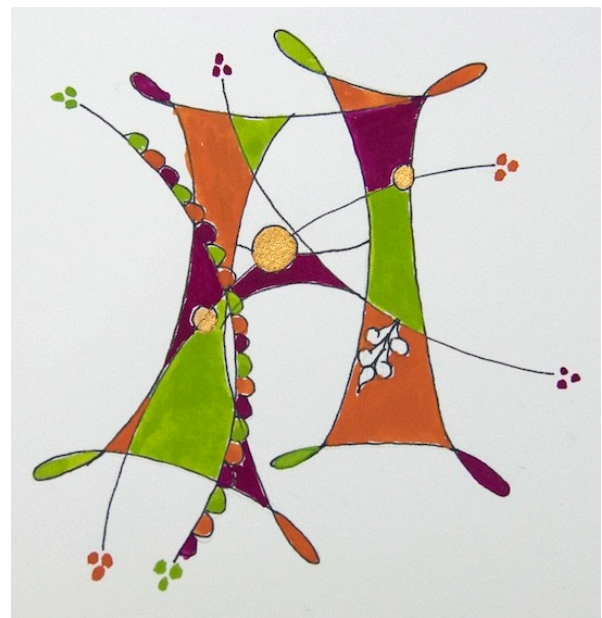
We spent a day and a half with letter shapes, drawing and transfer techniques, paints and

Harvest referenced some medieval psalters (large enough to be read at a distance by the choir), and the book of hours as personal Christian devotional books popular in the Middle Ages. Wikipedia says, "Like every manuscript, each book of hours is unique, but most contain a similar collection of texts, prayers and psalms, often with appropriate decorations. It is the most common type of surviving medieval illuminated manuscript. A typical book of hours might have contained records of church feasts,

excerpts from the four gospels, psalms, litanies, various prayers... ."



The amazing details in these samples makes me think there could be a dual meaning to the term Book of Hours because it probably took H O U R S to design and execute these works, not to mention the hours of writing out text. [But then, they didn't



have cable, nor many sporting events, nor shopping malls, so ... fewer distractions!]

Vertical stems of these letters tended to be 'waisted' (a gentle curve inward rather than straight lines), while the rounded portions of letters seemed to be exaggerated widths to accommodate artistic 'fills' of flora and fauna, birds, and even made-up critters along with varying uses of geometric patterns, some bold and some delicate.

In the last half-day session, Harvest showed some quick techniques for modern and casual uses for



our more casual art like envelopes and modern monograms, followed by a brief display of the decorated letters produced in the workshop. We packed up and left a little early due to weather threats. Harvest was to head to Austin to conduct a workshop on certificate design. She had actually come to us from Tulsa, thus making the Southwest Conference tour circuit.



EXTRA: NOTES ON TECHNIQUE

-By Linda Jones

Harvest suggested we work in ratio of 2 inches x 3 inches (either vertical or horizontal). We sketched out our letter on graph

paper to prescribed proportion, making note of elements we wanted to include. It was suggested we have a recipient in mind and use art elements that would pertain to that person.

MAKING PATTERNS:

- 90# Sheer Trace vellum by Borden & Riley – much more archival than tracing paper
- Trace pattern – use colored marker, colored pencil, colored Pilot pigma pen
- Flip pattern over and trace drawing with pencil on back to help it 'transfer'
- Flip pattern back to "front" – trace over (redraw) with pencil, pen, stylus to transfer design to paper where you want it.
- Copic markers fairly permanent
- Artistic by Fabriano from Dick Blick (Harvest's favorite Watercolor paper) 140# or 300#, not 90#)
- If using "transfer paper" to transfer your pattern, use Saral brand – other brands (i.e. Lowe Cornell) are not as reliable.

- HC used mechanical pencil on back of Sheer Trace Vellum
- Outline in black first – HC prefers outline

APPLY GOLD FIRST:

- Instacol (has a clay base) starting with dot or puddle of fluid. This is a modern method that replaces the historical use of 'glair' for adhesive (made from egg whites) of gold leaf.
- With brush, just gently pull from puddles into corners – wet into wet – adding additional fluid... slightly ridged – no brush strokes – always use flat surface – don't fuss – liquid is self-leveling – don't use blow dryer as it only dries top surface and causes bubbles in gold.
- Let Instacol dry ½ hour to 45 minutes
- Can apply gold or palladium – palladium doesn't tarnish like silver yet gives same "silver" color (About a year ago, HC did a video on gilding which can be found on her website.)
- Allow Instacol to dry evenly – get too much fluid and it will 'dimple' as it dries – also, the more you mess with it, the worse it gets.
- Lightly scrape top – HC uses fingernail . (If correction is needed, Instacol can be scraped off and reapplied.)
- Apply gold within 45 minutes – no need to wait longer or come back the next day.
- Press gold (don't rock finger but press to adhere), then use new precision Q-Tip (pink box) – no agate burnisher needed. Polish with widest part of cotton in small circular motions (don't use standard Q-tip cause stick can come thru cotton and scratch or pierce gold).

- Test for dryness by touching the Instacol. If you think Instacol is dry, wait a bit longer as the under layer may not be as dry.
- BLING: the tiny 'jewels' used in nail salons can be applied sparingly with PVA glue
- Mash Nail Art – online source of bling – wheels \$8. Note: bling from Amazon.com sources – color quality and quantity not as good

Note: FINE TEC (metallic paint in six shades) comes in a palette of varying golds: Tibet gold; Inka gold; Arabic gold; Paraonen gold (or gold pearl); Luma gold (or Evening gold, HC's favorite), and Schuppensilber (Sterling silver). She also likes to mix #'s 3 and 4.

- Float, not paint (leaves no visible brush stroke).
- Once dried, Fine Tec can be "tooled" with a stylus
- One can paint over gouache and/or over Instacol with Fine Tec – but cannot do the reverse.
- Use stylus to make marks in gold leaf.
- Another modern adaptation is to apply "bling" – use tip of stylus / toothpick / etc. to apply dot of PVA glue. Use tip of kneaded eraser to pick up bling "jewel" and transfer it to dot of PVA.

TOOLING:

- Glassine from junk envelopes is thinner than the glassine you can buy. Thus, it is good for placing between tools and gold for Tooling.
- Place glassine on top of gold. Impress tools into gold area with a rocking motion. The resulting 'facets' allow light to bounce in different directions.

- On Fine Tec gold, stylus swirls don't show up as much but can definitely take depressions.
- Glassine not required when tooling Fine Tec because it won't pull up like leaf gold will. Should feel a tiny bit of 'stick' when pulling the glassine up from the surface.

FILIGREE:

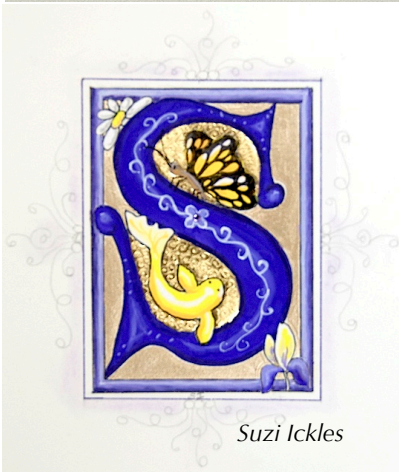
- Meant to be very light and airy – never focal point – light wash of red / blue – very much watered down.
- Basically paisley shape & circle & variations.
- Three small circles are seen in manuscripts everywhere – symbolic of the trinity in medieval times – today used more as decoration.
- HC uses pointed pen for drawing filigree. Sepia and gray copic multiliners size .1 or .5 and a red (more of a wine color – red with blue tint) are HC's favorites for filigree (from Dick Blick).
- If something sticks out of border, filigree should go around it.



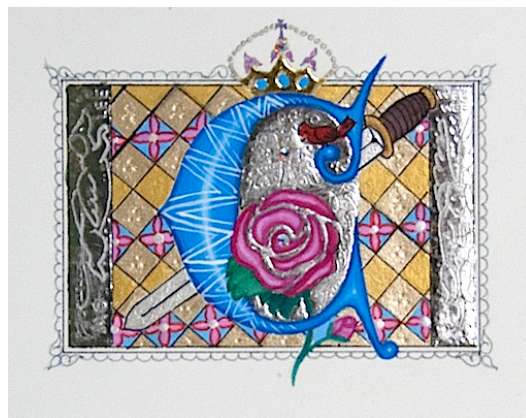
Student work in historical techniques



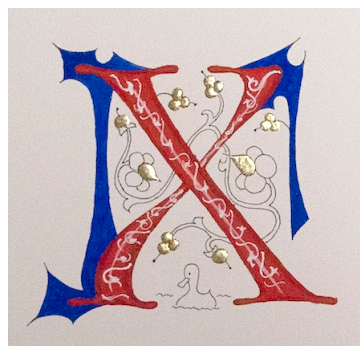
Sharon Schmidt



Suzi Ickles



Nan Kirby

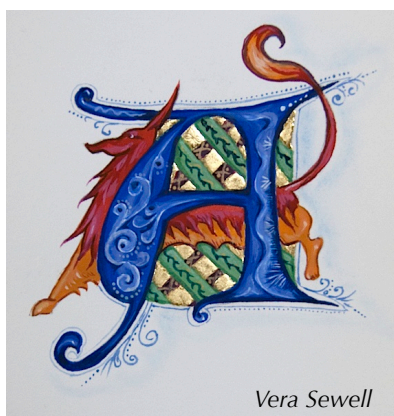


Wendy Carnegie



Linda Langley





Vera Sewell



Debbie Worden



Linda Jones



Brittany Lax



Marilee Haughey



Rick Maul



Margaret Mall



June Baty



Catherine Burkhard



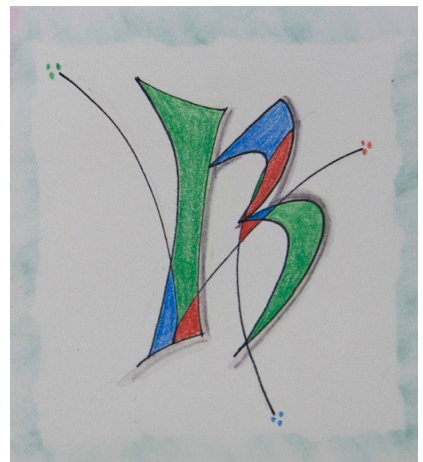
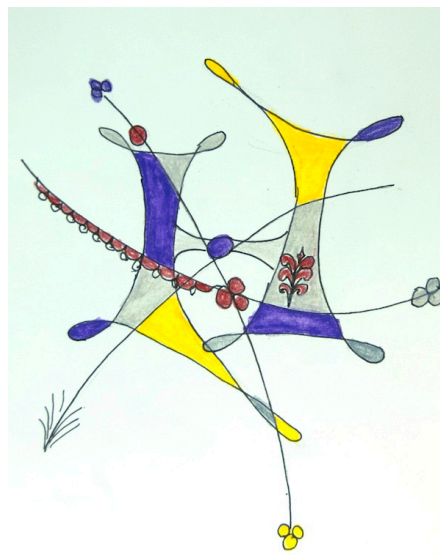
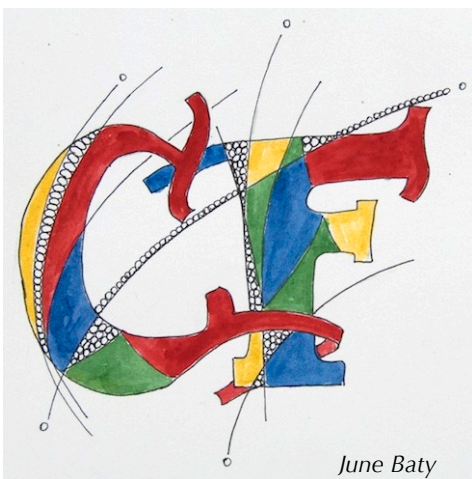
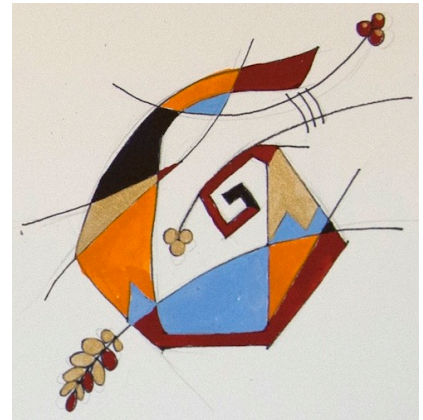
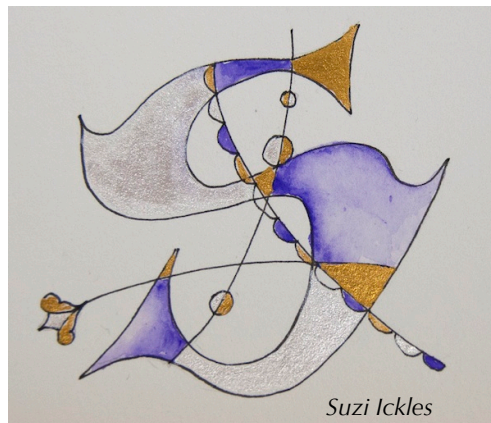
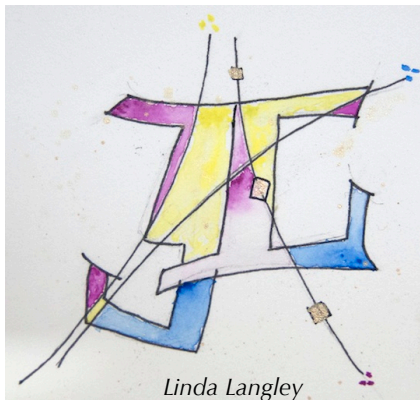
Sherry Barber

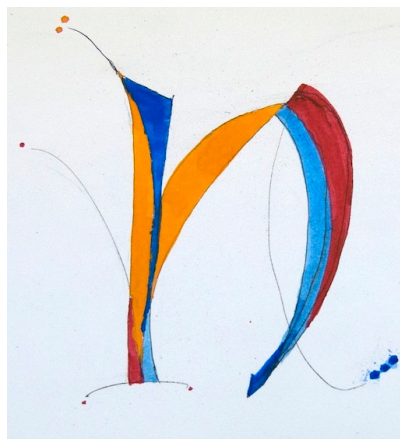
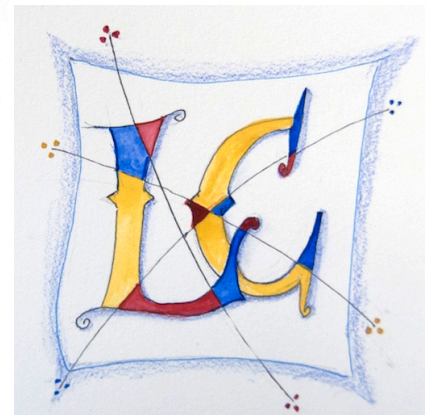
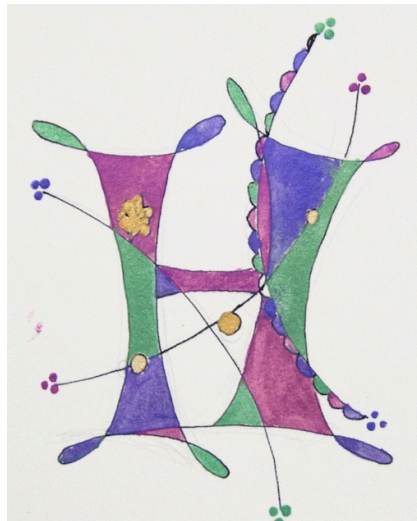
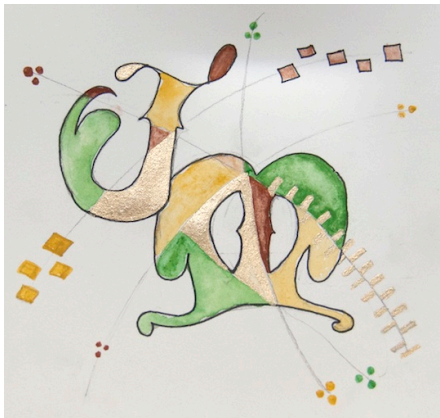
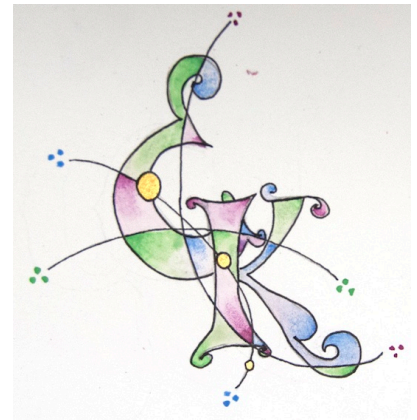
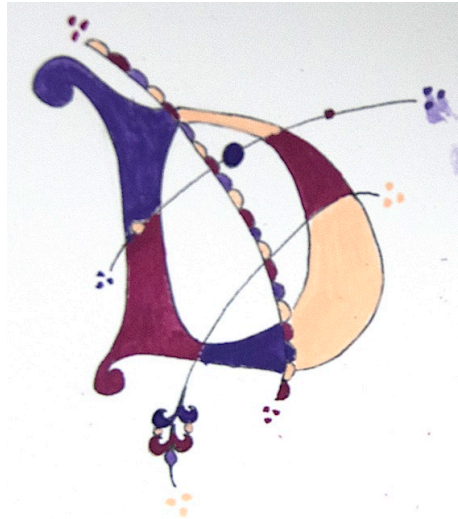


Ollie Olivarez

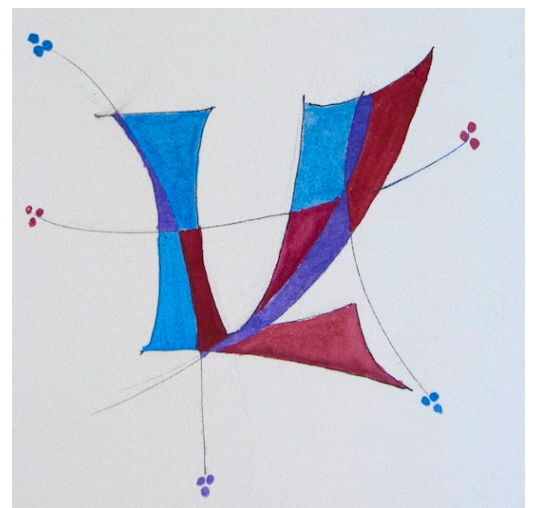
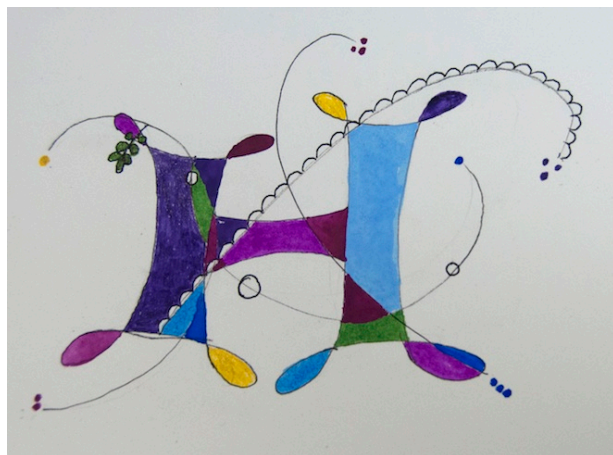


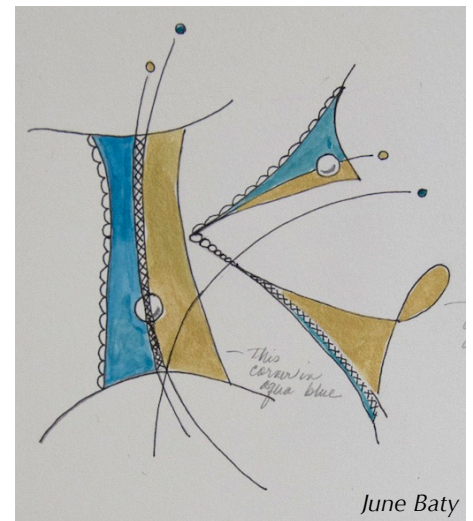
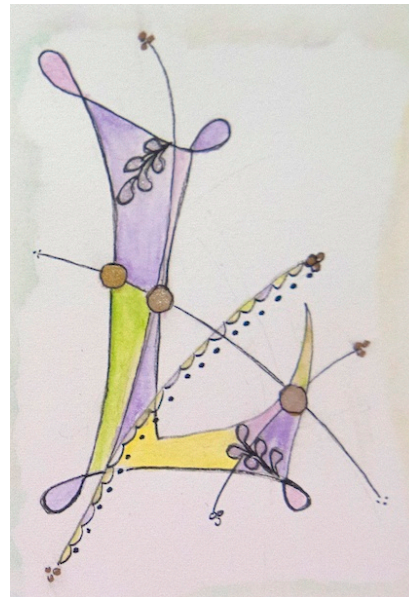
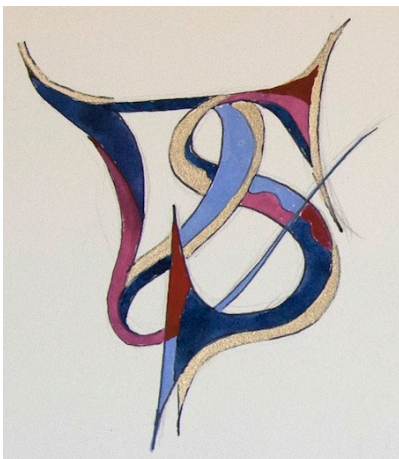
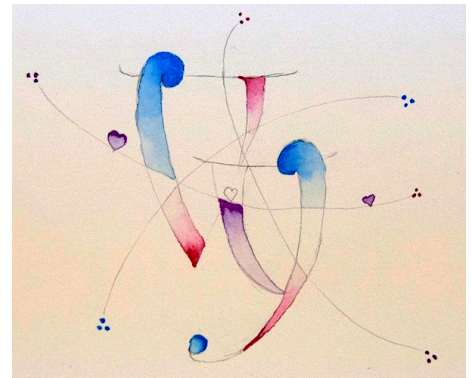
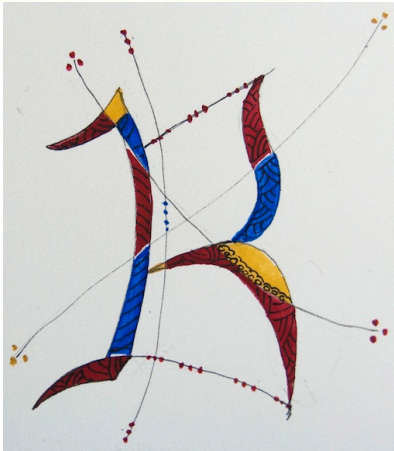
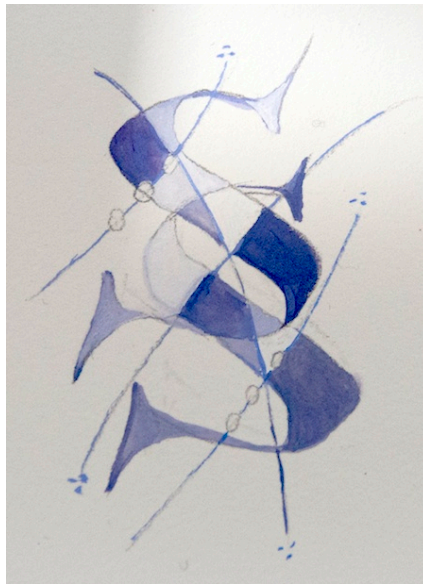
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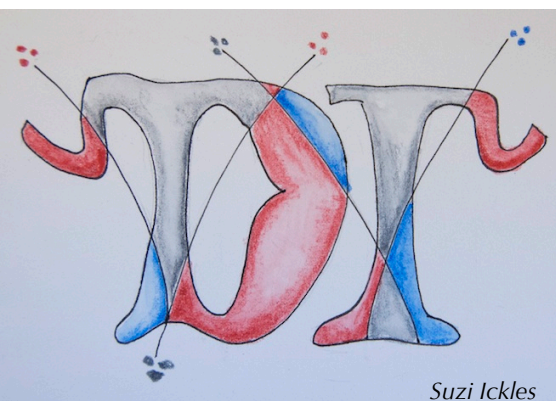


Linda Langley

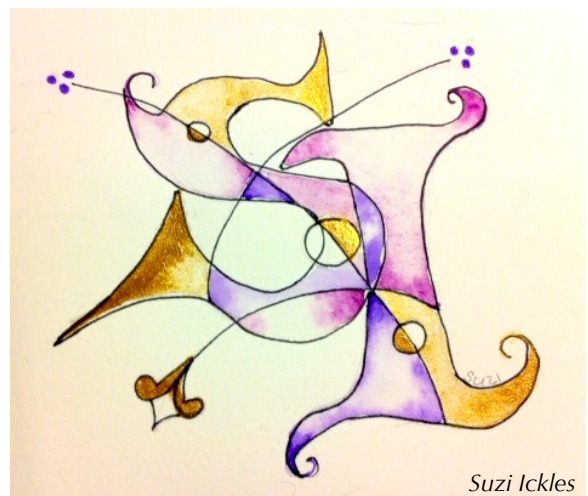




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