

## Etel Margarita Bacigalupe Ranses de Di Fabio

I was born in the city of Carmelo, Uruguay.

I lived for a year in the city of Takamatsu located in the Shikoku Island in Japan. While there, I witnessed for the first time works of calligraphy and painting called *sumi e*. This art form originated in China and moved to the rest of Asian countries. It fascinated me due to the magnitude of its meaning using simple tools of white rice paper, black ink and brushes. I took classes at the Takamatsu Community Center. I was the only foreigner there; however, my fellow colleagues accepted me and a showed me a lot about Japanese culture. We then moved to Vancouver, Canada where I continued to learn *sumi e*.

After several years, we moved to Ottawa, the capital of Canada, where I received my diploma of Visual Arts from the Ottawa School of Arts. It was here, while taking Calligraphy and Oriental Painting courses I met Professor Tomoko Kodama. She introduced me to her own system of teaching: the three Bs-Body Breath and Brush. With Professor Kodama as a teacher, and her system of the three Bs, I really started to understand the whole concept of oriental arts. Although the tools may be simple, their use requires precision and mindfulness. To inhale and exhale while breathing in a conscious manner allows our minds to be quiet; the serenity and this new awareness helps one to concentrate and allows more fluent control of one's brushstrokes. This universal form of relaxation brings the whole body to move at once, not only the hand that holds the brush. This whole body movement facilitates intuitiveness. The intense black ink over an intense white paper creates a brush stroke that is full of energy but simultaneously with the minimal, discrete but at the same time full of freshness, still but at the same time full of rhythm. Professor Kodama has the ability to abbreviate and communicate all of the abstract concepts of *sumi e* that originated from a very old and wise culture. She delivers a simple method of learning to a Western public not trained for this kind of art. Her method and technique has enthused people from around the world where she has taught her approach. She has presented her approach in Washington D.C. and in Uruguay. Language is no barrier; in Uruguay she used her DVD, which was translated into Spanish, along with her books. With the interest of letting her unique form of art be known, the painter Ricardo Rodriguez is showing elementary and high school students this method. All the students are responding very well and with a lot of curiosity towards this kind of subtle art form. To the students, this has been a very enriching experience for them to be so close to a very far away culture, cultural globalization in its best form.

