

GLOBAL SCRIBES

• Loredana Zega • Slovenia •

Loredana is a devoted freelance calligrapher and an artist from Slovenia in Europe who is blessed with a lyrical first name from Italian heritage. I have been watching her journey since her days at CLAS, and delight in knowing that there are such talented young letter artists who are so enthusiastic about embracing their skills and stepping outside the box. Loredana has hit the floor running, or should I say, she is literally dancing... all around the world...with her fresh approaches and passion for letters...

JW: Loredana, tell us a little about yourself...

Calligraphy is my passion for almost 26 years now! My aunt was a designer and we received lots of greeting cards written calligraphically... I was really dying to see those magical letters! (as I still do) So I started to learn calligraphy very early. But in those times it was really hard to buy something as special as a calligraphy pen. So when I was on a dance competition in Denmark I bought my first one and at this point my painful (!) way of self learning really started. I was quite a strict teacher to myself and I had a passion to achieve perfection. My first alphabets as templates came from my aunt, but soon they were not precise enough for me. So, the next step were fonts! I printed out a letter at a time and started to practice. I discovered lots of things by myself and this knowledge is priceless and firm.

After finishing high school in Slovenia, I figured out that I could turn my hobby into business and so I started to write exercise books for teaching calligraphy and became a freelancer at the age of 21. Through teaching I gained a lot of practical knowledge, but that wasn't enough for me. I found an organisation which holds an English National diploma in Calligraphy and organises calligraphy master classes (The Calligraphy Lettering Art Society - CLAS - London). My first was with Denis Brown in 2007. I finally gained the National Diploma in Calligraphy in 2007 intermediate level and in 2013 – advanced level, passed with distinction. For the last 14 years I've been working for many private clients and institutions besides teaching and exhibiting worldwide.

JW: Can you describe the time when you first realised that creating calligraphy/ lettering was something you absolutely had to do?

When I saw calligraphy written diplomas or hand written posters in the library or like I mentioned - my aunt's cards, I was just blown away! They completely took my breath away and I just kept staring at them. But as I had also many different hobbies in adolescence the choice of being professional calligrapher was really a decision at the age of 18, I guess. I could be a professional dancer, too!

JW: What type of calligraphic work do you most enjoy doing?

Hmm... there are lots types of calligraphic work that I enjoy... but most of all I enjoy doing live performances. In those I can include my other passions like theatre, dance and singing, which is really fulfilling. That is why I wrote my Musical "A day of a calligrapher".

JW: We would love to hear about any interesting calligraphic projects you have worked on recently. Tell us about them...

I have just completed one large family tree with 430 names! Can you imagine? It was written in three layers of wood plates measuring 110 cm x 180 cm. The biggest I have ever made. What else... I have just made two art pieces with my loving brush - for a Westerloo (Belgium) calligraphy competition and won! And one of my favourites is a big performance in Rennes (France), where I wrote large inscriptions on the floor and created a giant calligraphic piece on stage. An unforgettable experience...

Below: Calligraphy on a 6m x 2m wall in the town of Bled, 2013





JW: Do you have a dream project?

I would love to create my musical in collaboration with dancers, singers and other artists – to make it really special and then play it in some biggest theatres. And the other one: I would like to create a giant calligraphy art piece on a façade of one high building. These are my dreams...

JW: What are the 3 most indispensable items in your studio?

A high quality brush, a gouache and a really good paper. That's all I need to be happy!

JW: Where do you find inspiration for your work?

My inspiration is absolutely nature... being there – in the woods, drinking water from the creeks, breathing the fragrance of the rain and dancing among the snowflakes – artworks by themselves. The inspiration is a freedom of a running Samoyed, his smile and joy... then my heart is full of inspiration, happiness and gratitude.

JW: Describe a real-life situation that inspired you...

Oh, there was a workshop in Haus Werdenfels, Germany. My first international... And the last evening they prepared me a big wall covered with paper and said: "So, Loredana, please let us see how you dance with your biggest brushes!" And they made a terrible mistake... they gave me a glass of wine, too! I started to enjoy myself writing backwards – like Leonardo daVinci, imitating the voice of Jean Larcher how the copperplate should be written, explaining why the Rustica script is impossible to learn... and so on and on... It was really great show, with a great supporting audience and in one moment I knew this would become my Musical for the 34th international calligraphy conference in San Francisco! The next day I started to write the concept and in the next months I changed the text of 6 well known rock songs into calligraphy themes, went into a music studio and recorded them. I wrote all the text that I am speaking on the stage, made choreography for dancing, recorded 2 new videos and finally prepared all the calligraphy inserts that I make on the stage live. Quite a huge work, but really enjoyable, especially when it was presented in Person Theatre (San Francisco) in front of 400 calligraphers!.

JW: What is the best advice you've been given regarding calligraphy or arts practice in general?

It was about blank spaces from Denis Brown. It is about the harmony of the spaces between letters and words... Artur Schnabel once said: "The notes I handle no better than many pianists. But the pauses between the notes - ah, that is where the art resides." It is the same in calligraphy or dance.

JW: How do you feel about the role you consider a calligrapher has these days in society?

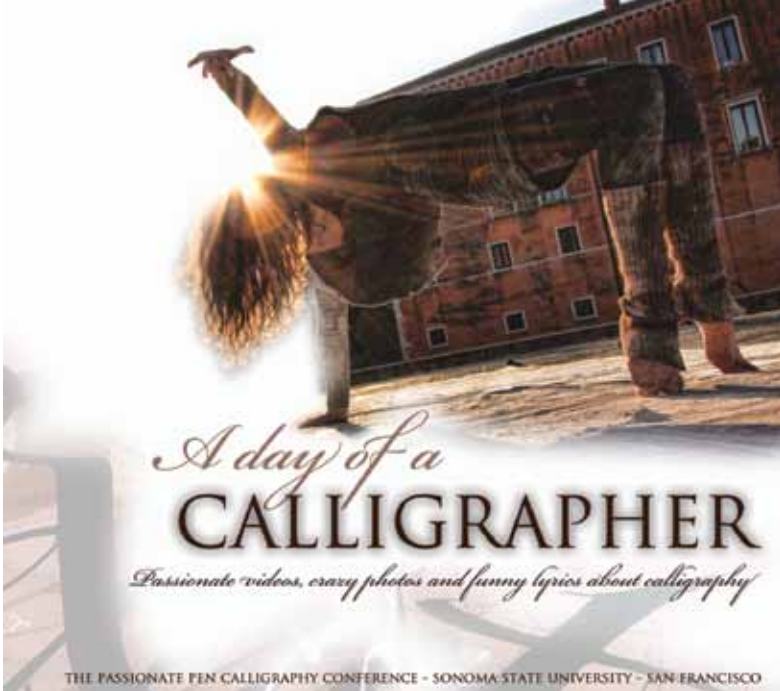
Do we still have a reserved place in heaven? ;) Well, one big impact as a calligrapher made Herman Zapf, who created gorgeous fonts that I meet on every step around the world. I feel that calligraphers should have a bigger role especially nowadays. Bringing back a handwriting culture, a visual consciousness, a sense of beauty, proportions and finally, through practising the letters, a contact with ourselves

JW: What do you like most about your involvement with calligraphy?

Most of all the freedom that I have in my life. That I can do whatever I want to do. Sometimes it can be hard to be your own boss, of course. Calligraphy offers me a stage where I can express all of my passions.

Above: "Povodni Moz"(Waterman) 100 x 100 cm, 2014, brush, acrylic metal colours on wood and Below: Lamp: 12 x 12 x 45 cm, 2013





Above: Cover design for Loredana's CD - "A day of a calligrapher", 2015

JW: How has your calligraphy practice changed over time?

In the first 7 years of freelancing my progress was so evident, that I couldn't see my calligraphy from a month ago! Then it slowly got better, and this was Denis Brown's fault! Then the development rapidly increased... there were some crucial moments that changed my calligraphy practice. One was Europa Scriptorium conference in 2012, creating beside the great Jean Larcher and to whom I dedicated my Musical. There I started to use a brush technique. Then I think it was a gorgeous Carl Rohr's workshop where I met W&N 995 brush and got inspired of so many different ways of writing he showed us. That was in Regensburg, Germany and the organizer invited me to teach the next year's workshop – my first international. After that I really mastered the brush and it became my top tool. I dedicated a song to it. Rolling on the river (Tina Turner) became Rolling with a brush, yeah...

JW: Are there any themes in your work that you like to pursue?

Oh, yes. I think there is plenty of room to improve my live performance, especially my Musical. I would like to continue with my work on the walls, which I like a lot. And I would like to refine my wooden – veneer lamps. But I never limit myself with anything. If something new comes to my mind, I just go for it.

JW: Is there a calligrapher whose work has inspired you...what is it about their work or approach that you admire?

Hmm, only one? Laurent Pflughaupt is in the first place for sure. I admire his way of design, changing the scripts from traditional to top modern and still maintaining the perfect stroke, using the materials and techniques on a very high level. He is my true inspiration.

JW: Do you have any words of wisdom for those starting out on their own calligraphic journey?

First ask yourself: "Is this my passion? Do I want to dedicate my time to beautiful letters?" If the answer is "YES" then I say: "You can do it!"

Nobody is born as an artist (or calligrapher) but with a passion for it. And this love gives us energy to exercise and to dedicate our time to do what we love. This is a recipe: hard work, self discipline and lots of self criticism...

JW: And lastly...do you have a question that you are still seeking an answer to...calligraphic or otherwise?

Calligraphic: How the Rustic script was developed?! Come on... Written in so many angles? No way!

"THANK you for this interview. I feel honored that you find my work interesting... I wish you, the readers and calligraphers all the best... Maybe we meet someday" Hugs, Loredana

If you would like to see more of Loredana's exciting work, check out her website www.kaligrafija.org or you can follow her on facebook: Calligraphy-Loredana-Zega.

Julie Williams

Left: "Peace": 45 x 35cm, 2016

Below: Writing outside on a 15 meter wall, San Francisco, 2015

