



Sophie Sanders

July 2021 Featured Artist



Sophie Sanders, "Flowers for My Family (2)"
Pen and ink, watercolor, 17.5" x 23.5"

Sanders was born and grew up in Taiwan. At the age of one, she contracted polio, which severely impacted her ability to walk. Throughout childhood she depended on two crutches to move about. Since she couldn't play with kids outdoors, she spent her time learning how to draw. Fast forward to the Bay Area where in 1979 she enrolled at the California College of Arts and Crafts (now called California College of the Arts); in 1982 she earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts. She married and lived on the East Coast for a while then relocated back to the Bay Area in 2008.

Due to Post-polio Syndrome (known as PPS), under medical advice she began using a wheelchair for mobility in 1989. This helps her conserve her dwindling energy which she prefers to use creating drawings and paintings. These creations give her a sense of liberation -- something not available to her in the physical world. She keeps developing her skills and talent for drawing and painting because working from pure imagination allows her to construct a world filled with beauty, harmony and whimsy. Sanders explains, "I just draw or paint whatever happens to come to my mind, either from imagination or from memory, in the moment. It is truly "playing" on paper! Accuracy is not my concern, but 'having fun' on paper is! My main goal in creating art works is to be liberated from reality, to gain a form of freedom, which doesn't exist in reality due to my severe disability."

The world she inhabits in her art is far from any wheelchair. The way she links lines and shapes into a lush floral reality filled with interesting details begs you to linger. Each drawing is a world unto itself, a look at floral whorls and twirls you never imagined could live together in such harmony. Her drawings offer us bouquets from her imaginary garden.

The Art Gallery at Wilder is virtual because it is closed due to COVID-19 restrictions. If you have any questions about Sanders' artwork or the exhibit please contact Curators Denise Nomura and Aniston Breslin at wildergallery@lamorindaarts.org. At press time it was unknown when Wilder will reopen; please check www.lamorindaarts.org/current-exhibits-wilder/ for up-to-date information.

Sanders invites you to view her exhibit at Wilder at <https://LamorindaArts.org/current-exhibits-wilder/> during the month of July 2021.

The Art Gallery at Wilder is managed by the Lamorinda Arts Council and is located in the Wilder Art & Garden Center at 20 Orinda Fields Lane in Orinda. Due to the Pandemic it is currently closed. Questions please contact the curator at wildergallery@lamorindaarts.org.

