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Volume 1 Issue 4

08/07/2023

# Club Macchia

Exciting things happening with Club Macchia events in July-August.

## Painting sessions/events



Top left, a dab painting by Suzanne Keavney, painted all'aperto in Cottage Grove. Below that image, is my demo painting for the same learning session. Bottom image on the left is a cheerleader from Brownsville High school handing out Pez treats at last years "Stand By Me Day" paintout in Brownsville.

In keeping with Club Macchia's mission of bring art education, exhibits, and events to rural Oregon areas, this year we will again sponsor the annual "Barbizon Brownsville Paintout.", July 23<sup>rd</sup> on Main Street in Brownsville.



## Verga and "Verismo"

Celebrating Giovanni Verga: A Journey into Verismo Literature

Italy is abuzz with excitement as it commemorates the 100th birth anniversary of one of its most revered literary figures, Giovanni Verga. This iconic Italian writer, born on October 2, 1879, left an indelible mark on the world of literature with his profound understanding and portrayal of the everyday lives of the middle and lower classes. His masterful works, characterized by their verismo style, continue to captivate readers and inspire generations of writers even a century after his birth.

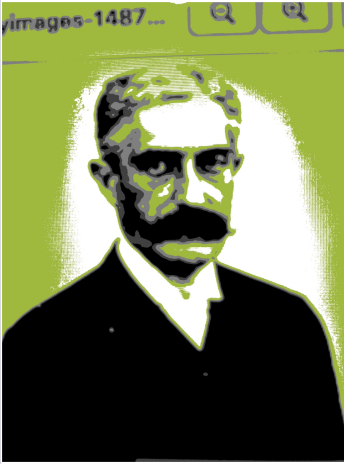
Verga's verismo writings form the essence of his literary contribution, as they illuminate the joys, struggles, and complexities of ordinary people living ordinary lives. The verismo movement emerged in Italy during the late 19th century as a reaction against the romanticized and idealized portrayals of society prevalent at the time. Instead, verismo aimed to bring forth the unvarnished truth of life, highlighting the stark realities faced by



Above: Martin Sostre followed by PEZ girl, BAA Brownsville

## Celebrating Giovanni Verga: A Journey into Verismo Literature

the lower classes and the middle class.



Verga, considered the leading figure of **Italian verismo**, possessed a unique talent for weaving together intricate narratives that delved deep into the human condition. His works, such as "**I Malavoglia**" (**The House by the Medlar Tree**) and "**Mastro-Don Gesualdo**," offer poignant glimpses into the struggles of ordinary individuals, exploring their desires, frustrations, and aspirations. Verga's characters are multi-dimensional and relatable, as they navigate the complexities of family dynamics, social pressures, and economic hardships.

One of the key aspects of Verga's verismo style is his meticulous attention to detail. He painted vivid pictures of the characters' surroundings, immersing readers in the landscapes, architecture, and customs of rural Sicily, where many of his stories are set. This descriptive richness not only served to enhance the authenticity of his narratives but also contributed to a deeper understanding of the characters' lives and the social contexts in which they existed.

Moreover, Verga's verismo writings transcended the boundaries of mere storytelling. They became powerful social commentaries, shedding light on the struggles and inequalities faced by the middle and lower classes. By focusing on the everyday lives of ordinary individuals, Verga gave a voice to those often overlooked by society. His works resonated with readers of all backgrounds, sparking empathy and raising awareness of the shared human experience that transcends social hierarchies.

To celebrate Verga's centenary, Italy is hosting a series of conferences and events to honor his literary legacy. These gatherings aim to delve deeper into the themes and techniques of his verismo writings, examining their relevance in today's world. Scholars, writers, and enthusiasts will gather to analyze Verga's contributions, discussing how his work has influenced subsequent generations of writers and shaped the trajectory of Italian literature.

The renewed attention on Verga's works also brings forth a crucial opportunity for contemporary readers to revisit his writings. In an era marked by rapid change, technological advancements, and



societal transformations, Verga's verismo narratives act as a reminder of the enduring power of literature to capture the essence of the human experience. They invite readers to reflect on the timeless themes of family, love, societal pressures, and the struggle for survival.

As Italy celebrates the 100th birth anniversary of Giovanni Verga, it is not only a moment of remembrance but also a time to recognize his contributions to Italian literature. His verismo writings continue to be cherished for their ability to transcend time, offering profound insights into the lives of ordinary people. In the words of Verga himself, **"Truth is beauty, and beauty is truth."** And it is through his masterful storytelling that he revealed the beauty of the ordinary, forever etching his name in the annals of literary greatness.

## Domenico Morelli and the Macchia Revolution

### Context

“After the Congress of Vienna there was a proliferation of multiple theories and movements, which exploded in the general European revolution of 1848. In these thirty-three years of transition we reflect on the series of still living "isms" that arose during that period. The term "liberalism" first appeared in the English language in 1819, "radicalism" in 1820, "socialism" in 1832, "conservatism" in 1835. The 1830s marked the birth of "individualism", "constitutionalism", "humanitarianism" and "monarchism". “Nationalism” and “communism” date from 1840. Only in the 1850s did the English-speaking world use the term “capitalism” and only later did we hear of “Marxism” even though Marx's theories dated back to the 1840s. Many of these ideas were born with the Enlightenment, if not earlier. The appearance of so many "isms" indicates that people were giving their ideas a more systematic character; society as a whole was reconsidered. Without the "isms" created in the thirty years following the Peace of Vienna, it is impossible to understand or even speak of the subsequent history of the world.” Morelli was one of the first painters to emphasize “macchia” as the overall unifying balance of lights and darks in a painting.

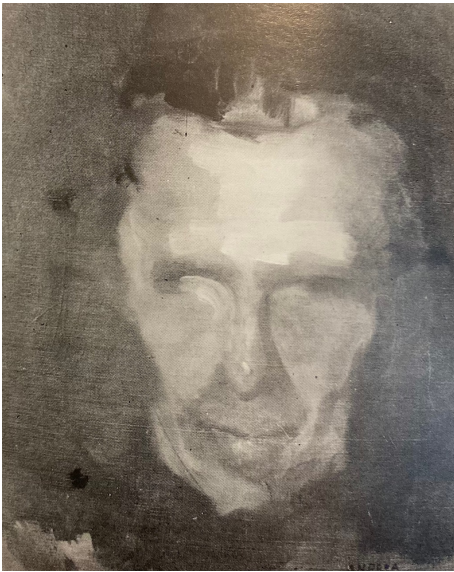
## Andrea Alfano

### Context

Born in the town of Castrovillari in 1879, he soon embarked on an artistic career. At the age of just twenty he was awarded a scholarship, with which he was able to go to study at the Academy of Fine Arts in Rome. However, he refused to complete his studies, to devote himself fully to artistic activity, meeting artists such as Ignacio Zuloaga and Antonio Mancini.



After an initial period of prominence in national attention, during the Fascist period he lived alone and forgotten by everyone. However, he returned to the national scene after the war, with exhibitions in the most important Italian cities and even in London. Among these, the one in Palazzo Marignoli that the city of Rome wanted to give to him on his seventieth birthday should be remembered. To seal this artistic recognition, the President of the Republic, Luigi Einaudi, will confer on him, in 1954, the title of Grand Officer of Merit of the Italian Republic.



Alongside the thriving painting activity, the master also added good poetic ability. His verses are collected in the volumes *Pars Parva* (Rome, Ed. dell'autore, 1936), *Solitudes* (Rome, Edizioni Cenacolo, 1948), *Sillaba: poesia nuova*, with appendix and notes and a judgment by Alfredo Gargiulo (Rome, Edizioni E. S. A., 1950), *Sillaba Eterna* (Rome, 1963).

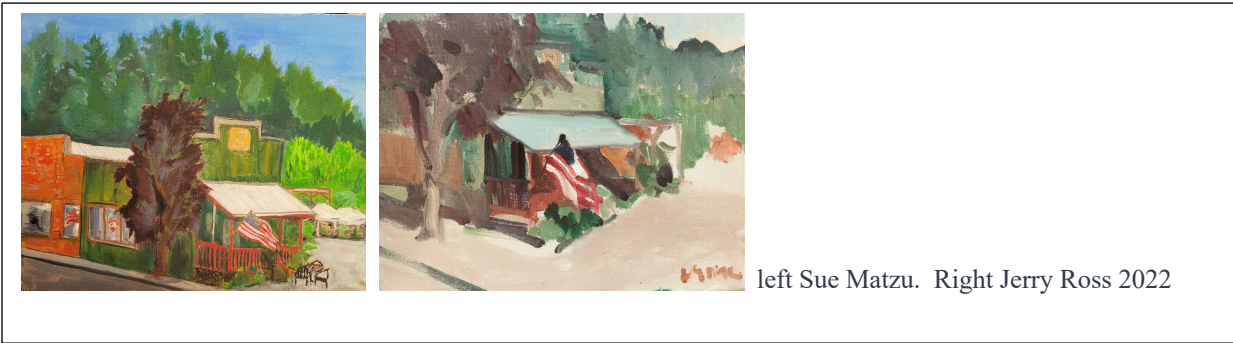
He ended his activity away from his hometown, to which he however dedicated numerous compositions and the desire to be able to donate his artistic heritage. He died in September 1967 in Rome.[1]

A self-portrait of him can be found today in the Uffizi Gallery in Florence. The Municipal Art Gallery of Castrovillari was named after him, as well as that of the nearby municipality of Saracena

## Club Macchia Activities Recap

Stand by Me Day – report by Jerry Ross

Only three Club Macchia painters participated in this year's Annual Barbizon Brownsville Paintout. Seems most Plein air Painters of Lane County were out to the Oregon coast for the annual Erik Sangren plein air workshop. I painted the four youths from the Stand By Me movie, Gordi, Chris, Teddy, and Vern and did a quick study of Randy's Café across the street from where I was holed up on the lawn of the historic Moyer House. I enjoyed interacting with the locals and out of towners as well as they filed past the painting.



MtsuAsian Celebration JSMA Exhibit

Club Macchia member Sue Mastzu had her marvelous Taiji Master painting on display at The Jordan Schnitzer Art Museum (JSAM) on the U of O campus. This is an annual exhibit held in conjunction with the Asian Celebration.

**Oregon Asian Celebration**  
**Art Exhibit Opening**

**Wednesday, July 19 | 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.**  
 Celebrate the Oregon Asian Celebration Art Exhibit with an intimate reception with the artists. The exhibit is on view July 19 – 30, 2023 during museum hours.

Asian Celebration

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

JORDAN SCHNITZER MUSEUM OF ART

Visit to Allen Jackson Ranch

Angela, Carol (Angel’s visiting sister), and I piled into the car on our way to Bandon and stopped by to a pre-arranged meeting with property owner Allen Jackson of Cottage Grove. Club Macchia member, Suzanne Keaveny, organized the get together. We were exploring possible painting sites for Club Macchia and other plein air painters. Allen is an artist (see portrait) and avid art collector. After a tour of the property Allen showed us his barn that he is in the process of converting into creative spaces: shared studio spaces, performance arts stage, and perhaps a petty zoo for children. He welcomed Club Macchia to hang out on the property for painting



sessions and classes. Right now the only bathroom is in the main farm house. However, he has a plan to install a bathroom in the barn down the road, when he can get to it.



## Roseburg Biennial: “Dorris Ranch” painting

Jerry is exhibiting “Dorris Ranch” at the Roseburg Art Center. The show comes down mid-August. Jerry plans to return to the area to teach a workshop at the Center as soon as something can be scheduled.



## Discovering Bandon

Continuing our road trip after leaving Cottage Grove, we drove on I-5 to the Drain exit (Hw 38) and took that all the way to the coast at Reedsport. Then we headed south to N. Bend, Coos Bay, and then to Bandon. We had notified an old friend and client, Thaddeus Konar, a retired computer science professor (Jerry’s colleague at LCC) and a photographer. We had several great visits with Thaddeus and left with a gift of one of his photos of a tree on metal. See below. We agreed that Thaddeus was macchia style photographer and so we may now have a Club Member in Bandon! Thaddeus recommended we see Face Rock south of town and we drove there. Here is a shot of Angela with Face Rock in the distant background.



Thaddeus



Angela with Face Rock in distance



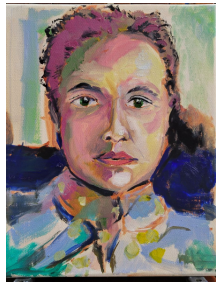
Tree Macchia by Thaddeus Konar

# Club Macchia Members Gallery

Sue Matsu



Summer Celestial



Portrait of a Friend



## Patti McNutt

“Coastal Trees - 18”x24” Oil on board prepped with Gamblin Oil Ground –

so many compositions at the Rocky Creek Scenic Wayside. So little time”....



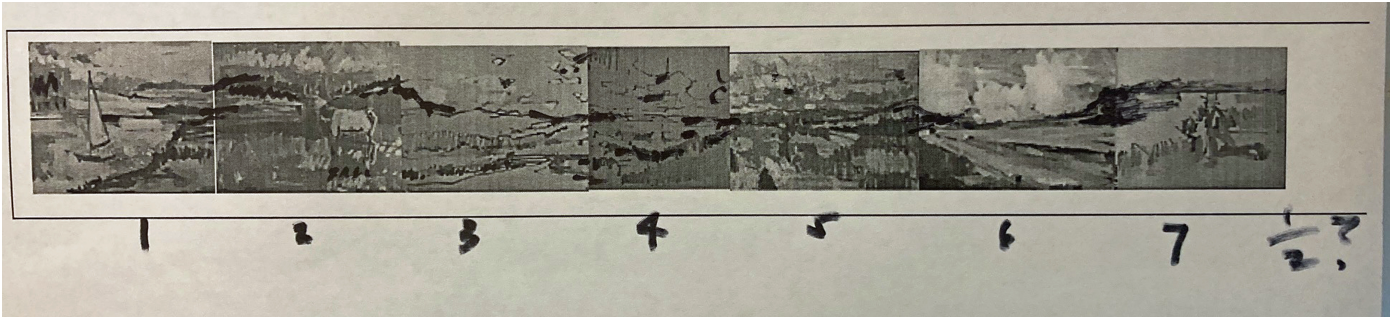
## Marina Arbuck

Abstract Still Life and Bridge (Florence, OR)



## Jerry Ross Studios Mural Contract in Veneta

Work has begun on Jerry’s mural project funded by the City of Veneta. Vickie Soudry the client and owner of a storage business in Veneta applied for a City grant and won! Work has begun as is shown by the photos below. Below is a rough design for the mural which will contain nature scenes that flow into one another. Imprimatura being applied in photos below. Area is 12’ by 100’.



Serene Lake scene with Sailboat, lake and forest with elk grazing, mountains and wetlands, river with lake and forest, forest with stream and vineyards, mountains and river, river or lake with fisherman – each scene seamlessly flowing into the other.

Club Macchia Class Sessions by Jerry Ross

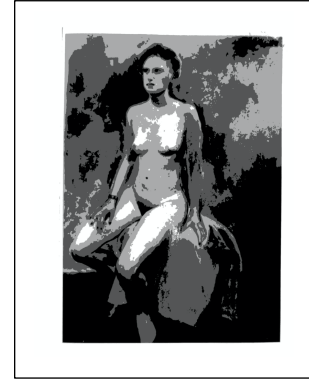
Brownsville: Portrait and Figures in the Landscape Class







I have developed a new class that I recently presented in Brownsville and now have the session “on the road” so to speak, ready to present elsewhere. The Craft Guild at Art Inc in Veneta is interested as are some people we recently met in Bandon.



## American verismo

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

**American verismo** describes an artistic style of [American literature](#), music, or painting influenced and inspired by artistic ideas that began in 19th-century [Italian culture](#), movements that used motifs from everyday life and working class persons from both urban and rural situations. American composers, writers, painters, and poets have used this genre to create works that contain socio-political as well as purely aesthetic statements.

### History

In [Italy](#), the term *verismo* is applied to the use of everyday life and characters in artistic works. It was introduced into [opera](#) in the early 1900s in reaction to contemporary conventions that were regarded as artificial and untruthful.<sup>[1]</sup>

Generally, *verismo* (meaning "realism," from Italian *vero*, meaning "true") refers to a [19th-century Italian painting style](#). This style was practiced most characteristically by the *I Macchiaioli*<sup>[2]</sup> a group of [Tuscan](#) painters, who were forerunners of the French [Impressionists](#).<sup>[citation needed]</sup> The style and its underlying social goals related to general 19th-century artistic developments that occurred in many countries, from Scandinavia to the Mediterranean, which stemmed from nationalist movements and intellectuals' responses to the effects of industrialization.

In Italy, the national origin of *verismo*, especially in literature and opera, was a profound sympathy for the disadvantaged working people, whose life, for the most part, consisted of hard labor, poverty, and oppression.

For example, the authors [Giovanni Verga](#), [Luigi Capuana](#), Domenico Ciampoli, Renato Fucini, [Matilde Serao](#) introduced the language of common people into their works and made extensive use of dialects. The Italians also created a theater that reflected everyday life, as exemplified by the comedies of [Gerolamo Rovetta](#) and [Giuseppe Giacosa](#).

In America, [Tobias Picker](#)'s 2013 opera [Dolores Clairborne](#) was acclaimed as a “triumph of American verismo.”<sup>[3]</sup>

Verismo opera composers often chose rural folk, poor city dwellers, and representatives of [bohemianism](#). Early works in this genre were [Pietro Mascagni's Cavalleria Rusticana](#) (1890) which chose rural folk, poor city dwellers, and bohemian characters.

Verismo entered opera through 'scene popolari', such as Verga's **Cavalleria rusticana** (1884), which was the first text to be turned into an opera. In 1888 the publisher Edoardo Sonzogno advertised a competition for a one-act opera by a young Italian composer. Mascagni had no innovatory intentions in his choice of Verga's popular one-act play. The libretto preserved the vivid dialogue and the rapid pace but the operatic version was distanced from the veristic play by a distortion of its social characteristics and a dilution of its down-to-earth language with traditional high-flown libretto jargon. The opera's success, however (1890, Rome), led to *Cavalleria rusticana* becoming the prototype of a new genre. The term verismo was adopted, to designate the subject of the libretto and the work's musico-dramatic structure. The 1890s witnessed a brief flowering of operas on veristic subjects, both in Italy and abroad.<sup>[4]</sup>

## Jerry Ross

The American painter [Jerry Ross](#), who calls his style "American verismo", builds on the ideas of art historian [Albert Boime](#) and his book *The Art of the Macchia and the Risorgimento, Representing Culture and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Italy*.<sup>[2]</sup>

This text had a huge effect on Ross who began incorporating the story of the I Macchialioli into his class materials. Ross's own background in the radical politics of the 1960s and 1970s led to his identification with the Tuscan group, many of whom participated in the struggle for Italian socialism and national unification. In 2013, Ross wrote a "Manifesto of American Verismo," which summarized many of his ideas on the subject.

Desiring a painting style that was truly Italian and representative of their particular cultural characteristics, loose and expressive and breaking with tradition the I Macchiaioli began artistic movement. As explained by Boime, their "sketch style" and "non finito" (unfinished) look was both modern and a clean break with academic "polish", but also the subject matter was often political as well, featuring socio-political issues such as the plight of women, workers, and farmers.<sup>[5]</sup>

Ross points out that the most experienced [plein air](#) painters generally use this approach, sometimes called "contemporary impressionism." Ross notes that after absorbing some of the ideas in painting brought into the light of day by the Abstract Expressionists, *plein air* painters need to incorporate abstraction and descriptive/expressive brushwork as well as texture techniques that give the surface a three-dimensional quality. His class "abstraction in *plein air* emphasizes the idea of discovery of large abstract shapes and the importance of composition. In his approach, "there is abstraction within realism and realism within abstraction."<sup>[6]</sup>

### Why It is Important to Show Visible Brushwork in Dabs by Jerry Ross

Art has always been a reflection of cultural identity and the socio-political climate of its time. One intriguing movement that captures this sentiment is "American verismo," a term that I coined to indicate an art inspired by the I Macchiaioli.

Rooted in the ideas of art historian Albert Boime and inspired by the Italian Macchiaioli, this approach emphasizes **visible brushwork and a fusion of abstraction and realism**. This artistic philosophy not only pays homage to history but also connects art with contemporary expression.

**The “dab” or a visible “unit of structure” is an almost cubistic emphasis that when utilized correctly can add power and impact to a painting.**

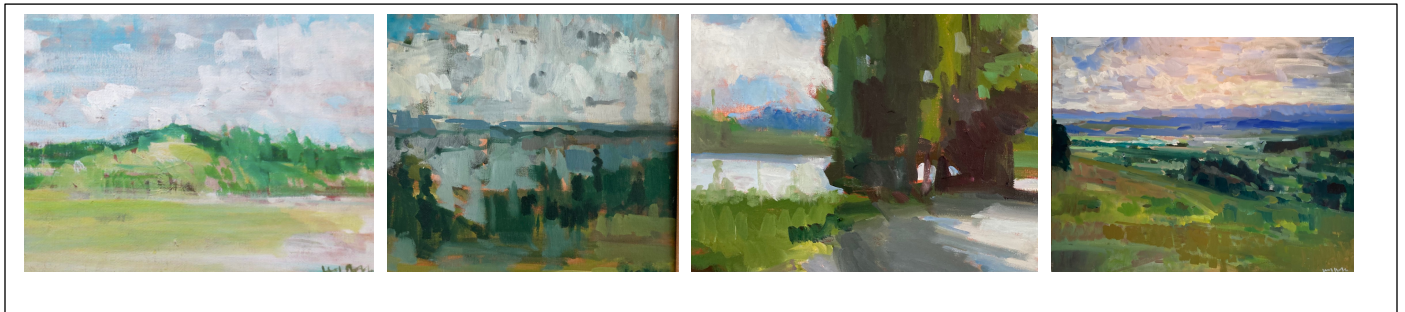
The journey of American verismo can be traced back to Albert Boime's groundbreaking work, "The Art of the Macchia and the Risorgimento, Representing Culture and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Italy."

This book explored the Macchiaioli, a group of Italian artists who pursued a distinctive style characterized by **loose brushwork and an "unfinished" appearance**. Deeply impacted by Boime's insights, I incorporated the Macchiaioli narrative into my teachings and artistic endeavors.

My affinity for the Macchiaioli was not just an artistic infatuation but a connection fueled by personal experience. My involvement in the radical politics of the 1960s and 1970s would have resonated with the Florentine artists who had striven for Italian socialism and national unity. This parallel in ideology spurred me to write the **"Manifesto of American Verismo" in 2013**, encapsulating my ideas about this artistic approach.

The incorporation of visible brushwork is key to the style. This notion aligns with the style of plein air painters, who employ a technique often referred to as "contemporary impressionism."

Building upon ideas brought to light by Abstract Expressionists, I assert that plein air artists should **integrate abstraction and expressive brushwork, along with texture techniques that add a three-dimensional quality to the surface.**



"Invitation to Club Macchia Painters!"

I will be applying for a booth at Art in the Park.

Join us on Sept. 9th from 10-2 at Peterson Barn Park off Royal Ave.

Submit example painting(s) no later than August 15th

if you want to be included in the "Club Macchia" booth.

Send images to [swirlsue@gmail.com](mailto:swirlsue@gmail.com) (contact me if you have questions)

The organizer wants names and examples from each artist, not necessarily for each work

I can get one 10x10 space or two depending how many artists join.

You can also apply for your own booth, (It's free)

and be our neighbor at the show!" – Sue Matsu



Quote

“The Revolution will not be televised.”



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## Club Macchia

203 W. 52nd Ave  
Eugene, OR, 97405

**Recipient**  
Street Address  
City, ST ZIP Code