

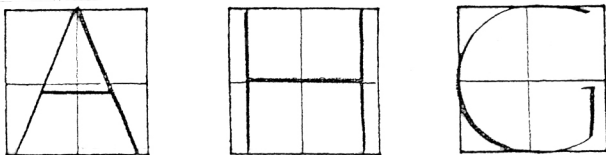
Watercolour Monumental Trajan

by Ann Purdy

Inspiration for this class was the inscription from the base of the Emperor Trajan's column erected in the first century AD in the Roman Forum. The Roman lettering on this monumental structure portrays beauty, majesty and strength. How appropriate since the inscription commemorates Trajan's victory in the Dacian Wars. It is believed that the letters were first written with a brush and then carved into the stone with a chisel. (I will never complain how difficult my tools are to work with again!)

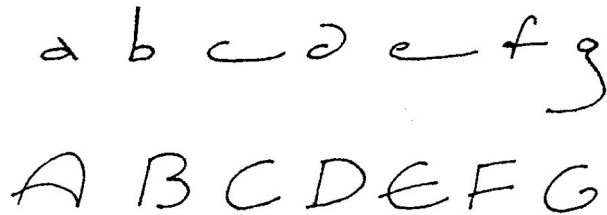


Gemma Black took us on this wonderful journey of exploring how beautifully proportioned these Roman Capitals are. At first we practiced each Skeleton Roman Capital on a grid square to understand the geometric proportions. It was like being back in elementary school learning the alphabet all over again. We wrote the letters in pencil first and then advanced to doing them in ink! There is always a little apprehension when you can't erase the mistakes you've made. You certainly learn the beauty of taking your time. Then we went a little informal by adding some slant, speed and some tiny strokes.



Gemma also introduced us to Akim Cursive letters created by German calligrapher, sculptor and musician, Hans-Joachim Burgert, who quotes, "We need a cursive hand, as all cultures have, as a dynamic medium to get away from all the very serious Roman soldiers marching so proudly in their lines." We went from learning the foundations of a traditional

hand to one where we can express more emotion and rhythm. What a contrast! What fun!



We chose two complementary watercolours (ones opposite to each other on the colour wheel) to work with, and did a sample sheet showing how it looks when: 1) the paints are applied directly onto the paper; 2) water is applied first, then the paints; and 3) the paints are applied directly and water added from an eye dropper or from a spray bottle. Now we had the basics to work with!



George Huitema

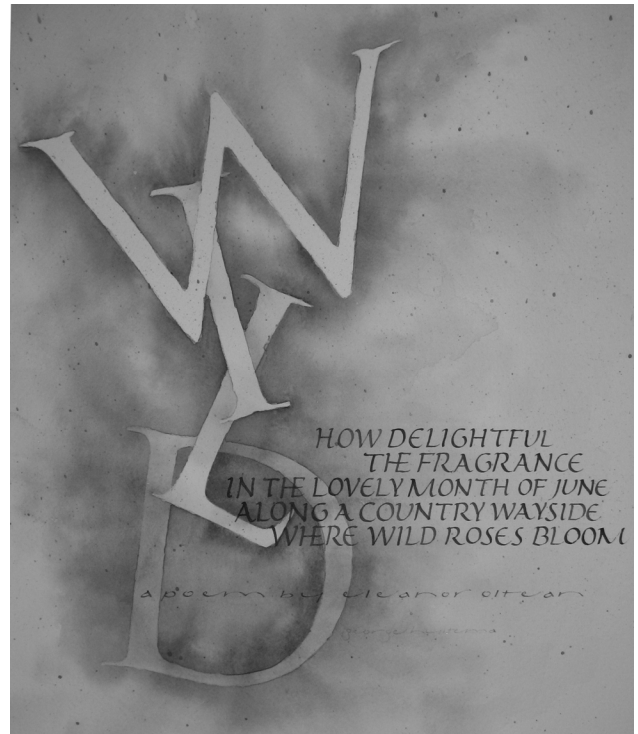
We chose a quote and also a word from the quote which we would use to layer our Trajan letter forms. Gemma provided four-inch Trajan Roman letters on laminated sheets for us to use. First, we traced each letter with pencil onto tracing paper and cut them out individually. Next, we had to decide how

we wanted to layer the letters of our word onto our sheet of watercolour paper. Once that was decided, we took the letters off and used graphite chalks to outline each letter on the underside of the tracing paper. We traced the letter (tracing paper right side up) onto our watercolour paper and the graphite transferred onto the surface. What a great tool!

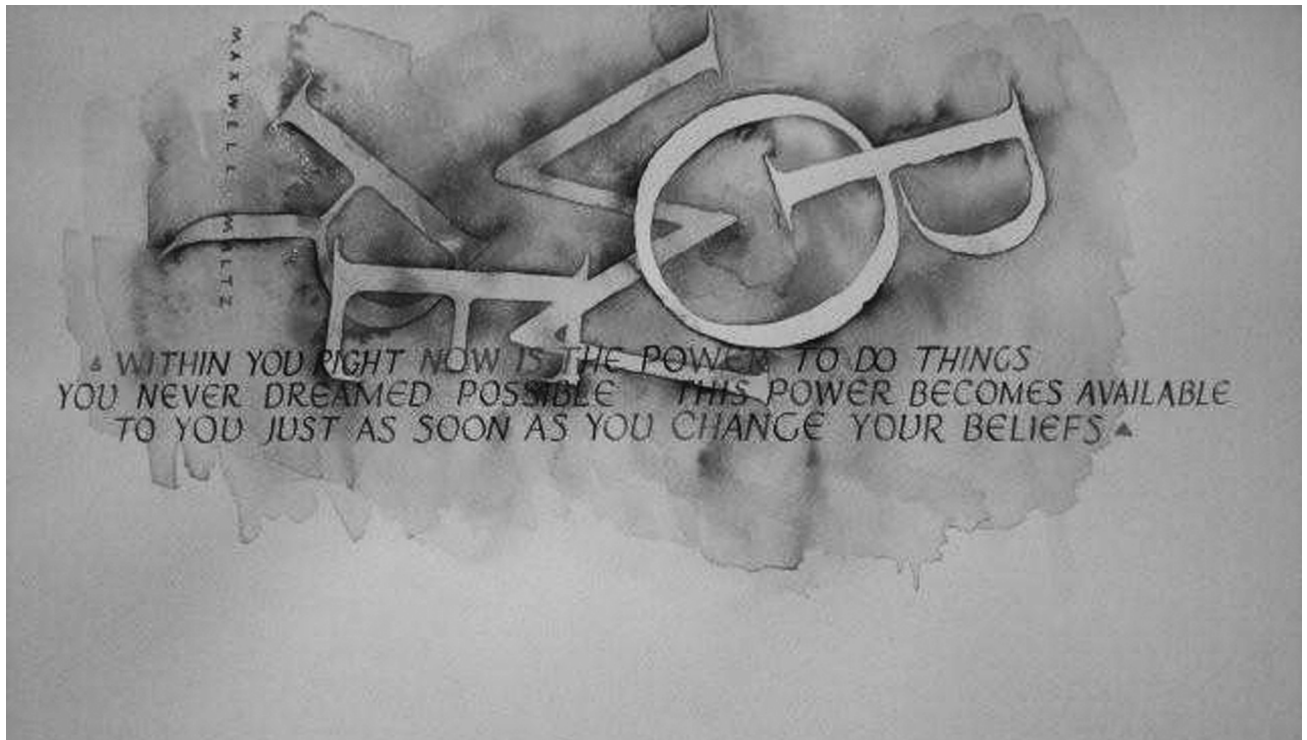
Then we wet the area surrounding the first layer of letters of our word and started to paint. We would carefully apply more shading around the outline of the letter and gradually draw the colour outwards. We moved to the second and third layers, repeating the same process. We also had the option of spattering some paint on the background wash to create a little more interest. Our word was really starting to come alive! Once we were done with our word, we worked on the quote itself either in the Akim Cursive hand or an informal Roman capital style.

Gemma also did a demonstration of the Roman Capitals with the serifs added using a flat edged brush. It was mesmerizing to watch her create each letter so effortlessly and gracefully with the utmost control. We can only practice, practice, practice!

It was great to be able to attend a workshop with an instructor like Gemma who is so incredibly patient. Her kind and gentle nature inspires one to keep working at learning the art of calligraphy. The three days went soooo fast and we were very busy during that time. Thank you, Gemma!



George Huitema



An Akim Cursive by Gemma B.

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v

x y & z: simplicity everywhere ^{0.3}

The example here is a variation based on the Akim Cursive developed by German calligrapher, sculptor and musician Hans-Joachim Burgert. Akim is a hand to suit all, a move away from the regimented, where your own characteristics will come into play. To quote Mr Burgert "we need a Cursive hand, as all cultures have, as a dynamic medium to get away from all the very serious Roman soldiers marching so proudly in their lines".

simplicity everywhere ^{0.8}

simplicity everywhere ^{0.1}

simplicity everywhere ^{3.5m}

simplicity everywhere ^{3/4 B}

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U

V W X Y & Z

Gemma Black Teaching Guide

