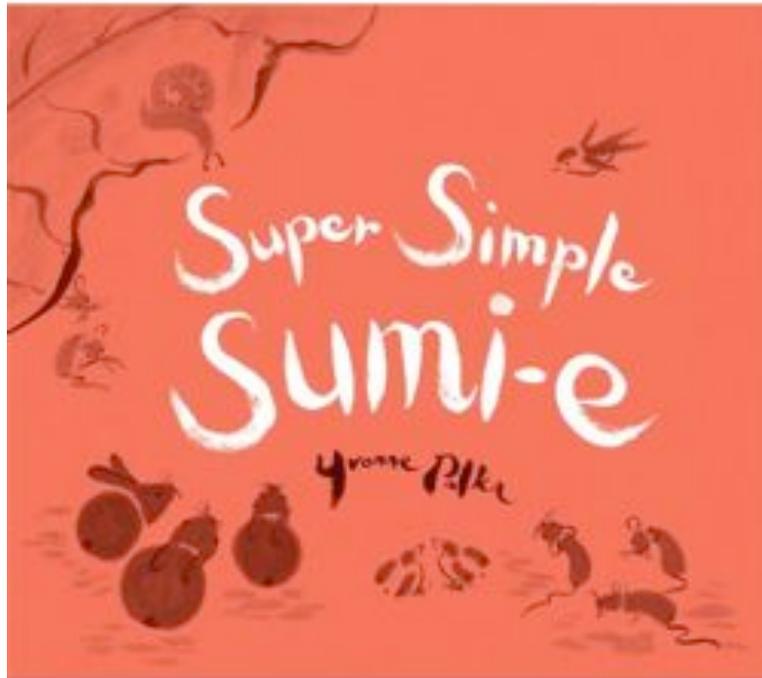


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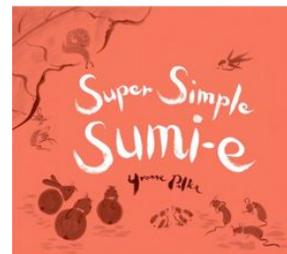
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Retired College Professor Follows Her Passion and Launches a Second Career

(Whidbey Island, Washington) – When Yvonne Palka of Whidbey Island, Washington, was a child she wanted to be an artist, but at her parents’ urging she became a scientist and a college professor instead. Now since retiring, she’s following her passion by launching a second career.



“I woke up one morning and I said to myself, ‘You know if you died tomorrow morning and you were looking back from the other side at your life here on earth, you would be really mad that you hadn’t done anything with your art in this lifetime.’ I got the message and decided to do something with my art.” she said.

Not long afterwards, a friend invited her to a sumi-e (Asian brush painting) class and she quickly got hooked. Sumi-e is an Asian style of painting that has been practiced for well over a thousand years. The art form’s earliest practitioners were Buddhist monks trained in the art of clarity, concentration and simplicity.

Today, sumi-e is practiced by artists all around the world. Palka explains what appeals to her most about it: “Sumi-e is about accessing your heart and inner energy so when you are painting your strokes are coming from your heart and the energy is flowing from you out into your arm, into the brush and onto the paper.”

Palka has become especially good at painting sumi-e style birds and animals, but perhaps her favorite creatures to paint are dragons. In fact, there’s a whole section on how to bring these mythological creatures to life in Palka’s new book, *Super Simple Sumi-e*, published in January 2012 by HeartRock Press of Langley, Wash.

Super Simple Sumi-e, intended for children ages 8 and up, is an instruction book that provides directions for getting started, teaches kids how to do the various brush strokes and explains step-by step how to bring animals, such as snails, mice, rabbits, birds and panda bears, to life with a few simple brush strokes. Also taught are the steps involved in drawing trees and of course dragons.

These days, Palka is back in the classroom teaching the ancient art form to American children, using the steps outlined in her book. “Over the last couple of years I’ve developed effective ways to teach sumi-e in schools,” she explained.

“Typically I will have the whole room set up so when the kids come in every place has the paper and all the supplies - the brush, the ink, the water - ready to go. I start by telling them a little bit about the history of sumi-e, then I use a document camera to demonstrate the strokes and we start painting,” said Palka.

Not only do the kids get to bring home the art they create, Palka leaves her paintings behind for the class to enjoy. She gets a kick out of the fact that some of the schools, like Weaver Lake Elementary in Maple Grove, Minn., have framed her art and put it up in their media centers.

Librarian Mary Litwinczuk invited Palka to the school after learning about her painting presentation from the parent of one of her students. “We are fortunate to have a document camera, so as Yvonne demonstrated a stroke on the document camera, the students were encouraged to try the stroke on their own paper. They painted birds, panda bears and dragons. The pictures were so good I was wowed,” she said.

Super Simple Sumi-e is available for purchase via the author’s website, <http://www.nwdragons.com>, as well as through Amazon.com. The book retails for \$14.95. Palka’s other title, the novel *Dragon Fire Ocean Mist*, is also available for sale in both places. The book, which retails for \$12.95, tells the story of a brother and sister who befriend a colorful family of dragons and help them bring peace to Shi Shi Beach on the wild ocean coast of Washington State.

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About the Author

Yvonne Palka is a retired college professor who taught psychology, biology and interdisciplinary studies first at the University of Washington and later at Antioch University in Seattle before retiring in 2000. She is also a grandmother, biologist and naturalist who is passionate about introducing children and adults to the wonders of the natural world. Yvonne loves sumi-e (Asian brush painting) for the simple elegance with which it captures the spirit of nature. Inspired by this simplicity she teaches children and adults the essence of sumi-e painting in schools and other community settings. Yvonne lives on Whidbey Island, Washington and Minneapolis, Minnesota. A portion of the proceeds from the sale of *Super Simple Sumi-e* goes to support arts education programs for children.



Title:	<i>Super Simple Sumi-e</i>
Author:	Yvonne Palka
Pub. Date:	2012
Publisher:	Heart Rock Press
Cost:	\$14.95
ISBN:	978-0-9817668-1-2

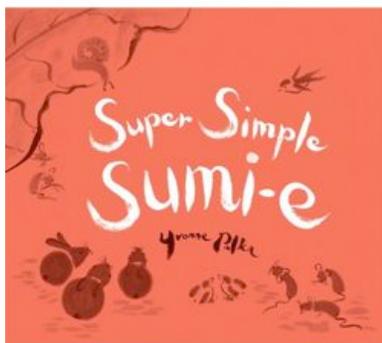
For review copies contact Rachel M. Anderson, Publicist at 952-240-2513 or via e-mail: rachel@rmapublicity.com

More information about the book can be found at <http://www.nwdragons.com>.

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Praise for...



“Your book is not only inspiring, but also taught me a great deal about the history and techniques of sumi-e. Although it is supposedly a children’s art book, I learned much from it.”

- **Cilla Walford, Artist and Instructor, Minneapolis Community and Technical College, Minneapolis, MN**

“*Super Simple Sumi-e* is a visual delight. Short phrases weave their way around the charming, step-by-step illustrations, making the painting process easy to follow. As I turned the pages, I felt I was entering a new world, a wonderful treasure hunt. This little book will bring hours of creative fun to anyone who picks up a brush and follows along. The author/illustrator shows you how to make your own birds, rabbits, mice, pandas with bamboo for them to eat, and even dragons! And who knows, perhaps you will create creatures of your very own.”

- **Marilyn Webberly, Artist, Seattle, WA**

“*Super Simple Sumi-e* is a most delightful ‘un-coloring’ book, encouraging each participant through playful experimentation to become familiar with the heart energy that underlies all true creation. This is a book sorely needed in our increasingly mechanical times.”

- **Eva Sher, Poet, Sumi-e Artist, Author and Illustrator of *The Scintillating Little Dragon*, Medina, WA**

“My 8 and 6 years old granddaughters were over this weekend and we had a *Super Simple Sumi-e* painting party. I went over the basic brush strokes with them first, then we started out with snail and mouse pictures. Ruby, my 8 year old, tried the panda on her own by looking at your easy to follow instructions and did a terrific job. The book is nicely laid out, and the few steps involved are perfect for kids of all ages. We’ll try painting new critters from the book next time they’re over.”

- **Susan Frederickson, sumi-e artist, Minneapolis, MN**

“This is the most adorable book in the universe!”

- **Valerie Sensabaugh, editor, Oakland, CA**

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About Yvonne Palka, author

Super Simple Sumi-e & Dragon Fire Ocean Mist

Yvonne Palka of Whidbey Island, Wash., and Minneapolis, Minn., is an award-winning author and artist who rediscovered her creative side later in life. “When I was a child I loved art and I wanted to be an artist but my parents didn’t think that was such a good idea so I gave up and became a scientist instead,” she said.

Palka majored in biology and psychology at Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania, then attended graduate school at U.C.L.A. She went on to become a college professor, first at the University of Washington, Seattle, and later at Antioch University Seattle. She taught psychology, biology and interdisciplinary studies until retiring in 2000.



She actually rediscovered her passion for art in the late 1990s. “I had a good friend who had been at about the same level as me artistically in the 1980s. She had gone on to pursue her art and had gotten pretty good. I thought to myself if she can do it I can do it, so I decided that I would.”

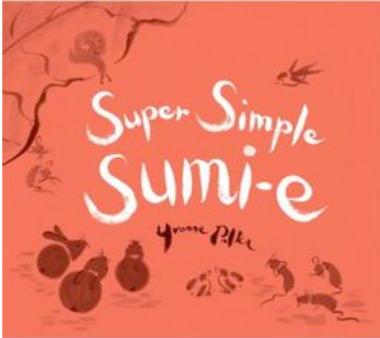
In 1998, Palka’s friend invited her to attend a class with one of Seattle’s better-known sumi-e artists. Prescilla Maynard taught her the essence of the art form, which is often referred to as Asian brush painting, and she was hooked. “Sumi-e is about accessing your heart and inner energy so when you are painting your strokes are coming from your heart and the energy is flowing from you out into your arm and into the brush and onto the paper,” said Palka.

In addition to painting, Yvonne Palka also writes. She recently published *Super Simple Sumi-e*, a book that teaches youngsters, and those who are young-at-heart, how to create a lot of different birds and animals with a few simple brush strokes. She is also the author of the award-winning adventure novel, *Dragon Fire Ocean Mist*, a story set in and around Shi Shi Beach, one of her favorite natural wonders in the Pacific Northwest. The book won a bronze medal in the Moonbeam Children’s Book Awards in 2009.

To arrange an interview with Yvonne Palka, or to set up a school visit, contact Rachel M. Anderson, Publicist, RMA Publicity at 952-240-2513 or via e-mail: rachel@rmapublicity.com.

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**Ask Yvonne Palka,
author
*Super Simple Sumi-e***



1. What is sumi-e and what makes it so special?
2. How did you come to be interested in sumi-e?
3. Why did you decide to write a sumi-e instruction book for American children?
4. Why do you think the art form is so appealing to elementary school-aged children here in the United States?
5. What's next for you? Are there more books in the works?

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Local Artist Finds a Super Simple Way to Inspire Creativity in Kids



By Rachel M. Anderson

(Maple Grove, Minn.) - *"Look what I just did!"*

"Wow, I can't believe how real that looks."

"Look, I painted a panda bear and he's eating bamboo."

"My dragon is breathing fire!"

There was a sense of excitement and surprise in the voices of fourth graders at Weaver Lake Elementary in Maple Grove, Minnesota, recently. In less than an hour's time, they had learned how to paint a masterpiece suitable for framing.

The kids were the lucky recipients of a visit by sumi-e artist Yvonne Palka, a part-time Maple Grove resident. Sumi-e, or Asian brush painting, is a style of painting that has been practiced for well over 1,000 years. Buddhist monks were the first known sumi-e artists. Today, it is a style practiced by artists around the world.

Palka was first introduced to sumi-e by a friend back in 1998 and has been hooked ever since. She especially enjoys painting birds, panda bears and dragons, the mythical creatures she has been making up stories about since her own children were young.

"Dragons captivate my imagination because deep down they are the guardians of the sacred - and they are unpredictable. I find them delightful to paint because they mirror my own moods when I paint them - and since they are mythical beasts they can be painted in so many ways and manifest so many different qualities," says Palka.

Dragons inspired her first book, *Dragon Fire Ocean Mist*, an award-winning adventure story set in the Pacific Northwest that she both wrote and illustrated. They are also prominently featured in her latest project, *Super Simple Sumi-e*, an instruction book that gives youngsters an introduction to the various brush strokes and techniques required to bring their paintings to life.

Palka says she got her inspiration for *Super Simple Sumi-e* from the instruction books a friend had brought back from Asia. *Super-Simple Sumi-e* begins with an introduction to the various brush strokes kids will need to learn, then shows them how to use them to create trees, flowers, mice, rabbits, birds, panda bears and dragons. After three years of doing presentations in schools, she has developed effective ways to teach sumi-e to kids.



“I start by telling the kids a little about sumi-e and what it is, then show them how to hold the brush and get paint on the brush effectively, how to make a variety of lines and how to load the brush with black and grey,” says Palka. “I have been very impressed with how quickly the kids pick it up.”

When she first started sumi-e painting, Palka followed the traditional method, actually making her own ink. She would grind an ink stick composed of pine soot on a stone with a shallow depression craved in it, slowly mixing in water. Because the process can take some time, these days she comes to the schools with a bottle of ink ready to go.

When she appeared at Weaver Lake Elementary recently, the first thing she did was set up the materials so everything would be ready to go when the kids came into the classroom, then she demonstrated how to bring animals to life on the page. Librarian Mary Litwinczuk says she was “wowed” by the paintings the kids created.

“The teachers tell me that the students still talk about how great it was. In fact, one student liked the presentation so much, her teacher allowed her to skip her physical education class so she could take part in the next presentation,” says Litwinczuk.

Palka says that while the book is intended for children, adults are purchasing it too. “For those who have always wanted to paint but just couldn’t do it, now they have an excuse to learn,” she says.

About the Author

Yvonne Palka is a retired college professor who taught psychology, biology and interdisciplinary studies first at the University of Washington and later at Antioch University in Seattle before retiring in 2000. She is also a grandmother, biologist and naturalist who is passionate about introducing children and adults to the wonders of the natural world. Yvonne loves sumi-e (Asian brush painting) for the simple elegance with which it captures the spirit of nature. Inspired by this simplicity she teaches children and adults the essence of sumi-e painting in schools and other community settings. Yvonne lives on Whidbey Island, Washington, and Minneapolis, Minnesota. A portion of the proceeds from the sale of *Super Simple Sumi-e* goes to support arts education programs for children.



Super Simple Sumi-e retails for \$14.95 and is available for purchase at Amazon.com and on the author's website, www.nwdragons.com. The author's first sumi-e illustrated book, *Dragon Fire, Ocean Mist*, an adventure story set in the Pacific Northwest, is also available for purchase. It retails for \$12.95.

Palka hopes to publish more sumi-e instruction books in the future. Among the topics she is considering, how to paint the animals of the Pacific Northwest and Minnesota.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: This article is being offered to you copyright free and cost free. If you wish to publish it as is, please contact me for photography. I can also put you in touch with Yvonne Palka if you wish to do a story of your own. – Rachel M. Anderson, RMA Publicity, 952-240-2513; rachel@rmapublicity.com

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