

# POINTED BRUSH WORKSHOP with Kathy Guthrie

by Annette Wichmann

There are a number of different types of brush pens available but Kathy prefers the Pentel Color Brush pen, because it has a synthetic bristle tip and it is refillable. It is available in black and other colours. When putting your brush pen away, make sure you bring the bristles to a fine point before recapping the pen. Most other brush pens on the market have felt tips, not brush tips. These pens include: Zig, Tombow, Staedtler-Mars Graphic 3000. Note that the felt tips tend to dull quickly.

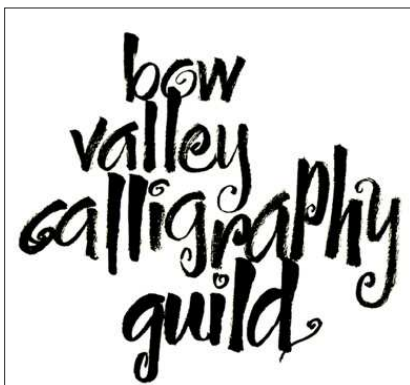
Pointed brush lettering is based on Italic letter forms, written at about a five degree slant. Use the side of the brush for the down stroke. Do not use the tip and do not hold the pen perpendicular to the paper. Put the brush pen to paper, pause and make the down stroke and then flick up back into the down stroke. The pause at the beginning and the flick at the end give the stroke a cap and base. When lettering with a brush pen, it is not always held at the same angle. Depending on the letter you are creating, some pen manipulation may be required. For example with a "t" or an "f" you would change the position of the pen for the cross stroke. For round letters, put pressure on the pen on the down stroke and lighten up on the up stroke, resulting in a thicker line on the left side of the letter and thinner line of the right side. The Speedball textbook contains brush lettering examples. Another good book choice is *Brush Lettering* by Eliza Schulte and Marilyn Reaves, available for purchase through John Neal Bookseller, or it can be borrowed from the BVCG library.

chinook  
calligraphy  
guild  
Jane Hewitt

We started with the similarly shaped lower case letters "i", "l" and "j". We then moved on to the round letters "c", "e" and "o" and finished with letters like "a" and "q". We kept practising groups of letters because, as Kathy says, "Practice is the key to improving your calligraphy skills." Kathy had us write out "Bow Valley Calligraphy Guild" experimenting with at least five variations. Here are some of her suggested formats:

- ♦ Write on a horizontal line.
- ♦ Write on a wavy line using a flexible curve as your guide.
- ♦ Put the word "calligraphy" on the diagonal.
- ♦ If a letter is repeated, use letter variations; there are quite a few repeated letters in Bow Valley Calligraphy Guild – the letter "y" was popular for this exercise.
- ♦ Emphasize some words more than others by making them bold.
- ♦ Make tall, thin letters or short squat ones.

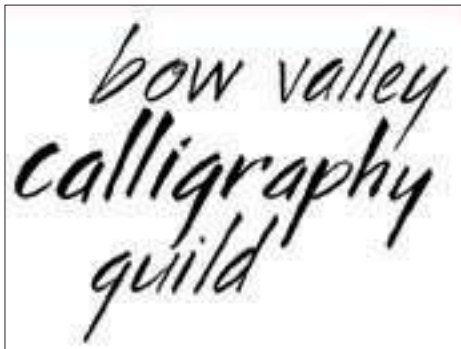
Next we wrote on paper towel with the brush pen; this produces a unique dry brush appearance. Try using brush pens on various surfaces to create interesting results.



Suzanne Murison



Donna Uncles



Annette Wichmann



Donna Uncles



Sue Robertson

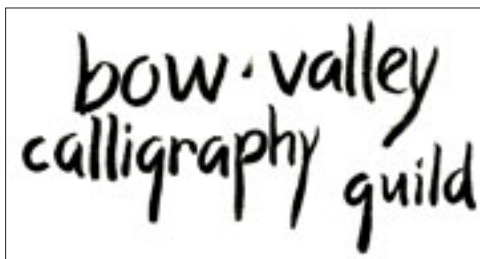
Kathy had us draw a slip of paper from a container. Each piece of paper had two words written on it and we were to create a design using these two words. Some of the word pairs were: Welcome Back, Jazz Festival, Coffee Shop, Open House, Creative Discoveries and Art Show. What do the words make you think about? Kathy suggested stacking letters or words, placing one or all at an angle or on a wavy line. Another method to find a pleasing composition is to write out each word, cut them out, and move them around on a blank sheet of paper. The results were posted on the bulletin board for all to see and there were some great artistic designs!

Capital letters were next. The height of pointed brush letters can vary. Like lower case letters, capital letters combine thick and thin strokes; most of the down strokes are heavier and made more slowly, while the up strokes are thinner and done quickly. For an even, flowing look keep spacing between letters even and parallel as in edged pen lettering. Options for lettering now included mixing upper case and lower case letters, adding some curls inside letters like "O" and "Q" and varying the sizes of the letters within a word.

Kathy assigned us homework to reduce or enlarge our finished pieces from the first day to help us understand how this changes the lines, strokes and look of the design. This can be especially important when working on a commission where the client needs to reproduce the artwork in various sizes.



Lorraine Luyten



Anne Trotter



Norma Bogle



Yogi Grunwald



Donna Uncles



Chris McDermid

Day two started with reviewing the various enlargements and reductions. Some of the pieces looked very good when they were reduced, but minor and even some major flaws became apparent on the enlarged pieces. This eased us nicely into the next phase of exploring layout and design possibilities: centered, flush left, flush right, asymmetrical, left-right justified, wavy line, and circle. Our task: to select a quote, choose a layout, and create a masterpiece using our newly acquired brush pen lettering. The use of thumbnail sketches was discussed. Another design option is to cut out the lines of text or each separate word and experiment with various placement designs. Work on the same size practice paper as your finished piece. Once you are happy with the layout, tape down your paper and your cut out text. Use a straight-edge or t-square if you need to mark lines on your final piece. Kathy also demonstrated how to use masking fluid with both a pointed brush and the Masquepen. The results of everyone's colourful quotes were pinned on the bulletin board, accompanied by many ooohs and aaahs!



Norma Bogle



Barb Doll



As a final project, Kathy had us create a Pointed Brush Lettering Sampler using the following materials:

- ◆ Pentel brush pen
- ◆ Pentel brush pen with an added shadow
- ◆ Gouache
- ◆ Watercolour
- ◆ Metallic pen
- ◆ Masking fluid
- ◆ Outline with masking fluid
- ◆ Mini brush markers
- ◆ Decorate on top your pointed brush letters

Again, the results were exciting. Kathy made sure we had opportunities to practise our new lettering all weekend by assigning us a variety of tools and exercises; all in all, two challenging and fun days with a great instructor. We all came away with some great ideas plus a new lettering technique!



Sue Robertson



Barbara Murray



Suzanne Murison

## Workshop Bonus

Learning from one another is often a workshop bonus. Have a closer look at the rich colours Lorraine Luyten used for her background on page 17. Is it a.) leather? b.) vinyl? c.) ultra suede? d.) a brown paper bag? e.) imported vellum? It is, in fact, a brown paper bag, with a twist! Dampen a brown paper bag. Yes, an ordinary grocery type bag. Crumple it. Using a turkey baster, squirt Rit fabric dyes onto the paper bag. Work over the sink. When the paper is dry it can be ironed. Lorraine learned this technique from Lorraine Cockle at a BVCG enrichment meeting .