

## Lotus Stories

By [Frank O Smith](#), writing coach, ghostwriter, author of "[Dream Singer](#)"

Mei Selvage is a captivating artist, bringing her whole history and heritage to her art as a painter, a poet in colors. Born in China, matriculated in Montana, she turned to painting to embrace her Chinese-ness in the face of ridicule, in part, for speaking with an accent in her adopted home in the U.S.

She is a creative cauldron of contradictions and complexities. Gloriously self-taught in art, she formally studied Zen Buddhism. Though a painter, she passionately views her canvases as “stories” – replete with main narrative and backstory. Brilliant, insightful, and grateful the grace of the moment, she blends worlds, East and West, in her thinking and her painting. As she also does the worlds of the arts and high tech in her career. She is a respected and sought after IT consultant. She laughs, saying, “what I am doing with my art is what I do in my job – I’m looking for patterns, integrating data that resides in silos.”

Mei will be the featured speaker at the first Ya Ji East/West Cultural Gathering, sponsored by Fox Intercultural Consulting, in Portland, Maine, on Wednesday, November 19<sup>th</sup>, 5:30-7 p.m. The event will be held at ThinkTank, an innovative co-working hub in the heart of downtown. (533 Congress Street.) Mei will share her story, “Journey to the East,” and her mission, which is mirrored in her gallery show that hangs at ThinkTank. Admission is free, and Chinese tea will be served.

“When I work with old Chinese texts, I’m connecting to a rich heritage,” she says. “Chinese is very unique – based on pictures.” When you look at a Chinese word – what she calls an icon – she says there are multiple meanings. Like in painting, there is both the hidden and the perceived.”(<http://www.meiselvage.com/acrylic.html>)

“When I paint a plant, for example, the goal is not just to understand the characteristics of the plant, but their associations with Chinese history,” she says. “I want to honor my ancestors’ techniques, but not just the techniques – also the association with how humans exist in the cosmos.”

Art for Mei “is the boat that carries me through,” she says. “Through my painting, I realized I was storytelling. Bridging East and West. That is my mission.”

One of her favorite themes in her painting is the lotus. “There is a Buddhist chant,” Mei says, “May we be like the lotus, at home in the muddy water.”

Come listen to Mei Selvage tell her story on November 19<sup>th</sup>. You will be transfixed, and in the moment, transformed. She is a spellbinding storyteller – but more, a radiant spirit like a lotus blossom.