

Docent Dates

Oct 3

9:15 Coffee;
10:00 Meeting &
Lecture: Julie Joyce,
Martin Kersels
Installation;
Presentation of
Research Paper
by Guy Strickland;
Asian Curator,
Susan Tai, *Artful
Recluse: Painting,
Poetry and Politics in
17th Century China*

Oct 17

9:15 Coffee; 10:00
Meeting, Lecture:
Research Paper by
Linda Adams;
Arnold Chan,
Artful Recluse

Nov 5

SBMA Book Group

Nov 7

9:15 Council
Meeting Coffee
10:00 Lecture

Dec 10

Holiday Party

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All images selected
by the editor.



Camille Pissarro, *Boulevard Monmartre, Winter Morning, 1897*, Oil on canvas, 32" X 26"
Courtesy of www.camille-pissarro.org

As President I get the unique opportunity to see the breadth of docent offerings at the museum, and I must say I am impressed. I will be featuring at least one program a month so that you may have a full understanding of how our docent passion expresses itself. First let me say, this dialogue would not be possible without the amazing work that Lori Mohr does on this publication, *La Muse*. Her diligent work informs us, entertains us, keeps us current and in contact as a Docent Council. Lori has never missed a deadline in three years and we always have the newest issue of *La Muse* in our inbox at the first of every month...very impressive!

This month I am featuring the SBMA Cultural Connections: *Making Art Accessible to People with Dementia*. The SBMA is partnering with the Santa Barbara Alzheimer's Association to provide cultural experiences for people who suffer dementia and their caregivers. After several exploratory meetings, Karen Brill picked up the reins and is moving forward with purpose and organization. This summer she toured several groups of people with dementia and their caregivers in the museum and was featured on KDB.

At her informational meeting on September

Kathryn Padgett
President



11th, Karen said that “engagement with art can have significant benefits for people with dementia and their caregivers.” And that “art can be used as a vehicle for meaningful self-expression.” This program also helps caregivers to gain from the “art experiences by exploring their own interest in art while the person in their care is present, safe, and engaged.” The SBMA program benefits from and draws a great deal of information from the New York MOMA program (<http://www.moma.org/meetme/>).

Eight docents attended Karen’s meeting and learned methods for preparing a tour, working with people, facilitating discussion, and handling challenging scenarios. They plan to conduct tours at 3:00 on the following dates: October 30, November 27, January 8, March 12, May 14, July 9, September 10, and November 12. The tours will be in one gallery that is closed to the public during that time. I am confident that the people who participate will feel both enriched and rewarded.

Thank you Karen, for your passion and leadership, and thank you to those docents who participate in this very meaningful activity!

Last, but not least, Rachael has placed a box of docent cards in the Docent Office. These cards are useful to give to visitors who wish further information about the museum, your tour, or the docent program. We have effectively recruited future docents through the use of these cards.

Have a wonderful month enjoying all that the SBMA has to offer.

Message from Vice President Vikki Duncan



Dear Docents,

A wealth of suggestions for the Social Committee has been arriving via email, phone calls, and in person. Thank you to everyone for such an enthusiastic response. Those able to attend the first meeting at Christine Holland’s home on Monday, October 1st, had much to talk about in addition to making plans for a trip to Los Angeles on **Monday, November 5th**. Details and sign-up information will follow. If you are still considering being involved in the planning of events, I welcome you to take part in the Committee.

At our October 3rd meeting, look for Joan Dewhirst with a new sign-up notebook for providing refreshments at our social time before the Council Meetings.

In addition to the fall Art Talks lecture series and the new docent-led Thursday evening Ten Talks, Museum presentations to note this month include British sculptor Tony Cragg’s talk this Thursday, October 4, at 5:30 pm. After the talk, docents still have time to attend the second Ten Talks at 7:10 PM in the galleries upstairs. Docents greet visitors in Ludington Court just as we do on Adult Tours.

On Sunday, October 14th at 2:30, photographer Doug Busch and scholar Colin Gardner will discuss Busch’s work and the power of photography. Both October artist talks will be held in the Mary Craig Auditorium and are free for SBMA Members/\$10 Non-Members/\$6 Senior Non-Members.

I’m also passing on a reminder that we now pick up tickets for all events — free as well as paid events — from Visitor Services.

On October 28, Free Family Day, The Family Resource Center will open its doors to *View from a Thatched Hut: Reading Chinese Paintings*. In this interactive instructional environment, we, too, can try our

hand at the brushstrokes that translate into images like those of the 17th-century Chinese poets and painters whose work we will see in The Artful Recluse exhibition opening on October 20th.

Also on October 28th, the Museum will hold its 23rd annual Dia de los Muertos festivities honoring the Mexican tradition of remembering the dead. The displays of memorial altars created by students and community groups hold wonderful surprises each year, and this year tie into themes of our upcoming 2013 Latin American exhibition, *Myth and Materiality: Latin American Art from the Permanent Collection, 1930-1990*. Mark your calendars for the exhibition opening on February 16th, 2013.

Throughout this opportunity filled month, happy touring! 

STUDENT TOURING



Ann Robinson
Student Teams Chair

Thanks to Rachael and Amanda for leading the power point team workshop on September 18th which showcased the images of paintings, photography and sculpture available for classroom presentations and provided “hands-on” computer training. Team members are ready for their first presentation on October 2nd. Each docent is equipped with an individual flash drive for their presentation.

At this meeting, we also learned about the educational department’s remarkable resource for teachers and docents on our own Museum’s web site. I encourage all of you to click on the programs and events tab, choose schools and teachers and see what is being offered to classroom teachers in Santa Barbara. You will find curriculum connections, observations and discussion of Art for every grade level that will enrich your student touring.

The Lararium is undergoing a major overhaul. Molora Vadnais is overseeing the construction of a new Lararium and we will have more to report on this in the next few months.

ADULT TOURING



Kudos to our new active docents for their flawless handling of the summer Highlights tours. In June, July, and August docents gave **144** regularly scheduled tours and a variety of special request tours to a total of **1173** visitors.

Tours averaged 6.5 visitors. Four tours were canceled for the Solstice Parade and Independence Day and 9 scheduled tours had no visitors. Four of those tours were on Sundays.

The Ten Talks team is off to a flourishing start. In the first three weeks, docents gave 6 ten-minute talks to at least **66** people. Christine Holland had a whopping 35-45 people show up at one time to hear about the Bougereau and Morisot gals!

All of you are encouraged to come down on our new free Thursday nights and experience the fun. It’s a great mix of people — some on date night, some looking for a date, and a few families. For those of you interested in joining the Ten Talk team, we will be recruiting more docents in January. Please consider signing up to give these really fun and creative short talks.

Sue Billig



Welcome to docents of all kinds to the SBMA Book Group!

Next Meeting **Monday November 5 from 1:30—3:30**

We meet about every six weeks on a Monday at 1:30

DATES We need hostesses for our next meetings. Call or email Susan Billig to volunteer. 965-9505 suebillig@gmail.com

Nov 5

Jan 7 2013

Feb 18

April 1

May 13

November Selection

Emperor of China: Self Portrait of K'ang-Hsi

by Jonathan D. Spence

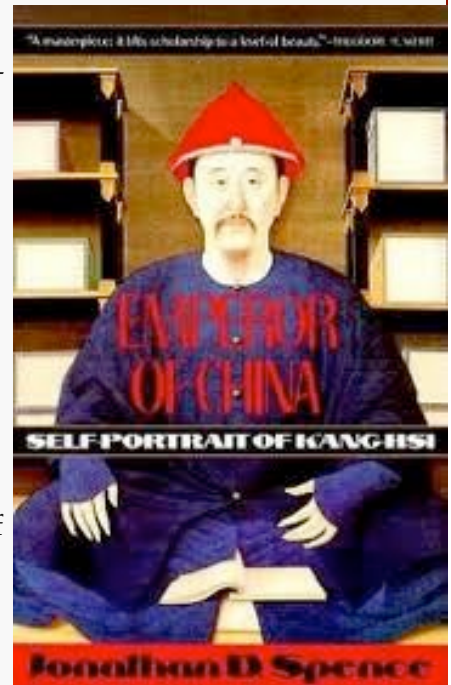
This book may enhance your understanding of our new China exhibit.

The Chinese Emperor K'ang-hsi reigned from eight years old for sixty-one years, making him the longest ruling Chinese emperor (1661 - 1722). This biography about him is pieced together from his fragmented writings and is illustrated from his own authentic brush-and-ink ideographs and from the marginal drawings with which he would have been familiar. Its fragmentary origin is hard to detect because the book reads like a good story, or even like a letter. K'ang-hsi tells about his actions, his worries, his practice of governing, his country, and his predecessors (former Chinese emperors). Spence's biography describes K'ang-hsi in flesh-and-blood, as K'ang-hsi advises today's reader about his ideas on fair government and healthy living, on revered gods and ancestors, and on plans for his successor. Readers, whose knowledge of China is a little or a lot, will truly enjoy this biography. Google review, 5 stars, c.1988, 256 pages.

The Yale historian, Jonathan Spence, uses K'ang-Hsi's own words and thoughts to tell his own story. We get an insight into his understanding of Confucianism. Can this help us understand a philosophy? Spence quotes Kangxi, "If you want to really know something you have to observe or experience it in person; if you claim to know something on the basis of hearsay, or on happening to see it in a book, you'll be a laughingstock to those who really know."

Another of his sayings is "Don't have too much sex when you are young...For example, I only have 300 women in my palace."

Read this book to understand whether he is joking. ~ Susan Billig



Maybe you were not able to slog through the September book selection, "Van Gogh: the Life" by Steven Naifeh and Gregory White Smith or laugh at the fantastic version of the creative lives of the Post Impressionists, "Sacre Bleu: a Comedy d'Art" by Christopher Moore. Both books present answers to the question -- how did Vincent Van Gogh die?

1. He wounded himself in a wheat field. That is what most of the Auvers, France villagers agreed to say. That is what many people believe, especially after reading or viewing "Lust for Life".
2. Vincent died by the hand of a gnomish man who sold special indigo paint to all the great artists. He didn't mean to do it.
3. Available Evidence. René Secrétan, in his old age, admitted that, as a teenager he often cruelly taunted Vincent and he got an old pistol from the Auvers inn keeper. He stops at admitting that he shot Vincent.

I saw that I would not be able to read every one of the 953 pages in "Van Gogh: the Life". So I started reading from "The French Years" and turned back to read parts of "The Dutch Years" when the book referred to important events in Holland.

Poor Vincent. He was drowning in guilt induced by his father and mother, induced by himself when he could not sell his work and had to depend on his brother Theo. His mental and physical health were always a burden. He predicted for himself a life of "poverty, sickness, old age, madness and always exile." Fear, longing, and regret sent him into spirals of despair and three major breakdowns.

As impossible as his life was, and as impossible he made his life, this book still showed me an ever hopeful side. He (his mania?) was always planning ways to get around the stumps and bumps in the road.

Note to Docents: I also gleaned many ideas that I could recite to museum goers. In Arles, he painted in the color wheel opposites, orange and green. Then changed to yellow and violet (irises). Flowers dominate so many of his paintings. Find some new details for your talks when you read either of these two books. ~Sue Billig



Dear Docents,

Joe and I would like to thank you all for your thoughts, prayers, cards, donations in Pam's memory and especially the love and concern you have so generously given us at this very difficult time. You are an extraordinary group who have enveloped us in your warmth and compassion which has allowed us to begin the process of stepping back into the lives we lived before this unimaginable loss.

My sincerest love and thanks, Sue

Sue's new email: skenderian@cox.net

by Robert Hughes Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 2011

Review by Ricki Morse

In the August issue of La Muse, Ricki submitted two essays on Robert Hughes: one was a bio/appreciation piece, the other a review of his 2011 book, Rome. Only the bio was published. The review is below. I regret the editorial error. ~ LM

In his prologue to this astonishing book, Robert Hughes shares his first experiences in Rome in May of 1959, as a 21 year old architecture student overwhelmed by the particular quality of light reflecting off the pyramids of peppers, tomatoes and eggplants, surrounded by hundreds of pots of blooming azaleas in the Campo Dei Fiori. Rising in the midst of the plaza is a tall plinith topped by a dark, cowed, brooding figure, Giordano Bruno (1548-1600). A heretic Dominican philosopher, astronomer and mathematician, Hughes describes him as, “. . . all told, one of the most brilliant and unorthodox Italian minds of his time, . . . [he] proposed and taught that the universe, far from being the tight and limited system of concentric spheres conceived by medieval cosmogony, all tied into orbit around their Unmoved Mover, was in fact infinitely large—a vast continuum consisting of sun after sun, star upon star, eccentric to one another and all in independent movement. This was the starting germ of a modern vision . . .” The statue (erected in 1889 through the influence of Northern Europeans including Victor Hugo and Henrik Ibsen) commemorates the pyre upon which Bruno was put to death for heresy in 1600. “Thus perished one of the true intellectual heroes of the Italian Renaissance,” writes Hughes, who notes the vegetables and flowers of the piazza provide a constantly renewed tribute to the martyred philosopher.



We can begin to see the way Hughes is going to proceed, through over 2000 years of history. His style is engaging and yet never schoolmasterly. He assumes we follow him, and somehow, we do. He delves deeply into moments in Roman history that he finds pivotal or relevant. He is an experiential writer in that he provides experiences rather than intellectual instruction. At the same time he includes a complete history of popes and emperors, orgies and peccadilloes, sorted around the polished jewels of his focused attention. And another delight is his interest in language, offering the obscure etymology of words for our delight. An example comes in his discussion of Julius Caesar’s military plans to overrun Gaul. As proconsul in 58 B.C.E. he controlled southern France which he referred to as “the province,” a name commemorated ever since as Provence. Closer to home, the month of July was known as Quintilis, but renamed for Julius Caesar, an honor formerly reserved for kings or gods. He also drops words I have never heard but am eager to add to my vocabulary. How about the ubuesque Roman policy of tearing down temples to leach out the lime from the stone--clearly a grotesque and ludicrous policy. With the political season in full swing, I can think of lots

of ubuesque policies. So much for the hick motorcyclist from the Outback.

His chapter on the foundation of Rome includes a retelling of the Rommulus and Remas story and dispelling the idea of twin founders. Since Rommulus killed his brother over a minor slight to his authority, he was the surviving founder, setting the stage for bloody clashes over authority and prominence which Hughes shows characterize Roman history.

Hughes asks, "How Roman is Rome?" considering all the mixtures of peoples, slaves, runaways and miscreants



who gathered under Rommulus to form a city. I quote the following in it's entirely, as it is relevant to our collection: "If a statue

dug up not far from the Capitol carved by a Greek artist who was a prisoner-of-war in Rome, depicting Hercules in the style of Phidias and done for a wealthy Roman patron who thought Greek art the ultimate in chic is it a 'Roman' sculpture? Or is it Greek art in Exile? Or what?" This passage exemplifies another of my great comforts with Robert Hughes. He is never convenient. He doesn't accept the publicly acknowledged answer. If it is an open question, he makes sure the prop is firmly in the door to keep it open.

As a student of architecture, Hughes is fascinated by the solutions Roman architects found for infrastructure problems, like handling waste and delivering water to the city. His exposition of the Roman aqueducts is deeply researched. Dating from 312 B.C.E. to 33 B.C.E., this elaborate system provided abundant water to the citizens and fountains of Rome and today provides some of the most remarkable arched monuments to the first use of concrete, particularly by Agrippa. It was under Julius Caesar's grandnephew, Augustus, the first Roman Emperor, who followed him into power, that Rome underwent its greatest building boom. The new young ruler (68 B.C.E. to 14 C.E.) assumed power first as part of a triumvirate to avenge the assassination of Julius Caesar. His ultimate rise to Emperor marked the end of the Republic, yet it is remarkable for the rejuvenation of Roman architecture. He said he found a city of mud brick and left it marble, in which assessment Hughes concurs. Augustus is said to have restored 83 temples in the first year of his plan.

After the death of Augustus, Rome suffered a series of decadent emperors, corrupted by power, Caligula and Nero standing out in an insufferable crowd. However, it was Hadrian under whom the most well preserved of the antique Roman buildings was constructed, the Pantheon in 125 C.E. Hughes writes



admiringly, “In the audacity and thoroughness of its engineering, in the grand harmony of its proportions and in the eloquent weight of history with which it is imbued, the Pantheon is certainly the greatest of all surviving structures of ancient Rome . . . This is a truly Roman architecture, not Greek. Greek building was a matter of straight posts and straight lintels. The Roman genius was to conceive and build three-dimensional curved structures, of which the Pantheon’s dome is the sublime archetype.” Roman concrete, a new invention not available to the Greeks, was moldable in wooden forms, graduated in size to allow the rise of the dome to support the 5000 ton structure—a marvel of architecture.

What for me enlivens the exposition is Hughes’s carefully developed presentation of the characters of the major players. He is meticulous in identifying what is gossip and what is recorded. He allows us room to judge the validity of the sources. You will be enchanted with his reconstructions of notables from Cleopatra to El Duce. He rejects the notion of Cleopatra as a nymphomaniac and presents her as a wise, even brilliant, leader who had only two known sexual liaisons, one with Julius Caesar by whom she bore a son and second with Marc Anthony, by whom she bore twins. A devoted mother to her children, she remained loyal to Anthony, dying by suicide after his death.

El Duce, who was presented in American World War II propaganda, as a “a buffoon, a swollen bull-frog on horseback,” is revealed by Hughes to have been quite different. “He understood the uses of the media and grasped them extremely well, at least as well as Winston Churchill; . . . he was ahead of his time, and his career pointed ahead to such image managers as John Kennedy and George W. Bush—but most of all as the immensely rich and sexually flamboyant mediocrat who, through his control of national television, is still the dominant figure in Italian politics, Silvio Berlusconi.”

We are delighted by his rejection of ideology in favor of research and observation. He puts two and two together as well as any writer I know, totally outside the op-ed loop, refusing to use past events or people as fodder for his personal opinions.

We shall miss him.



What should I do when a visitor gets too close to a work of art?

Submitted by Kathryn Padgett

This tip is being included as the result of a particularly difficult experience of a docent with one visitor. It’s something we’ve all had to address at one time or another, so a bit of discussion seems in order.

First, always be a good role model by standing at least on foot away from the art and avoid pointing with your index finger, which often results in getting too close to the object. If a visitor gets too close, verbally remind them that the museum has a policy of remaining one foot away from the piece and demonstrate the distance. If a visitor continues to be too close to the work of art after your reminders, ask for assistance from the guards. It is best to refrain from touching the visitor in any way unless there is clear danger to the piece of art.

I hate sweeping - disturbing a visitor's Trappist concentration to invite them on a tour is, for me, the hardest part of my touring role. It's also a very important part. That initial contact jump-starts the rapport between docent and visitor that is necessary for effective give and take during the tour.

Still, there are those tough days when everyone seems to have an excuse.

DOCENT: Hello, my name is Lori Mohr and I'm a docent here. I just want to let you know that I'll be giving a Highlights Tour in about 10 min - at 1 o'clock, meeting in the lobby. We'll be looking at some of the museum's very best pieces. I'd love to have you join me.

VISITOR: Uh, thanks. We'd rather just wander around and look on our own (nudges wife).

DOCENT: Well, enjoy your visit and if you see me in the galleries feel free to join the tour.

DOCENT: Hello, my name is Lori Mohr and I'm a docent here. At 1 o'clock I'll be giving a Highlights Tour...

VISITOR: Thanks, but we just finished the noon tour...don't think we want to do another.

DOCENT: Hello, my name is Lori Mohr and I'm a docent here. In ten minutes I'm giving a Highlights Tour...

VISITOR: We've already been here 45 minutes and we're starving. Is there a cafe in the museum?

DOCENT: Hello, my name is Lori Mohr and I'm a docent here. At 1 o'clock I'll be giving a Highlights Tour...

VISITOR: Thanks, but I have a dental appointment at 1:15. I'm just killing time.

DOCENT: Hello, my name is Lori Mohr and I'm a docent here. In ten minutes I'm giving a Highlights Tour...

VISITOR: Uh, well...I'm here with my friend from out of town and I'm not sure what she wants to see. She wandered off, but let me confer with her...you have any Rembrandts? I think she mentioned Rembrandt...and Pollock.

DOCENT: Hello, my name is Lori Mohr and I'm a docent here. I'll be giving a Highlights Tour in about 10 min...

VISITOR: OH, THAT WON'T WORK. MY MOTHER IS HARD OF HEARING, SO YOU'D HAVE TO YELL...

DOCENT: Hello, my name is Lori Mohr and I'm a docent here. I'll be giving a Highlights Tour in about 10 minutes. We have the Mona Lisa on loan from the Louvre and you'll be able to see it up close.

VISITOR: Really? Wow! The Mona Lisa! Ya know...on second thought...I think I'll pass. I saw it in Paris a few years ago and was kinda disappointed. It was so small...

DOCENT: Hello, my name is Lori Mohr and I'm a docent here. I'm going to be giving a Highlights Tour and...

VISITOR: Highlights? No...this is my natural color...why do you ask?

DOCENT: No, no, a tour... I'm giving a tour highlighting some of our very best works of art.

VISITOR: Is it free?

DOCENT: Yes, yes... absolutely free.

VISITOR: Actually, I need time to go to the Gift Shop before I have to leave.

DOCENT: Hello, my name is Lori Mohr and I'm a docent here. I just want to let you know that I'll be giving a Highlights Tour focusing on several of our very best pieces. I'd love to have you join me.

VISITOR: A tour? How long does it last?

DOCENT: About 45 minutes, but you can feel free to wander off at any point. I promise to show you some fabulous art and the tour will be interesting.

VISITOR: Well, my husband can't stand too long...we'll think about it. Where is it?

DOCENT: If you came in from State Street, it's right there, that first gallery.

VISITOR: The one with the naked statues...?

DOCENT: Uh, yes, our Greco Roman sculptures...

VISITOR: Well, that's where we started so we've probably seen everything...

continued

DOCENT: Hello, my name is Lori Mohr and I'm a docent here. I just want to let you know that I'll be giving a Highlights Tour...

VISITOR: Sorry, we just came to see the special exhibition...where do we go for that...?

DOCENT: Hello, my name is Lori Mohr and I'm a docent. I just want to let you know that I'll be giving a Highlights Tour in about 10 minutes.

VISITOR: Ten minutes? Great! I heard someone say the Mona Lisa was here...gotta see that.



Comments? Suggestions?
Mohrojai@aol.com

Lori Mohr, Editor

