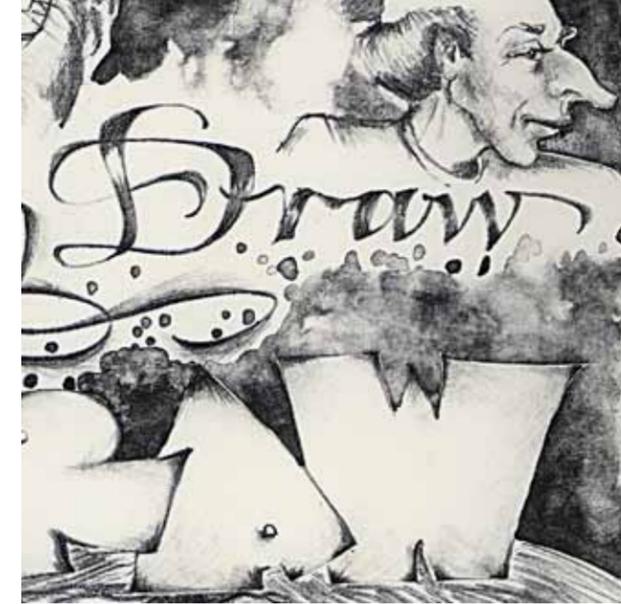




Above: *Ode to René Magritte*, 2011, watercolor, gouache on paper, 11x15". Magritte explored the word/image relationship with studies like this, where only one answer is 'correct.' You may find a relationship between all the words and their images, even though only one is 'right.'
 Right: *The Education of An Artist*, (Shahn), 1996, stone lithograph on paper. Page from a limited edition book of 20 copies.
 On the cover: *A Garden* (Goethe), 2006, watercolor, gouache on paper, 11x15".

Annie Cicale, a multi-talented lettering artist and author of the book *The Art & Craft of Hand Lettering*, will be teaching "Drawing for the Cowardly Calligrapher" on Nov. 3-4. On Friday evening, Nov. 2nd, she will present a talk, "Word and Image." If you can't make her workshop, we hope you'll come meet Annie at her talk! Details will be posted on societyofscribes.org.

Annie Cicale



Could you tell us a little about your background, Annie? What drew you to calligraphy - you had a career as a chemical engineer before you became an artist, right?

As a child, I always loved to write, and when my brother gave me an Osmiroid fountain pen for my 18th birthday, I threw away the accompanying book and began to invent my own writing styles, mostly by copying letters on music albums (Santana was great) and other psychedelia. But mostly I used it to take notes in classes — I majored in chemical engineering because I thought I would welcome the challenge and that it would be cool. Feminism was strong in the early 70's, and Gloria Steinem was my hero. I had been a competitive skier, and those competitive energies were poured into my studies. Unfortunately, I never really understood what I would be asked to DO as an engineer, and when I began to work — for a medical products company, making silicone body parts, with the emphasis on breast augmentation — I wasn't very good at it, nor was it interesting.

Meanwhile, I continued to doodle with my Osmiroid pen. After realizing I'd made a professional mistake, I saved money, and went back to school for a BFA in printmaking. I also took a lot of painting and a few lettering classes, taught grade school art, and then met Sheila Waters — who literally changed my life overnight. (Well, in 8 days. It was a long workshop.)

Any thoughts about what seems to draw people from such diverse backgrounds to calligraphy?

Calligraphy requires a wide range of skills, and to use the cliché, we use both the left and right sides of our brains. It is focused and disciplined, especially at the beginning, but also requires an ability to see shapes and to repeat them. It takes a great deal of persistence to master the craft, and cannot be learned by just dabbling. So it attracts people who have already learned to work hard and excel. Some scribes begin with the intuitive parts, emphasizing grace and movement, but have to struggle to build structure into their forms, where others work the opposite way, mastering form but working hard to get controlled movement into their letters. So as teachers, we try to help both sides, getting analytical with the dancers

and scribbling with the engineers, hoping they will all find a place on that continuum. And we hope to motivate them enough to go home and put the time in to really understand and master the craft.

You'll be teaching a class for us called "Drawing for the Cowardly Calligrapher"! Why do you think so many calligraphers are intimidated by drawing?

Drawing is fundamental to visual communication, just as reading and writing are fundamental to verbal communication. But drawing is not a survival skill in our culture, and is viewed as an extra, from elementary school on up. I was fortunate to have been encouraged to draw from childhood. But only by taking drawing classes, however, with principles discussed and exercises presented, have I been able to develop skill. Since many calligraphers come to this craft without an art background, drawing is always something they think they missed. Surprisingly, calligraphers have an incredible sense of shape and line, and just need a little help using these to draw something besides letterforms. One of my passions is calligraphy, but another is drawing, and I hope to share this second one with those who love the first.

The title of your Friday evening lecture is "Word and Image." Would you give us a hint as to what you'll be talking about?

The relationship between word and image is the fundamental principle of the modern world of communication, with electronic media able to cheaply present both. Graphic designers constantly work to present ideas using photographs, drawings, paintings, hand lettering and type, adding animation to enhance it all. As calligraphers, we also work within this realm, though with a smaller range of media, presenting our texts in ways that enhance their content. I break these ideas down into a number of 'chapters': Word AND Image, Word AS Image, Image IN Word, Word IN Image and Letters AS Image. I present the work of other artists who might be of influence in the choices we make, and show my own work as well, spanning over thirty years of investigations. 🙌

You have a heavy teaching schedule — booked through 2013! — but you've been teaching in Italy recently, and will be there again next June. What will you teach?

Because I have written a basic book on calligraphy, I find I am asked to teach more often. Besides the US and Canada, a few years ago I taught in Japan, and last year in Australia for their Summer School in Winter conference. It's great fun, and an honor to be able to share what I know with so many people. The Italian class is geared more for the general art world of watercolor painters, book artists and journalers. We'll be making books, but structures may vary, and of course the content will reflect each student's experience of Italy. It will be held in Cortona, in the middle of Tuscany, with field trips to other wonderful sites, especially Florence.

Since you have such a heavy schedule (and even though I know you are a woman of great energy!) when do you find time for personal projects? Anything especially exciting in your studio right now?

Thankfully my teaching schedule has lessened this year, and it's nice to be able to spend more time in my studio. I've feel I'm at the beginning of another big creative surge. I spent about a year updating my book, and am now back to work on some of my artist's books. I particularly enjoy making tiny books in medium size editions. They are affordable treasures for people, and are fun to trade. The more complex ones have begun to find homes, with a few private collectors, as well as the libraries at Indiana University, Yale and the University of Denver. I've been working with a scientific illustrator for the last few years, both team teaching and taking her classes, and I'm finding that plant forms, flowers and leaves are emerging from my brush more and more. So stay tuned and we'll see what happens next!

Thanks, Annie, looking forward to your workshop!



Grey Alphabet, 2005, graphite on paper, 5x8"



The Yellowstone Ecosystem, 1987, watercolor, gouache on paper, 11x24". Commissioned by a forester friend in Montana, illustrations done in December with a foot of snow on the ground, using dried specimens in the U of M's Botany Dept. and photographs.



Above: **Journal page - Peony**, 2007, water soluble pencils on paper, 10x13" double page spread. After a journal-making workshop with Sharon Zeugin, I continued experimenting with the same media/treatment of word and image.

Right: **Wisdom of Life** (Lin Yutang), 2000, watercolor, gouache on paper, 11x15". Some of my paintings sit around for a time while I search for an appropriate text. Below: **A Century of Women's Blues**, 1997, mixed media on paper, 22x30". Part of a series of quilt studies, triggered by the line, "Quilts are the blues of the American woman." This is a log cabin design with names of many blues singers, some never recorded, around the border.



"Surprisingly, calligraphers have an incredible sense of shape and line, and just need a little help using these to draw something besides letterforms. One of my passions is calligraphy, but another is drawing, and I hope to share this second one with those who love the first."

—ANNIE CICALÉ

