



Paint Fan Dance is a free combination art/exercise class taught by artist Lady Van Tiger at the McCracken County Cooperative Extension Service Building located at 2025 New Holt Rd, Paducah, KY 42001. The first class will be held on December 14th from 11:00 a.m. until noon. All art materials for the class will be provided, free of charge.

Lady Van Tiger, who relocated to Paducah, KY over 18 years ago as part of the Artist Relocation Project, has done many murals in the Purchase Area, including the Ingram Barge Company Flood Wall Murals, the Metropolis City Murals, a mural inside the Fort Massac Museum which received a USA Congressional Letter of Commendation and guided murals for schools and other public venues in the Paducah, Ky area. Her artworks and murals are in public and private collections all across the USA, especially in Hawaii, California, Utah, Idaho, North Carolina, Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana, and Texas. She has taught artists from all over the world having been the Artist in Residence at the Art School at Kapalua of the Ritz-Carlton Resort on Maui. Van Tiger has also produced, directed and written plays and other stage productions.

The **Paint Fan Dance** class idea came to Van Tiger earlier this year, during a time when she became wheelchair bound for several months from an injury and subsequent surgery to her right ankle. "I really wanted some sort of fun, healthy exercise activity that I could do while in the wheelchair, but nothing was available."

The exercise regime created by Van Tiger, modeled after traditional Fan Dances from Asia, is specifically meant to be low impact, intended for persons with low mobility, seniors, and/or anyone who wants a simple, basic work-out experience.

Incorporating a painting project into every **Paint Fan Dance** class starts each session off with a creative surge of energy. "Painting is a source of what psychologists call 'Flow' which produces an emotionally-stabilizing brain frequency equilibrium" Van Tiger explains. Coupled with the benefits of exercise, the combo of creativity with a low impact workout, Van Tiger hopes that persons with mobility issues will benefit from the class.

Born with defects in her hands and feet, Van Tiger underwent over 13 corrective surgeries from birth until age 16. Debunking "perceived limitations" Van Tiger went on to a full-throttled art career, motherhood (she has 4 children) and grand motherhood (12 grandchildren).

"There have been many times in my life that I have struggled with mobility issues. In fact, I've had to re-learn how to walk over 7 times in my life--but I believe that you still need to keep moving your body—even if you're in a wheelchair—and, also, use creativity as a tool for a better outlook on life."

Offering something unique and hopefully enjoyable, Van Tiger points out that the dance portion of the class is actually inspired by an ancient art form from Asia that is thousands of years old. Originally used as part of a regiment to train warriors, it was developed to strengthen hand-eye coordination and movement. "Fan Dancing is well known in Hawaii and stems from Asian cultures. Because the hand holding the fan naturally steers the movements of the body, there is a simple flow of movement that is easy to follow. It not only is good for your muscles and heart, but gives you a boost of endorphins which will lift your mood and help you feel physically better as well."

"Having art as a focus in my life has enriched my world in lasting, meaningful ways and echoes what science is finally proving to be true: that art and art-making are really, really good for us human beings," Van Tiger adds. "The new scientific field of study known as 'Neuroaesthetics' is proving that there is a measurable benefit to the human brain, the human emotional intelligence and functionality, and the human body when a person incorporates active art appreciation and/or artmaking into a daily habit."



The dance "steps" rely heavily on arm and hand movements, using the fan to "lead" the motions. This makes the dance "steps" easily adaptable for persons who may need to use a wheelchair or have other mobility issues.

Each **Paint Fan Dance** class will begin with embellishing a paddle fan. Using acrylic paints, each participant will paint the surface of their fan with imagery, which can be a composition designed by Lady Van Tiger created specifically for each class. Participants may choose to replicate that imagery or do some other design or subject matter. Below is the artwork composition designed by artist Lady Van Tiger for the first class on December 14th at 11:00 a.m.



The second part of the class begins the exercise portion of the hour. While the paint dries, Lady Van Tiger will lead the class in a series of warm-up exercises.

Third, after inspecting the painted fans to ensure that each is dry, the class will use the fans while doing dance steps led and taught by Lady Van Tiger. This exercise regime will be adapted for each class participant according to each person's own mobility needs or limitations.

"I still have a few mobility issues myself," Van Tiger adds, "But, recently, when my husband took me dancing and we did the Cha-cha, I almost cried. I felt so much joy being able to do those dance steps again!"

She hopes that this free art/dance class will bring similar feelings of joy to anyone who wants to join in. Adults 18+ are invited to attend.