

Docent Dates

Sept 19

9:15 Council
Meeting Coffee
10:00 Lecture

Oct 3

9:15 Council
Meeting Coffee
10:00 Lecture

Oct 17

9:15 Council
Meeting Coffee
10:00 Lecture

Oct 24

Book Club Meets
1:30-3:30

Nov 7

9:15 Council
Meeting Coffee
10:00 Lecture

Dec 5

9:15 Council
Meeting Coffee
10:00 Lecture

Dec 10

Holiday Party

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All images selected
by the editor.



Douglas Busch, *One Legged Fruit Seller*, 1992, Platinum print, 12" X 20"

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As the beautiful days of summer fade into our memories, we start anticipating the upcoming docent year. It is going to be a dynamic and interesting one filled with excellent exhibits, exciting touring opportunities and fascinating lectures, to say nothing of the bus trips and social events that nurture our camaraderie. As always, our unique group of dedicated docents will make the year sparkle with energy and enthusiasm.

The Docent Board has been diligently at work all summer, laying the platform for our new service year. Shirley Waxman, Laura DePaoli, Vikki Duncan and Molora Vadnais reviewed the Preference Sheets and established solid adult teams that will be touring our new exhibits as well as our permanent collections. In addition to their regular responsibilities, these docents have given life once again to our motto — be flexible — and collaborated with the Education Department in defining and staffing the newly-created "10 Minute Tours" now offered on free Thursday evenings. These short talks will no doubt be a fun opportunity for those docents who have volunteered and we'll be anxious to hear about their experiences.

Sue Skenderian, as Evaluations Chair, has established a means of doing community outreach and has set up the evaluation process for this year. Membership Chair Gail Stichler has finalized last year's statistics and has created the forms for this year's tracking. Karen Brill is lending her expertise to bring art education and

Kathryn Padgett
President



experience to Alzheimer's patients in an outreach program. Student Teams Chair Ann Robinson has established the new student touring roster and is working with Sylvia Mabee and the Education Department in developing new Powerpoint presentations for the classrooms. The revamping of the Lararium for student tours is in Molora's very able hands.

As Treasurer, Ralph Wilson has established an annual budget for the Board's approval at our first Board Meeting. Secretary Rosemarie Gebhardt has completed June's minutes for approval and Research Chair Mary Ellen Hoffman has collaborated with Vikki Duncan to update the responsibilities of that Board position.

Gretchen and I have also been busy this summer, creating the course syllabus for this year's provisional class; we have 12 very able and interesting people signed up for the training program.

The websites, old and new, are moving forward. On our current site, Webmaster Ricki Morse has posted information about our new active docents along with their research papers. She has also updated touring teams, meeting dates, and other pertinent information. The development of the new website, using a newer software program called Word Press, is in the able hands of Mike Ramey, Loree Gold, Vikki Duncan, and Irene Stone. This new software will enable many new options for the docent council as we look to things as online docent rosters, the provisional curriculum, and forms that can be completed online and emailed. Stay tuned for the upcoming refinements of this new website when it goes live.

In keeping with the dynamic and fluid nature of our council, the start of this year brings both hellos and goodbyes. We are pleased to add the New Active Docents to our ranks: Linda Adams, Stephanie Amon, Barbara Boyd, Joan Dewhirst, Francis Hallinan, Teda Pilcher, Mike Ramey, Cynthia Schoustra and Guy Strickland.

At the same time we bid a sad farewell to Laura Creasy who was a shining beacon of intellect, curiosity, collegiality, and competence. We say farewell to Roy Nixon who has resigned and moved back to Kansas City; to Kyoko who has moved to Hong Kong; and to Shirley Waxman and Carolyn Pappas who have taken leaves of absence. Mary Alice Barnhouse, Barbara Carrington, Chantal Gariepy, and Denise Kightlinger have become Sustaining Docents.

As we move into the new service year, it is important to reflect on how we, as a Council, reap countless tangible and intangible rewards created by the truly competent, diligent and hard working individuals who make up our Board, and when we all stand together as a group, how each and every one of us contributes to making the SBMA Docent Council a strong, vibrant, energetic and forward-moving group.

With that said, let's all hang on for the exciting ride of a wonderful and dynamic year!





Dear Docents,

Being part of the Council is a privilege—and a special one for me this year, having been involved with the activities to support our celebrations and our shared love of art.

In just over two weeks we'll be meeting on September 19th. The Board will provide the refreshments as we catch up with one another. Joan Dewhirst has graciously accepted the role of coordinating the meeting refreshments for the rest of the service year, from October through June. Your responses to her requests for volunteers in providing the always-enjoyed refreshments for our social time together before meetings will be well received.

With the strength of our docent numbers and docents' generosity in the thoughtful sharing of ideas, information, and time in making our events successful, we've come to a good moment in our Council's development. In formal recognition and support of our commitment to shared activities, a social committee is being established this year to plan for and coordinate annual events, among them our holiday party, seasonal bus trips, Provisional luncheons, and the Provisional recruitment event. The committee will also initiate other art-related opportunities to be arranged as they arise during the year.

The social committee is not creating a new Board position; rather, it is a pilot program under the auspices of the Vice President. As such, we can include six docents willing to serve on the 2012—2013 committee.

The Book Club is back in full swing and will hold its first meeting on Monday, September 24, at 1:30 PM at the home of Susan Billig. In addition to hosting the meeting, Susan has agreed to continue her coordinating role this year in partnership with Kathy Eastman. See the Book Club article in this issue of *La Muse*.

We are considering destinations for a docent day-trip in early November that will be engaging without duplicating either the Fall Art Talks museum trip or the additional SBMA Member day trip in early December. Our docent trip and an Art Talks trip will occur in the same week, however, given the Docent Council lecture dates and Art Talks speaker availability.

Our fall activities will conclude with the camaraderie and cheer of our traditional Holiday Party, highlighted by the introduction of the 2012—2013 Provisional Class on Monday, December 10th. Would you consider hosting our holiday event? As you know, an army of docents is always on hand to help with planning, preparation, and clean-up. As a Council event, there is no cost involved in hosting. I would appreciate hearing from you during September if you think you would like to do this.

As your Vice President, I look forward to hearing your ideas, comments and responses at

vikki.duncan@verizon.net or 805-685-5692 or 714-349-4277.

Vikki



STUDENT TOURING



Ann Robinson
Student Teams Chair

Our student teams are in place and I am grateful that our team leaders, who all have had several years of experience with museum touring now, have elected to return for another year of leadership. Team leader is an important role in the smooth functioning of our touring program and as Chair, I appreciate their commitment.

This service year we have 40 docents making up the student teams, which represents a solid number for us as we begin the school year.

The classroom presentation team is being led by Sylvia Mabee, who participated on this team last year.

As I review the teams, it is exciting to see our newly-graduated docents integrated with those of long standing on both the student touring and classroom presentation teams. These teams make up a dynamic and energetic group of docents who are enthusiastic and ready to continue their work with the children of the Santa Barbara School District.

As we launch this new year, I want to extend a warm welcome to our new docents, both to the council and to our touring teams. I encourage you to continue broadening your student touring skills by attending team meetings, asking questions and taking advantage of the unbelievable talent in this docent council.

We all learn from each other, borrow from each other as we observe tours, share information/tips. One of the beautiful things about this council is that we docents never stop learning, never stop striving to improve our tours, never get stale. As new docents, you inject added energies, new perspectives, and remind us of the joy we felt starting out as new docents and how we wanted to be the best we could be.

That's what keeps us fresh, wanting to do our best, keeping the standard high, whether we've been part of the council for one year or three decades.

Here's to a great year of student touring.



DOCENT HOURS



Gail Stichler, Membership Chair

Just a reminder: Docent hours are tallied all year long, including during the summer. If you have tour and/or research hours you'd like to submit, please email me at: gmstichler@aol.com. You can save your hours to submit at our first meeting September 19 where the log sheets will be available.

I'm looking forward to seeing you in September!



Sue Billig



Two New Books:

“Van Gogh: a Life” by Steven Naifeh and Gregory W. Smith

“Sacre Bleu” by Christopher Moore

We still have time to read the new Van Gogh bio before the next SBMA Book Club meeting. If the 868 pages are too daunting, Christopher Moore has written a new light-hearted story with a comical theory of where artists get their inspiration.

“Van Gogh; a Life” by Steven Naifeh and Gregory W. Smith have written a detailed, compelling, and ultimately heartbreaking portrait of Vincent Van Gogh’s genius. The authors had new access to a wealth of previously untapped materials, including Vincent’s illustrated letters of unpublished family correspondence. The theme of loneliness and misunderstanding runs through all of his life without support from family or friend.

Most biographies concentrate on his last 4 years. These authors propose new interpretations of Vincent’s life and his inspiration, and covering his days before he moved to Arles. With a new tone of negativism, some blanks in his life are filled in, but the book presents many more questions.

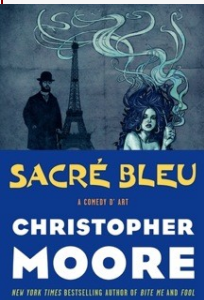
Art saint, sensitive victim or manipulating moocher? The authors propose a revised scenario of his death. Did he commit suicide? Or was he shot by a local bully? Can we know the facts?

Christopher Moore’s book, “Sacre Bleu” also questions how Van Gogh could have shot himself, then walked a mile to Dr Gachet’s house. The book is a mystery, a love story, and an investigation into the role the pigment Ultramarine Blue plays in the Impressionist’s lives and work. Moore proposes a wild theory to explain the source of creativity for artists from the beginning of civilized man.

Henri Toulouse-Lautrec and a fictional baker, who desires to paint great art, act as innocent sleuths.

Moore creates vaudeville-like dialogue to personalize each of the artists like Pissarro, Manet, Renoir, Whistler, and Gauguin.

When Moore selects a subject to lampoon (Shakespeare, Santa Claus) he thoroughly researches his subjects. With our knowledge of artist biographies, we may recognize truths or be fooled by the biography he creates.



Docents and Provisionals are welcome to come to the SBMA book Club. Please bring book titles and authors, or subjects you think that we would like to read about. We usually meet and read 5 times during the year. Attend the first meeting to help decide meeting dates and book titles.

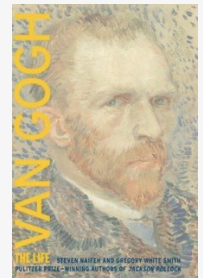
Kathy Eastman was and is the co chair of the Book Club.

Next Meeting **Monday Sept 24 1:30 – 3:30**

Goodies & Drinks at:

Susan Billig’s house 1693 Franceschi Rd

RSVP to 956-9505 suebillig@gmail.com



In Appreciation of Art Critic Robert Hughes

By Ricki Morse



Robert Hughes, the most famous art critic of the twentieth century, died on August 6, 2012. Born in Sydney, Australia in 1938, he was surely the most improbable king of the heap ever to arrive enthroned above the elite, erudite and revered critics who often scoffed at his pronouncements.

I began to learn how to look at art from him, especially from his 1990 book, *The Shock of the New*, which arose from his TV series of the same name and from his 1991 collection of essays, *Nothing If Not Critical*. Just to give you a taste in his incomparable style, follow

his comments on Watteau's musicality: "it lives in pauses, silences between events. He was a connoisseur of the unplucked string, the immobility before the dance, the moment that falls between departure and nostalgia."

His command of history seems complete, which may be accounted for in part by his education in a Jesuit boarding school following his father's death when he was twelve. Later he studied architecture at the University of Sydney where he declares himself an unremarkable student except in his ability to flunk an art history course. "I actually succeeded in failing first year arts, which any moderately intelligent amoeba could have passed."

After college Hughes traveled in Europe, finally seeing the buildings, paintings and sculptures he had only barely glimpsed through his studies and Australian museums. But he had already begun writing, first with a book on the art of Australia, which he dismisses, and next in 1969 a book on heaven and hell in Western art, which drew few readers, except for one very important one, a *Time Magazine* executive, who immediately offered him the art critic position at the magazine. In 1970 Robert Hughes left London, where he had been writing a column for the *Sunday Times*, and came to New York. He remained with *Time* throughout his career.

In the world of the important and self-important, Hughes was unimpressed. He remained an Australian motorcycle rider until an accident in 1972 ended his riding. But the attitude remained, uninterested in theoretical positions or ideologies, he looked at art, experienced it, and communicated the clarity of his vision without regard to the prevailing wisdom.

Upon reading of his death, I decided to read his last book on the history of Rome, one I cannot even imagine how he managed. His health was seriously compromised by a 1999 automobile accident in Western Australia, which he narrowly survived. However, though his rehabilitation was on-going, he continued to



write, ultimately agreeing to develop the idea of a London publisher for a book on the history of Rome. The publisher had long thought of Hughes as the perfect



one to accomplish his dream, and Hughes, now in a wheelchair, with his wife Doris Downes and the help and support of numerous British and Roman friends, managed to negotiate the historical sites. The book was completed in 2011. It stands as

a tribute to his tenacity (he always considered writing the hardest work one could do), his zest for living and his abiding love of the history of creativity.



Short Stop Tour *By Josie Martin*



So it's a Sunday, a free Day at the Museum and I'm sweeping for my Portrayal Betrayal Tour. Not too many people around. I sweep twice, decide to approach a threesome just on the chance; the older woman in the group wearing an elegant chapeau and some interesting jade jewelry smiles and says, "When? In two minutes? Yes, that would be fine." She's using a cane.

We meet in Ludington Court. Introductions, she lives here, the stunning grand-daughter and her friend are from San Diego. Good eye-contact, lots of smiles and nods. We set off for the Egyptian Mummy painting. I get a laugh when I say "She could be an ad for Maybelline with those penciled eyes." Good start, I tell myself. Off to Tomoko

Sawada and the questions of identity that her work poses. The tall grand-daughter is looking at her watch. I head for Greta Garbo, confident that the two portraits will be of interest. Well, no. Grandmother

didn't like her and Grand-daughter had never heard of Garbo. I take them to the huge Paul McCarthy portrait which immediately changes the atmosphere.

Grand-daughter knows his work, yes he is a wild man and she really likes him, saw his strange pieces when she was taking art classes at college. She seems engaged when I mention that at one point he used himself as a paint brush, etc. We cross the room to Irving Penn and Larry Sultan side by side, the women stand quietly. No reaction to either, not when I speak of the mood from the dark tones of "La Marchande de Ballon", nor the harsh light of the Larry Sultan and his pornographic actress in the curlers. Grand-daughter wanders off, grandmother looks as if she'd like to go with her. The friend follows me to "Baptism on the Jordan River" with its beautiful young woman and her blissful expression. "Wow, she looks a bit like A_____, " pointing to the Grand-daughter. Grandmother comes back, lifts her hat and says, "I've been to the Jordan in Israel, but I didn't go in for the dip....why yes, " she agrees, the woman in white does look like her grand-daughter who is now in the next gallery.



I continue with just the two in tow. They appreciate "La Vida No Es Bella" with its snaky looking hands and are genuinely interested in the portrait of "Helene Jacobs, from the series "Rescuers of the Holocaust". I tell them about Helene's unusual history, mention that I was rescued by a nun during WWII. The grand-daughter has come back catching just the end of my brief story that her grandmother wanted to know.

And then they're gone again, both of them! Now it's only the friend and me. I continue with my tour, the friend doesn't say a word, but politely follows. I feel sorry for her, she's caught between her girlfriend and her own good museum manners. Grandmother is sitting down, her cane toppling on the hard floor noisily. She looks exhausted as she retrieves it.

What to do? It's been twenty minutes. I can't just stop. I have at least twenty-minutes more to share. Maybe, maybe Shirin Neshat's "Rebellious Silence" and Laila Esayadi's intriguing portraits of women in chadors will re-ignite some interest. Indeed, Grandmother gets up and comes over. "It's a crime to be a girl in that culture, thank God we live in America," she utters before I even begin. Grand-daughter walks past and smiles at me and she's off again looking at other works, Catherine Opie's "Jerome Caja" and the Diane Arbus. She actually calls her friend over to tell her about Jorge Luis Borges in Central Park.

The friend looks apologetically as she leaves me. Grandmother appears a bit sorry as well, looks for another bench to sit on. As graciously as possible I give a quick wrap-up, thank them for their attention and the tour ends. I am as relieved as they are. It doesn't happen often with adults, but sometimes we have to let it go. I suspect Grand-daughter was indulging Granny when she agreed to go on the tour, though she was perfectly capable of viewing without a docent stopping her for the commentary. And then she got caught up in what really attracted her, not what I wanted to show. Is my tour boring? I don't think so, but you just can't win them all.

I can't remember the last time I did, but sometimes one just has to stop short.



From the July 22, 2012 edition of the LA Times. Reprinted with permission from the author



All Quiet on the Western Front (1930) is among the films arising in response to the grim realities of industrial warfare.

Along with millions of idealistic young men who were cut to pieces by machine guns and obliterated by artillery shells, there was another major casualty of World War I: traditional ideas about Western art.

The Great War of 1914-18 tilted culture on its axis, particularly in Europe and the United States. Nearly 100 years later, that legacy is being wrestled with in film, visual art, music, television shows like the gauzily nostalgic PBS soaper "Downton Abbey"

and plays including the Tony Award-winning "War Horse," concluding its run at the Ahmanson Theatre.

"It created an epoch in art," said Leo Braudy, a USC professor of English and author of "From Chivalry to Terrorism: War and the Changing Nature of Masculinity." "The question is, what was on one side and what was on the other?"

The simple answer as to what lay on the near side of World War I is Modernism, that slippery but indispensable term denoting a wide range of new sensibilities and aesthetic responses to the industrial age. Modernism took shape decades before World War I, but its clamorous arrival was vastly accelerated by the greatest collective trauma in history to that point.

From the fiction of Hemingway, Virginia Woolf and John Dos Passos to the savagely critical paintings and etchings of George Grosz and Otto Dix, World War I reshaped the notion of what art is, just as it forever altered the perception of what war is. Although World War II racked up more catastrophic losses in blood and treasure, World War I remains the paradigmatic conflict of the modern age, not only politically but also culturally.

"Of all the wars, that is the one that seems to explain us best," said Michael Morpurgo, the English author of the novel "War Horse," about a Devonshire farm boy's death-defying bond with his noble steed Joey, on which the National Theatre of Great Britain's production is based.

Particularly in his country, he said, World War I resonates louder than the even greater cataclysm that followed it 20 years later. "The First World War for British people is very much a part of who we are," Morpurgo said during a visit to Los Angeles. "It's so deep in us; the poetry, the stories, the loss, the suffering is there in every village churchyard."

During and after World War I, flowery Victorian language was blown apart and replaced by more sinewy and R-rated prose styles. In visual art, Surrealists and Expressionists devised wobbly, chopped-up perspectives and nightmarish visions of fractured human bodies and splintered societies slouching toward moral chaos.

"The whole landscape of the Western Front became surrealistic before the term surrealism was invented by the soldier-poet Guillaume Apollinaire," Modris Eksteins wrote in "Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age."

Throughout Western art, the grim realities of industrial warfare led to a backlash against the propaganda and grandiose nationalism that had sparked the conflagration. Cynicism toward the ruling classes and disgust with war planners and profiteers led to demands for art forms that were honest and direct, less embroidered with rhetoric and euphemism.

"Abstract words such as glory, honor, courage, or hallow were obscene besides the concrete names of villages, the numbers of roads, the names of rivers, the numbers of regiments and the dates," Ernest Hemingway wrote in "A Farewell to Arms," his 1929 novel based on his experiences in the Italian campaign. Other artists clung to the shards of classical culture as a buffer against nihilistic disillusionment. "These fragments I have shored against my ruins," T.S. Eliot wrote in "The Waste Land" (1922).

In "The Great War and Modern Memory," Paul Fussell argued that the rise of irony as a dominant mode of modern understanding "originates largely in the application of mind and memory to the events of the Great War."

Irony and dissonant humor permeated the music of classical composers such as Alban Berg and Benjamin Britten, a pacifist who parodied marching-band pomposity in his Piano Concerto in D. In his 1989 film "War Requiem," based on Britten's non-liturgical Mass, British director Derek Jarman suggested a parallel between the indifferent slaughter of World War I and the neglect of AIDS-infected young men in the 1980s.

The fear that powerful new machines invented to serve humanity might instead destroy it also took root around World War I, later spreading into science fiction and the debates surrounding today's aerial drone warfare. "World War I definitely gives a push forward to the idea of dystopia rather than utopia, to the idea that the world is going to get worse rather than better," Braudy said.

When war broke out in summer 1914, artists were among its biggest cheerleaders. Britain and France, Europe's dominant 19th-century military and cultural powers, saw the war as necessary for reinforcing the continental status quo, while Germany viewed it as an opportunity for "purging" Europe of political stagnancy and cultural malaise.

"War! We felt purified, liberated, we felt an enormous hope," Thomas Mann wrote in 1914. Only years later would the German author renounce his support of the war in his novels "The Magic Mountain" and "Dr. Faustus," which depicted wartime Europe gripped by a mass psychosis.

Austrian composer Arnold Schoenberg initially drew analogies "between the German army's assault

Modernism
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on decadent France and his own assault on decadent bourgeois values" and music, as the New Yorker music critic Alex Ross writes in "The Rest Is Noise: Listening to the Twentieth Century." "Now comes the reckoning!" Schoenberg wrote to Alma Mahler. "Now we will throw these mediocre kitschmongers into slavery, and teach them to venerate the German spirit and to worship the German God."

For Morpurgo, the essence of how World War I stamped modern consciousness can be found in the works of a generation of English poets and writers such as Rupert Brooke, Wilfred Owen, Robert Graves and Siegfried Sassoon, all of whom served in uniform.

In the conflict's opening months, Brooke penned the wistfully patriotic "The Soldier," expressing hope that if he should

die in combat he would be laid to rest in "some corner of a foreign field/ That is forever England."

Three years later, Owen, who like Brooke would not survive the war, wrote with blunt fury about the horrors of gas attacks and the obscene futility of battle in "Dulce et Decorum Est."

The ruinous carnage of the War to End All Wars has come to be regarded as emblematic of all misguided military action and the societies that support it. George Bernard Shaw's 1920 play "Heartbreak House" and films such as Jean Renoir's classic "The Grand Illusion" (1937) and Peter Weir's "Gallipoli" (1981) dramatize the class-based interests and divisions that drove the war. Other movies such as Stanley Kubrick's "Paths of Glory," the peace-and-love hippie ethos of the 1966 "King of Hearts" and the grotesque music-hall choreography of the Vietnam-era "Oh, What a Lovely War!" (1969) underscore the notion that wartime signifies the taking over of the asylum by the lunatics.

But possibly the war's most enduring legacy, and one of its few positive ones, was to emphasize not the strategies of kaisers and field marshals but the personal stories of the nontitled individuals who actually fought and died in it.

The impulse to remember and honor the hardships endured by the ordinary foot soldier creates a direct link between Charles Sargeant Jagger's Royal Artillery Memorial at London's Hyde Park Corner, with its bronze figure of a dead soldier covered by a blanket, and Maya Lin's abstract, quietly dignified Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.

Amy Lyford, a professor of art history and visual arts at Occidental College, said that Surrealism developed partly from artists' desires to depict the massive traumas the war inflicted on individual human beings. Meanwhile, she said, the ruling classes after World War I were trying to "paper over" those wounds with plastic surgery, both literally in the case of mutilated veterans, who were fitted with newfangled prosthetics, and culturally.

"There was a kind of aestheticization of trauma," said Lyford, author of "Surrealist Masculinities: Gender Anxiety and the Aesthetics of Post-World War I Reconstruction in France."

Today, Lyford said, some contemporary artists are exploring how "stories of reparation and therapy" are being used to paper over the actual and metaphoric wounds of 21st-century warfare in Iraq and Afghanistan. "The fragmentation is real," Lyford said. "It's not just something you sew up with stitches and move on."

World War I reshaped the notion of what art is, just as it forever altered the perception of what war is.



Summer Art Project
Class of 2006-7
Atelier Ann Hammond

Photos by Gina Chalmers



Dear Docents, I will be traveling during the second half of September, returning October 1st. The October issue of La Muse will be published on the 2nd or 3rd. LM

Comments? Suggestions?
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