

Coming Up

November 2

9:15 Coffee
10:00 Bindu Gude
Curator, LACMA

November 3

4:00 PST Meeting
w/ Laura DePaoli

November 7

1:30 Book Club

November 9

9:30 Board
Meeting, Luria

November 16

9:15 Coffee
10:00 Dane Good-
man, Gallery
Director, SBCC

December 12

Holiday Party

*All images selected
by the editor*

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Oscar Castillo, '47 Chevy in Wilmington, California, 1972, Color photograph
Courtesy of the Chicano Studies Research Center, UCLA

The National Docent Symposium that Kathryn and I attended at the beginning of October was energizing and validating of everyone's efforts for our docent council. We truly appreciate your support in sending us to this biennial event. Please see page 6 for an article that will include some details of the trip.

Our upcoming Council meetings will be highlighting two very contrasting areas of our art collection. On November 2nd our speaker, Bindu Gude, Associate Curator of South and Southeastern Asian Art at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, will enhance our knowledge of the cultural and artistic traditions of Southeastern Asia. In contrast, our November 16th speaker, Dane Goodman, Director of Atkinson Gallery at Santa Barbara City College, will be focusing on contemporary art within our larger community. As different as they are, they both are directly relevant to our present diverse gallery exhibitions.

Our always thoughtful librarian, Heather Brodhead, has given to our docent library collection a duplicate copy of *Buddhist Art Form and Meaning*, Pratapaditya Pal, Editor, which was donated to the museum by Dr. Pal; we thank both Heather and Dr. Pal. It is presently in the Docent Office with the Asian art collection. Remember to sign out for materials on the appropriate clipboard. (continued)



Irene Stone

As I noted in our last Docent Council meeting, this is a very special year for art in southern California. The Getty is sponsoring *Pacific Standard Time*, a celebration of post World War II art in LA with exciting exhibitions scheduled from San Diego to Santa Barbara, including our own *Pasadena to Santa Barbara* opening in February 2012. A number of these exhibitions opened in October, and if we don't plan now we'll miss out!

To make sure that doesn't happen, we'd like to invite anyone who's interested to take a few road trips, read a book or two about the art and artists, and have some good conversations. If you're interested, please join us for a meeting so we can plan what we'd like to see, read and discuss. Laura DePaoli has taken the lead in organizing this interest group. The first meeting will be at her home, 645 Stoddard Lane, SB, on Thursday, November 3, 4:00 p.m. Please RSVP to Laura at ldepaoli@verizon.net or 565-9471.

Also, see Kathryn's message (below) for a sampling of a few specific exhibits. Following are two websites with much more information about this exceptional year of art exhibitions:

<http://www.pacificstandardtime.org/>

<http://www.amazon.com/Rebels-Paradise-Angeles-Scene-1960s/dp/0805088369>

Time has passed so quickly that it is hard to realize that by the time of our next *La Muse*, we will all have had the opportunity at Thanksgiving to reflect with family and friends on our myriad blessings. I wish all of you the bountiful best wishes of the season.

Message from our Vice President



Kathryn Padgett

Just to whet your appetite for what's in store with this region-wide *Pacific Standard Time*, and as a lead up to the planning meeting at Laura's, I thought I would give you a sample of just a few of the exhibitions going on in the LA area, our own backyard.

The scope of art represented encompasses every conceivable genre, including paintings, photography, sculpture, ceramics, decorative arts, architecture, video and mixed media. The reviews below are reprinted with permission from art critic Christopher Knight from the LAT/Guide, Sunday, Oct 30, 2011.

Beatrice Wood: Career Woman—Drawings, Paintings, Vessels and Objects

In the annals of understatement, to say that Beatrice Wood was a late bloomer ranks right up there with saying Bill Gates is rich and Lady Gaga likes clothes. She was well into her 60s when her luxurious, luster-glazed earthenware vessels made Wood a potter to reckon with—one of the most distinctive and compelling of the last half century. A lovely exhibition, part of *Pacific Standard Time*, at the Santa Monica Museum of Art does a good job of putting her work into the context of the late 1950s and early 1960s, when Southern California artists working with clay shook up complacent expectations.

Now Dig This!: Art and Black Los Angeles 1960-1980

The exhibition, part of the *Pacific Standard Time* series, tells an important story that is not so much unknown as underknown. Many of the individual artists—Melvin Edwards, John Outterbridge, Noah Purifoy, Betye Saar, Charles White and others—are certainly familiar, while David Hammons ranks among the most important American artists of the last 30 years. What hasn't been the focus before now is the context within which their work developed. *Now Dig This!* lays it out with clarity and compelling insight.

Hammar Museum, Westwood

<http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/culturemonster/2011/10/pacific-standard-time-now-dig-this-places-of-validation.html>

Under the Big Black Sun: California Art 1974-1981

This *Pacific Standard Time* show has an audacious premise: Much of what we take for granted in the diverse panoply of recent international art first emerged in California nearly 40 years ago. The show, in fact, is huge. Some 500 works by 139 artists are included. That's sensible, if daunting, since it chronicles the explosive emergence of pluralism in art. Pluralism, rather than a single movement like 1950s Abstract Expressionist painting or 1960s Finish Fetish sculpture, recognizes that artistic energy is broad and diverse. The century-long linear march of Modern art styles, never very convincing, finally fell apart. Rather than "anything goes" advocacy, this specific diversity reflects what establishment forces, weakened in the 1970s, had kept out of art's lexicon. Freud called it "the return of the repressed," and it returns here with a vengeance. The show, sometimes spinning out of control, occasionally loses focus. But in good pluralist form, it's not without a diverse abundance of individually absorbing works.

Geffen Contemporary at MOCA, L.A.

Docent Book Club

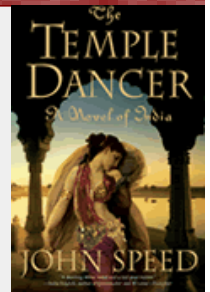


Sue Billig

There are two book selections for November, both chosen for their relevance to the new Asian galleries: "The Temple Dancer: a Novel of India," by John Speed, 2006, and "The Thousand Autumns of Jacob De Zoet," by David Mitchell, 2010.

All docents are welcome to the SBMA BOOK CLUB.

Meeting date is **Monday November 7 at 1:30**



The November hostess is Susan Northrop
33 Las Alturas Circle
Please RSVP to her at Deandad36@cox.net
963-2810





Gail Stichler
Membership Chair

We have a strong Docent Council for 2011-12. Here are the numbers:

69 Active docents

3 Active docents on a Leave of Absence

26 Sustaining docents

13 Provisionals

Thank you to all who have submitted your touring and research hours. Reported hours provide a tangible measure of the council's dedication to the museum's educational programs and outreach. There are three ways to report: email me at gmstichler@aol.com, submit via our docent website, or record hours on the sheet available at docent meetings.

As a reminder, research hours include any hours spent researching and preparing for tours, visiting museums or any institution of continuing art education, including SBMA, writing research papers, attending docent council meetings or field trips, and participating in docent or membership activities. Please remember to separate tour hours from research hours. Public tour hours reflect any time you are speaking in front of the public on behalf of SBMA; this includes all adult and student tours, and power point presentations to classrooms or seniors. Your reporting is important and very much appreciated. Thank you!

Adult Touring for September, 2011



Vikki Duncan
Adult Teams Co-chair

Touring numbers dipped from summer levels, coinciding with the closures of *Ori Gersht* and the full *Van Gogh to Munch* exhibition, and without any Special Request tours on the calendar for September. Numbers picked up with the re-hanging of special loans in the *Van Gogh to Munch* in Preston Morton, and with the mid-month opening of *Picasso and Braque*.

From Red Book comments, we know that docents toured local "regulars," and tourists from Germany, Canada, and Pakistan. A docent engaged children in a family group by introducing Visual Thinking Strategies into the tour, and another group thanked their docent, saying, "You were worth the price of admission."

Here are the September visitor touring numbers: (48 tours)

Highlights - weekend and daily	101	
Focus Tours	76	
Ori Gersht	15•	*Closed on September 4, 2011
Van Gogh to Munch	70	
Picasso and Braque	<u>76</u>	
	338	



Ann Robinson
Student Teams , Chair

SBMA student touring is off and running with the season's first tour on October 20th. Docents and students from the ART REACH Program explored all galleries, looking at abstraction, impressionism and cubism. The galleries are filled with art objects that many students will be exposed to for the very first time. What an exciting time for all docents to share their love of art and open new worlds to these visitors!

There was standing room only in the docent office on a Monday afternoon when Loree Gold and Carolyn Pappas presented the final cut for this year's PowerPoint presentations. It is a captivating overview of objects presently in the museum that will inspire and motivate students when they see them during their tours.

I encourage all docents touring students to schedule a viewing with the classroom presenters and see the amazing art education this museum brings into the school system. Thank you Loree, Carolyn, and all the PowerPoint presenters for bringing our museum to the children of our community.

Docent-to-Docent



Josie Martin

This little episode was summarized by Josie Martin in an email she wrote Shirley Dettman following a "notable" tour of Picasso/Braque. -LM

Dear Shirley,

You are one gracious docent! The interrupter who, for a while, sounded as if he was going to take over the tour, including some erroneous materials about Matisse... well, you handled him so gracefully. When he went on past the five minute mark, putting his information on parade, Mary Eckhart and I looked at one another, each wondering how can I help to give the tour back to Shirley?

But you didn't look the least bit perturbed and the guy was sort of a curiosity. He claimed to be knowledgeable about African art, so he carried on about how the African Gabon figure's arms and legs joined together, the fact that it was a wooden armature covered with copper. The most interesting point was that Picasso apparently wouldn't admit that he had been influenced by the African masks that he had seen at the Musee d'Ethnographie at the Palais du Trocadero. Not until 1937 did Picasso admit it had influenced the women's mask-like faces in the Desmoiselles d'Avignon. Finally, the visitor finished and you applauded him! What else could we do but join in? He looked pleased and began to walk away. You resumed the tour, valiantly picking up right where you left off. Ah, but only for a minute.

The guy comes back!

He has something more to add. At this point most of us would have given him the old "one-two, out with you" maneuver. Again, you quietly let him have his one more say, which was mercifully brief this time, and the tour continued to Braque *Bottles and Glass*.

I learned something about patience and good manners. While we certainly strive to engage our audience, it behooves us to be very, very tolerant, even when they go on too long.

Better to have a satisfied customer than a trouble-maker any day.

By Irene Stone



Irene Stone

What an energizing, revitalizing event the Docent Nation Symposium was! Over 400 docents and staff members attended, representing a wide variety of cultural institutions from most of the states and Canadian provinces, with even one docent from Korea. We listened, shared our experiences and ideas with others, visited many museums and cultural sites, especially appreciating Monet's *Water Lilies* (a 75 foot triptych from three cooperating museums in St. Louis, Cleveland, and Kansas City), engaged in informal and formal discussion sessions and also enjoyed many tasty meals.

The keynote speaker, Michael Cassin, Director of the Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, MA, entertained and challenged us with his talk, "Interesting is Good; Wonderful is Better." He sees museums as gateways to a world of fascination, excitement, and wonder, and believes that engaging with works of art can help us understand the past, make sense of the present, and shape the future. His goal for docents: "Make tours not just interesting, but wonder-full," citing the historical beginning of museums in the 16th century as "cabinets of curiosities" or "cabinets of wonders." There was our mission. Not just one "Aha" during a tour, but many. Everyone embraced that goal as the symposium then unfolded.

The workshops addressed many of the practical concerns of achieving that goal, including docent training, evaluations, tips for touring students to adults, community outreach activities, the always-changing docent and staff relationships, especially as funds are shrinking. As Kathryn and I listened and considered our own Docent Council, we felt assured that we have been accurately assessing the needs of our group and developing a program that is effective. We will share some of the information and insights with you so that we can reassess and reconsider how to make our organization as effective as possible. Following are some highlights.

Several sessions I attended dealt with the question of evaluations. The presenters were from museums with between 115-140 docents. All conduct evaluations on a 3-year cycle, though some I talked to use a 2-year cycle. All emphasize that the goal should be to improve all docent presentations, and that the process should be non-threatening and supportive in all phases.

Evaluations at the Seattle Art Museum are conducted by a Museum Evaluator team of two - staff and docent - with individual goal-setting and self-assessment by the evaluatee. The evaluators write up detailed narrative reports; follow-up evaluations are conducted by the Museum Evaluator.

The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco use teams of three docents, employing a Y/N format, with reevaluations done by another team of three docents.

They see their tips for successful evaluation as: good communication of the process (which involved informational meetings), consider shortening the evaluation tour, involve all docents in the review, and use a form as objective as possible. I like the idea of more self-assessment being built into the process, but appreciate that our format is much less cumbersome, formulated for our particular needs.

FAMSF also developed Docent-led Study Groups. With the reopening of the DeYoung's African/Oceanic Art halls, docents needed to research and learn about the collection. With the cooperation of curators and use of the space, they formed study groups in which they chose articles to research and prepared archive materials



St. Louis Art Museum

for all to use. The groups met once a month to discuss the material, which had the added benefit of improving contact between newer and more senior docents. The process helped all to become better observers of art. Also, they recorded speakers, including docents, and posted the DVD of the sessions on their docent website.

Some general observations: The use of technology was significant. Most of the museums are developing docent websites. We have been farsighted in this venture, thanks to Ricki's vision. Some museums have separate websites for provisional training so that less material needs to be printed. Kathryn is ready to experiment! Many have newsletters or email postings for communication (thank you, Lori). Also, the use of DVD and MP3 recordings for continuing education is being developed by many.

The Portland Art Museum presented a workshop entitled "Let's Talk: Promising Approaches to Conversation, Participation and Docenting at the Portland Art Museum." Their goal is to make museums more participatory, more conversational in approach. They cited the following resources: a blog by Nina Simon, www.museumtwo.blog.spot.com and her book, *The Participatory Museum*; a participatory art history website, www.smarthistory.org by Harris and Zucker; *Teaching in Art Museums* by Rika Burnham and Elliott Kai-Ke; and *Conversations at the Castle* by Mary Jane Jacob.

Portland presently has several experimental programs. One is using a modeled conversational approach by recording 2-people conversations about a painting, 2-4 minutes in length. They emphasize that editing is required, which can be expensive without using student interns. Using the inspiration of StoryCorps (which can be heard on NPR), they are experimenting with "Object Stories." They have set up a recording booth in the museum and have invited mainly middle school students to bring an object into the museum and talk about it on tape. The purpose is to emphasize that in the museum all objects have stories, just as the students have stories about the objects in their lives. The tapes are archived.

Just a quick listing of other ideas: "Pen to Palette," a program to provide tours to reading groups based on their reading. Phoenix Museum of Art has a Master Docent program to encourage senior docents to tour 30 hours per year. St. Louis and other areas have a Docent Council of Area Museums to discuss common issues and share ideas. Bellevue Art Museum has developed a strong teen docent program.

At our last meeting, some of you picked up copies of two interesting papers, "Six Ways to Look" from the Cantor Arts Center (at Stanford) docent training program, which is a good review for all, and a paper by Ron Ritchhart, "Cultivating a Culture of Thinking in Museums." Other handouts will be available in the docent office for you to peruse at your leisure. I welcome your reflections on these observations. There is also a new revised symposium website that should include some of these papers and summaries as well as ongoing newsletters and information, www.nationaldocents.org.

The symposium was both enjoyable and thought-provoking. While we will certainly continue to evaluate our program with the new information, Kathryn and I were reminded again and again of how much we have benefited from the docents whose foresight and wise judgment have provided us with such a strong foundation for our continued growth.

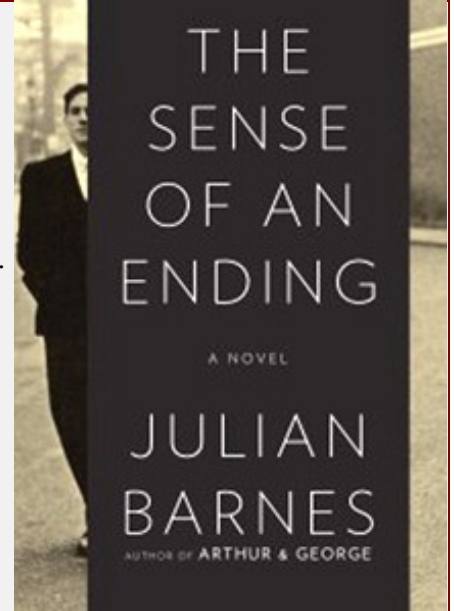
Kathryn and I thank you for the opportunity to attend this symposium. The next one will be held in San Francisco in 2013. We will look forward to hearing about new programs and ideas from those docents holding our offices two years from now.



Ricki Morse

On October 18, Julian Barnes was awarded the Man Booker Prize (given to a writer living in the British Commonwealth), the most prestigious English fiction award. Some critics wailed that *The Sense of an Ending* (Knopf, 2011) was too entertaining, not weighty enough, a detective story, too brief. They completely miss the point.

This novel is a master work by a craftsman who can afford to delight his reader while working out complex understandings of man's experience of time. One of the gifts of this novel is that it's short enough, 163 pages, to read right through as a mystery, then begin back at page one to rediscover the many-faceted, echoing complexity of the structure. It becomes a faceted crystal, reflecting remembered meaning while examining the distortions of those reflections. My third reading examined the nature of time and memory to which the title refers. The title, *The Sense of an Ending*, quotes Frank Kermode's 1967 critique of the novel, a work by an eminent Shakespearean scholar that explores the relationship between time, reality and the work of the fiction writer.



Julian Barnes

So we have at least these three levels of meaning operating through this seemingly easy narrative of an Englishman, now retired, remembering an early failed romantic relationship, for reasons we can't yet discern, but are intrigued by. We are drawn into his exploration by his careful attention to his own process of memory, a sort of self-conscious attempt to report accurately, which continually exposes the possibility of his inaccuracy. It is a great read. It is also an exposition of the craft of the novel at its most refined, its most elegant. You have only, upon finishing the novel, to go back and read the opening paragraphs to appreciate all of those reflecting facets which make up the kaleidoscope images collected in our minds as we read his story. We not only experience the protagonist's search for the past but become aware of our internal reconstructing of our personal histories.

*You can now find previous issues
of La Muse in the archives on our website*



Laura Six-Stallings

Shakir Alousi, a well-groomed man with a salt-and-pepper beard, spoke first, looking to Qais al-Sindy for help when his fledgling grasp of English failed him. He had been a lecturer at Baghdad's Academy of Arts and a successful, well-established painter in the Middle East. Then one day, American soldiers knocked on his door, looking for insurgents hiding out in homes. When no one answered, the house and studio were planted with explosives. When Alousi returned home, there was nothing left but rubble. His household goods, his art supplies, his art collection, all destroyed.

Rasha Sami, *Untitled*,
Oil and acrylic on canvas



Vikki and I are conversing with Shakir.

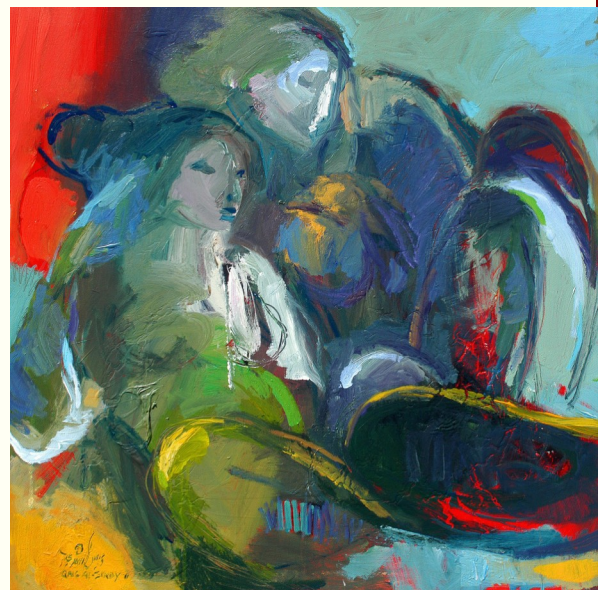
He, like al-Sindy and several of the other artists represented, became one of the more than 60,000 political refugees that settled in the United States, adapting to Western ways and Western tastes. A handful of the exhibited artists settled in neighboring Middle-Eastern countries, but all in this exhibit are refugees from a war-torn Iraq, each with a story to tell.

On October 1, Vikki Duncan and I attended a panel discussion followed by a reception with two Iraqi refugee artists facilitated by

Nomi Morris, a journalist and curator of *Out of Iraq: Artists in Exile*, an exhibit of Iraqi art at the THE/Main Gallery in Ojai. Ms. Morris had first written about the Iraqi contemporary art scene as early as 1999 and this exhibit is the product of an idea that has been germinating ever since.

The Iraqi modern art movement was renowned throughout the world for the way in which western modernism and ancient Mesopotamian influences blend, but world events on the political scene resulted in isolation. This is the first time that works by a group of contemporary Iraqi artists have been on exhibit

Qais-al Sindy (b. 1967), *The Last Tale of Sheherazade*, Oil and acrylic on canvas





Wadha Madhi (b. 1974), *Wishes*, Oil and acrylic on canvas

in Southern California - somewhat surprising when you consider that the largest concentration of Iraqi immigrants lives in El Cajon, California!

Three generations are represented among the ten artists, both sculptors and painters, whose works are on display at THE/Main Gallery in Ojai through November 20. The youngest are a couple born in 1982 - just 4 years older than my daughter! – who met and fell in love in art school, and the oldest was born the year before my mother in 1929. This senior member of the group, Mohammed Ghani Hikmet, who just passed away in September, was one of Iraq's national art treasures. He was responsible not only for many public monuments in Baghdad but for the "Door of Peace" at the UNESCO building in Paris. A small

sculpture from Ghani's "Mother and Child" series is on view at the Ojai gallery.

The gallery is not large enough to display all of the art that has been submitted, so if you are able to make your way to Ojai and are particularly drawn to the work pieces, ask to see more of the artist's work. And if you feel compelled to add something by one of these wonderfully talented painters or sculptors to your private collection, a portion of your purchase will be donated to "A Plate for All" which provides food to Iraqi refugees in Syria. <http://themaingalleryojai.com/>

"Out of Iraq: Artists in Exile" will be holding two special showings where former Middle East correspondent Nomi Morris will speak about Iraqi modern art and the artists in this group show. If you haven't visited this groundbreaking exhibition, now is your chance.

Sunday, Nov. 6 from 1 - 2 pm

AND

Saturday Nov. 12, from 8 - 9 pm.

Regular gallery hours are Saturday and Sunday, 10 - 4 pm.

THE / Main Gallery, 310 E. Matilija Street. 646-5901.

Mexico Reunion, hosted by Ricki Morse



(Left to Right) Suzanne Von Drehle, Maria Long, Dwain Morse, (grey head) Emmett McDonough, (1/2 face) Erin Zetter, Ricki Morse, (behind me) Michael Morse, Jadzia McDonough, (behind Lisa) Dwight Coffin, Lisa Robertson, Steve Hiatt, Karen Brill, John Cervantes (Lisa Robertson's fiancee), Amanda McIntyre, Christine Holland, Loree Gold, Karen Sinsheimer (behind Loree), Rachael Kriepps, Kristy Thomas.

Thank you all so much for coming. We were thrilled to have our two Museum Liasons, Kristy for Yucatan and Rachael for Oaxaca, adding their glitter, and Karen Sinsheimer who was supposed to go to Oaxaca but had instead to go to Rome and plan Gina Lollobrigida's photography show (which never materialized). And a special thank you to Maria Long, an experienced Mexico hand, who wanted to go both times but had to stay home and run CASA with the same flair that she ran our party. Each of you added that special vibe of your own, greeting fellow travelers some hadn't seen in years, sharing the brilliant sunset and wine and great snacks you brought and Almond Molé.

Comments?
Suggestions?
Mohrojai@aol.com

Lori Mohr, Editor

