

Biography

Jane Shibata is an adjunct faculty member in the art department at Santa Monica College in California and runs a design business specializing in the lettering arts in Los Angeles. Jane worked for the City of Los Angeles as a calligrapher for a few years and is currently doing contract work for the the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors Graphic Arts division. She is a long-time Society for Calligraphy Southern California member who has served on the board, coordinated outreach events, and taught many workshops for the Society for Calligraphy and Letters California Style conference. Jane has also taught for a few other guilds in California and other states, and two international calligraphy conferences.



Instructor Interview: Jane Shibata



What is the most challenging calligraphy hand to teach, and why?

The most challenging hand to teach is the italic hand because there are many variations of it, both historical and contemporary interpretations. Plus the consistency of the slant of the letters adds to the many things one has to think about when writing italics. But the Trajan roman capitals can be challenging also because of their geometric features and the details in the structure, such as the fine serifs. Keeping these capitals absolutely vertical and the shapes consistently the same can be frustrating.

How do you get into the state of flow?

Whenever I have to start doing some calligraphy or lettering work, I have this very strange ritual of cleaning up and organizing my work space first. Sometimes I have to turn on public radio or the tv depending on the project I have to do. Then, I actually do some quick warm-ups of some letters or strokes and to get my pens to work well.



What is the one thing every calligraphy student should know?

Well, I think there's more than one thing every calligraphy student should know.

One: learn from a very good teacher (being only self-taught can have its drawbacks)

Two: be open-minded

Three: the concept of consistency in all hands

Four: persistence

Five: practice, practice, practice