

# La Muse

## Coming Up

**April 2: (Mon)**

1:30 Book Group Meets

**April 4: (Wed)**

11 a.m. Carnegie Tour  
Car pools TBA

**April 11: (Wed)**

9:30 a.m. Board  
meeting in Luria

**April 18: (Wed)**

9:15 Coffee  
10:00 Docent Council  
Harold Marcuse:  
"Felix Nussbaum"

**May 2: (Wed)**

9:15 a.m. Coffee  
10:00 Docent Council

**May 9: (Wed)**

9:30 a.m. Docent Board  
Meeting Luria

**May 11: (Fri)**

3:30 p.m. Provisional  
Recruitment Reception

**May 16: (Wed)**

9:15 a.m. Coffee  
10:00 Docent Council

**May 21 (Mon)**

1:30 Book Club Meets

**June 6: (Wed)**

9:15 a.m. Coffee  
10:00 Docent Council

**June 8: (Fri)**

Docent Graduation  
Time TBA



Edward Henry Potthast, *Santa Barbara Mission*, oil on canvas, 20" x 24"

As the Pacific Standard Time celebration comes to a close, I can review with pleasure our four bus trips to view various exhibitions. Certainly our last trip to see the exhibits of the Pasadena Museum of Art and the Norton Simon was both stimulating and provocative. My special thanks to Laura DePaoli for initiating the organization of the PST tours and helping with the planning and execution.

And we're not done yet! After Faith Henkin's enthusiastic description of the exhibition at the Carnegie Art Museum in Oxnard, we now have a visit arranged for **Wednesday, April 4, at 11:00 a.m.** The exhibition, tangential to PST, is titled "California Art, Selections from the Frederick R. Weisman Art Foundation," which includes work from the 1960s to the present. I hope you have all received my more detailed information via email. (If not, please contact me.)

We will car-pool and meet at the museum for our visit. We have additional options of having lunch in the area and stopping at the Ventura County Museum to see weavings from Oaxaca on exhibit.



Irene Stone

**Please respond to me** to arrange car-pools and to verify numbers. Since CAM is not usually open on Wednesdays, we can especially appreciate their willingness to accommodate us.

At the April 18 Docent Council Meeting, our first order of business will be the election of board members for the 2012-2013 year. We have a strong slate nominated and thank Christine Holland for her work. Our speaker for the meeting will be Harold Marcuse, UCSB Professor of Modern German History, speaking on German artist Felix Nussbaum (Adele Nachman Memorial Lecture, endowed by Efrem Ostrow) within the larger compelling and complicated story of the theft, deliberate destruction and survival of Europe's art treasures during the Third Reich and the Second World War.

I have greatly appreciated the wonderful efforts of our docents, from filling in and covering tours to volunteering for all the special and daily projects of the council. Also, allow me to express my gratitude to the unstinting efforts of the hard working Council Board. And, as I see this year becoming more focused on the planning for next year, I have to give thanks for the generous and unflagging cooperation and support of the Education Office, especially Patsy and Rachael, with our changing needs.



## Message from our Vice President



Kathryn Padgett

The vernal equinox has passed and we have moved into spring, causing me to reflect on the word "spring." The spring season is a time of renewal and new growth, and a spring is a resilient device, a marvel of elasticity, that returns to its former shape when released. Our wonderful Docent Council exemplifies all that is good related to this word "spring." We constantly seek to renew our knowledge and to grow through the many educational activities offered each month.

We have experienced a lush array of educational lectures and bus trips to museums in the Los Angeles area this year. Many of us have attended each other's tours and the many educational events, such as the art lecture series, movies, ateliers, etc., offered by the wonderfully creative Education Department at our fine museum. When we have traveled we have gone to every available museum with the desire to add to our knowledge about art and its history, and have often shared our newly found information with our fellow docents and museum visitors.

We have continued this desire for renewal and knowledge through our support of the provisional class, serving as teachers, mentors, and role models. Many docents have volunteered to be hosts and hostesses to provisional luncheons where the individual class members, as honored guests, have had an opportunity to meet active docents. The provisional docents continue to report that they have felt supported through our active encouragement of their success.

As a Council, we are wonderfully resilient. In times of need we have always had a docent step forward to perform the necessary task, whether it is substituting for someone when they find themselves unable to conduct their tour, doing a special tour, or volunteering to provide refreshments at an event. When Erin left the

museum, many people stepped forward to assume the tasks that she would have done, and Patsy, Rachael, and Amanda have provided their steadfast support of the Docent Council, keeping us on an even keel.

This year, under Irene’s very capable leadership during times of change, the Docent Council has flourished. We are indeed excellent examples of the word “spring.” Let’s continue being springs, by moving forward with purpose and determination, remaining elastic, and always seeking ways to renew and grow.



### Adult Touring: Spring Changes



Shirley Waxman  
Adult Teams

The springtime brings changes to adult touring~

We will be adding a Photography Focus Team to the touring schedule beginning in May with the second part of the Vantage Points Exhibition: *Behind the Wheel*.

Since there is only one special exhibition through the spring and summer months, the 2 pm Sunday tour will be deferred until the fall.



Joseph Sterling  
*The Age of Adolescence*, 2006  
Gelatin silver print

Alas, beginning in April we will no longer have a Gods & Goddess Team. Thank you to: **Molara Vadnais-Team Leader, Mary Eckhart, Mei Chi Ho, Tracey Miller, and Gabriella Schooley** for gallantly and creatively conducting interesting and engaging tours of our Gods & Goddess this year.

#### Touring numbers for February 2012:

Highlights - weekend and daily	164
Focus Tours	336
Pasadena to Santa Barbara	<u>70</u>
	570

WOW! The numbers increased by almost two hundred for the month of February! This was mainly due to two large special request groups. One request was from the museum for their New Members event, and other event was for the SB Newcomers group.

An enormous thank you to: **Karen Howsam, Rosemarie Gebhart, Christine Holland, Queenie Scheurwater, Gwen Baker, Jacqueline Simons, Gail Stichler, Molara Vadnais, and Vikki Duncan** for coming in and touring these evening events!



Ann Robinson  
Student Touring Chair

The American Collection is gathering rave reviews among teachers, students and docents alike. Here we have a visual history of America beginning with landscapes, moving on to the wild, Wild West, and ending with the industrial age. If a picture is worth a thousand words, we are capturing two centuries of American history with incomparable "teaching moments," leading students to reflect on the history of America. In March, we toured 23 classrooms and 521 students in the museum.



The power point presentations reached 10 classrooms with a total of 276 students. Docents touring students have acknowledged with great delight that the American collection is filled with art that is a joy to explore with adults and students alike.



## Membership Alert!



Gail Stichler  
Membership Chair

Reporting your volunteer hours is greatly appreciated.

Last year's total volunteer hours of 11,722 equated to the equivalent of **6 full time employees!** That is remarkable indeed.

Now is a good time to check the number of volunteer hours you have submitted and bring them up to date since we are closely approaching the end of the year. The volunteer sheets will be at the front door of the Mary Craig Auditorium at each of our Docent meetings.

If you have any questions, email me at [gmstichler@aol.com](mailto:gmstichler@aol.com). Thank you!



Christine Holland

As announced at the recent Docent Council Meeting, the Nominations Committee has proposed the following slate of officers for the 2012-2013 service year of the Docent Council Board:

President: Kathryn Padgett  
 Vice President: Vikki Duncan  
 Secretary: Rosemarie Gebhart  
 Treasurer: Ralph Wilson  
 Membership: Gail Stichler  
 Student Teams: Ann Robinson  
 Adult Teams: Molora Vadnais and Shirley Waxman  
 La Muse: Lori Mohr  
 Evaluations: Sue Skenderian  
 Research: Mary Ellen Hoffman

The election of the officers will be made by majority vote at the Docent Council meeting on May 2<sup>nd</sup>. Please refer to section 8 of the Docent Council By Laws for more procedural information.

We thank all who consider serving on the Docent Council Board – we couldn't keep going without dedicated Board volunteers !

Thank you !

-----Christine Holland, Nominations Committee Chair



## Docent Book Club



Sue Billig

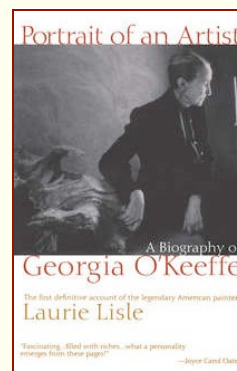
The selection for SBMA Book Club for the next meeting is  
 "Portrait of an Artist: a Biography of Georgia O'Keeffe"  
 by Laurie Lisle

"Georgia O'Keeffe, one of the most original painters America has ever produced, left behind a remarkable legacy when she died at the age of ninety-eight. Her vivid visual vocabulary -- sensuous flowers, bleached bones against red sky and earth -- had a stunning, profound, and lasting influence on American art in the last century. O'Keeffe's personal mystique is as intriguing and enduring as her bold, brilliant canvases. Here is the first full account of her exceptional life."

**Meeting date:**

**Monday, April 2 at 1:30**

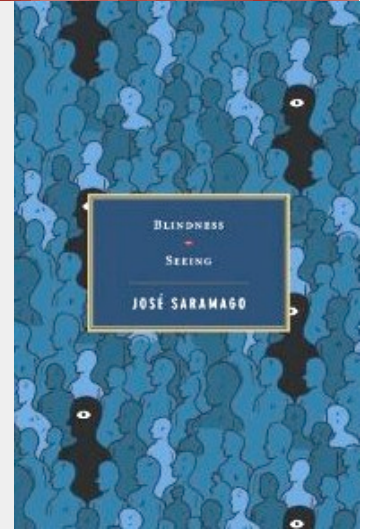
Place to be announced



*Translated from the Portuguese, 1997**Book Review by Ricki Morse*

An unnamed man is suddenly blind while driving his car in the traffic of an unnamed city. He is the first of an expanding epidemic of white blindness. Those he contacts also become blind, the thief/good Samaritan who drives him home and steals his car, the ophthalmologist who treats him, the others in the doctor's waiting room, are

soon identified by the authorities and isolated in a deserted mental hospital with others newly afflicted. Among the characters, the doctor's wife alone is not blind, but mimics blindness in order to remain with her husband.



The anonymity of this unnamed world casts a timelessness and universality on the narrative, while the humanity and power of human caring and brutality exert an emotional connection which kept me turning the pages while learning to negotiate Saramago's unique style.

His sentences often run to a paragraph, with no quotation marks, the change of speaker identified only by the capitalization of the next phrase. But soon my ear could identify the voices, as if I were blind and could not see the speakers, identifying them by phrasing and content, the occasional unidentified side comment reflecting the reality of group discussion.

And the point of view operates in a similar way, shifting from first person to an omniscient narrator, and occasionally adding a reflection on the narrator himself and his intent. As readers we become partners in the narrative, drawn in through these literary devices to be experiencer, analyzer, judge, and cohort. I found analysis and judgment elusive, opting for the experiential, becoming a cohort in their struggles.

The narrative follows our group of the first blind, guided by the seeing Doctor's wife, which includes those in the doctors' waiting room, the first blind man's wife and a parentless child, a prostitute with conjunctivitis known as the girl with dark glasses, and the car thief. They begin to build a family. They face a chaotic society of the blind, soon ruled by the one intern with a gun and his thugs who control the meager rations left by the guards, demanding the possessions and sexual favors of the others, all in the midst of the increasing filth, deprivation, lack of medical or most basic supplies to sustain life. As the guards become blind, the inmates are left to wander out into a world with no structure, no water except rain, just wandering blind people.

What elevates these events from a parable of man's social history is acts of caring, forgiving, understanding that define the best in human behavior. Touching as these moments are, they are never cloying; instead they expose and celebrate the power of the individual spirit.

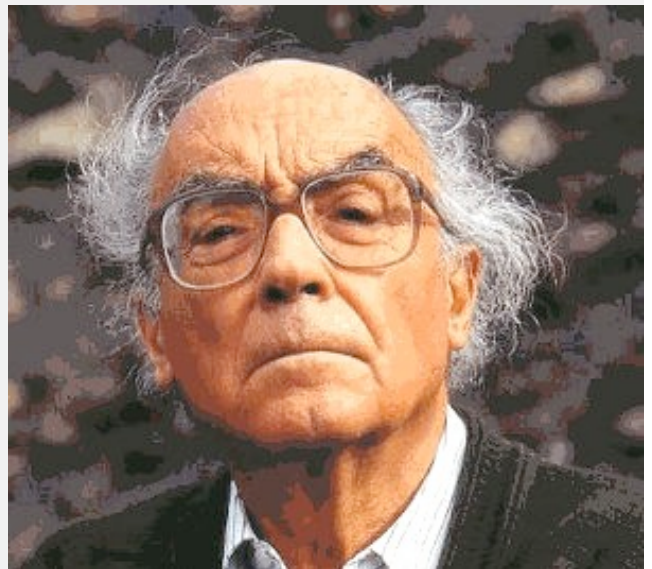
This is certainly a dark book, but it is also lyrical and uplifting and inherently celebrates the unselfish, loving act as basic to our natures.

My ultimate response is an appreciation of the fragility of life, how chaotic it can be, how ennobling it can be, and how tenaciously we cling to it.

Myla Goldberg said, on NPR, “Saramago tells his tale with humor and compassion, and with an imagination that is boundless enough to conjure an impossible epidemic without losing sight of the exigencies of actual life, achieving that rare blend of magic and reality in which the fantastical allows us to see our own world more clearly, from a perspective that brings out details we might not have otherwise considered.”

In the New York Times, Andrew Miller wrote, “Absurd to say it, but the blindness in Saramago’s novel is an allegory for not being able to see. What exactly it is we should see, what Saramago -- with all his years as a man and a writer and having lived through dictatorship and revolution -- fears we cannot see, is present in the writing, present abundantly, but it is not to be paraphrased.”

**The Author** José Saramago (1922-2010), pronounced sah-rah-MA-yo, received the Nobel Prize for literature in 1998, the first Portuguese Nobelist. He was born to a peasant family in a small village north of Lisbon and had only technical school training, beginning his work life as an auto mechanic. Having a feeling for language he worked as a translator, began writing poetry and found assignments as a journalist. It wasn’t until his 50’s that he began to write fiction. By this time he had despaired of politics in Portugal and moved to a small Spanish island where he remained for the rest of his life.

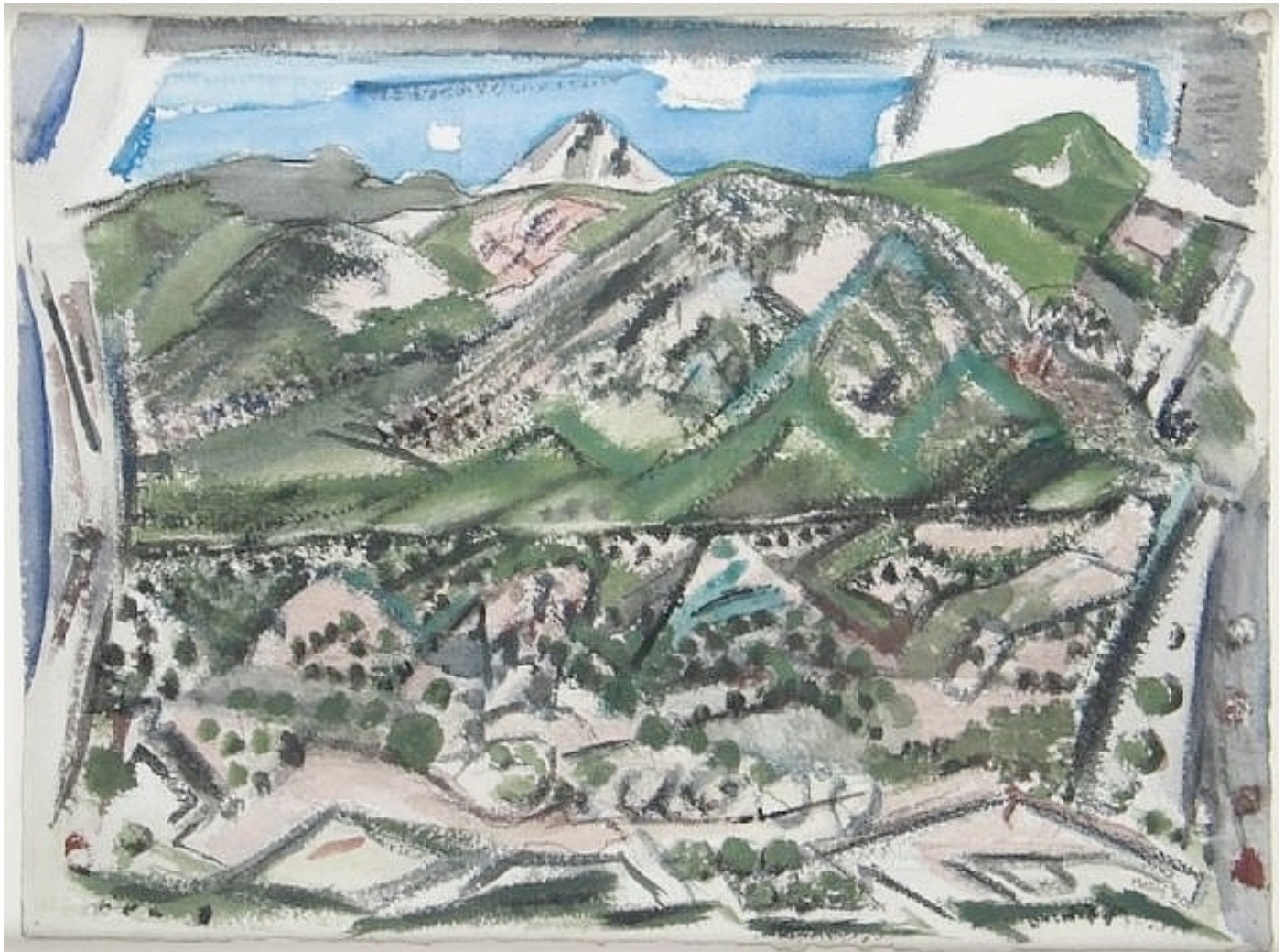


### ***Blindness on the Stage***

In 2008 the English language film *Blindness*, directed by Fernando Meirelles with Julianne Moore playing the Doctor’s wife, Danny Glover and Sandro Oh, premiered at the Cannes Film Festival. Available at Netflix with excerpts on YouTube.

In 2011 a German opera, *Blindness*, by Anno Schreier, premiered at the Zurich Opera house.

Excerpts are available on YouTube, also a discussion of the opera in Portuguese by José Saramago.



John Marin, *Mountain Patterns, New Mexico*, 1930, watercolor on paper, 15.6" x 20.0"

Comments?  
Suggestions?  
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