

December 4

9:15 Coffee
10:00 Meeting
Lecture: Nan
Rogers, SBMA

December 9

Holiday Party
2:00-4:00 Home of
Guy Strickland

December 16

Westmont College
Forde Collection

January 15

9:15 Coffee
10:00 Meeting

February 5

9:15 Coffee
10:00 Meeting

February 19

9:15 Coffee
10:00 Meeting

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Alice Aycock, *Rock, Paper Scissors*
Watercolor and ink on paper
95 11/16" × 59 1/2".
Internal use only.

Dear Docents,

The spirit of gratitude that we associate with being docents and with the celebrations of the season was reflected back on the Docent Council in our being named a 2013 Local Heroes honoree by the Santa Barbara Independent. Thank Patsy Hicks for championing our Council in nominating us for recognition in this very public way.

Our shared experience is richer with each exhibition and event. In early November, we were invited by Eik Kahng to the Delacroix Symposium, a scholarly, contemporary look at the artist and his work amid the controversies of his time.

The Asian Study Group, which originated a decade ago, held an afternoon salon for Asian Team members and those docents who responded to the call for research with interest in our Asian collection. We enjoyed the 2nd Docent Art Show (see coverage in this issue), and the well-attended trip to LACMA with a curatorial tour of LACMA's partner exhibition of the John Divola survey.

Adding to the pleasure this month, the notes of Chopin—an audible finishing touch—reach our ears in both the *Delacroix* exhibition, and the works-on-paper room in Ridley Tree Gallery, which has been transformed into a life-size jewel-box room of Byzantine icons in *Religious Images of the Christian East*. The opportunities to make connections among the diverse exhibitions, from haloed saints to contemporary Dark Stars, can challenge us and let us shine.



Vikki Duncan
President

The remarkable histories of 19th Century frames will be the lecture topic at our December 4 Council Meeting when SBMA staff framer Nan Rogers will talk about frames on Delacroix works in particular (see the 2008 interview with Nancy in this issue).

Invitations to our holiday party on December 9th are in our hands and mailboxes. Thank you to our hosts, Guy and Vicky Strickland, who are opening their home to us. We look forward to welcoming our Provisional Docents, introduced by their mentors, and sharing holiday cheer. Please r.s.v.p. to Molora Vadnais by email moloravadnais@gmail.com or by phone 886-7393 by December 2nd. We can expect maps, driving directions, and carpool information in the coming week.

Our final docent outing for 2013 will be on Monday, December 16, to Westmont College to view selections from the Forde contemporary collection in a 1:00 p.m. tour with Ridley Tree Art Museum Director Judy Larson. Sign up at the December 4 meeting or r.s.v.p. to Molora at moloravadnais@gmail.com, if you would like to join the tour.

I want to thank Vice President Molora Vadnais and the social and travel committees working with her for the variety and number of art events this fall. And to the Docent Council Board, thank you for the dedication, thought, and experience you bring to considering all topics related to the well being and running of our Council.

I wish you all a wonderful month bringing our thrilling exhibitions to visitor's, and a new year of health and adventure.


Vikki Duncan 

From our Vice President



Molora Vadnais

Thirty-one docents spent a wonderful day at LACMA on November 18. LACMA photography curator, Eve Schillo, gave docents a wonderful tour of the John Divola exhibit which is housed in a single room with each wall devoted to a different series. The LACMA exhibit features 7 Songbirds and a Rabbit, enlargements of stereograph images; Artificial Nature, 36 arranged film continuity shots of fake landscapes; large scale Polaroids of sculpted objects; and a Giga-pan photograph of the artist running from the camera.

Docents had lunch on their own—some choosing LACMA's cafe and some choosing the food trucks across the street--and then enjoyed LACMA's other temporary and permanent exhibits in the afternoon. Many thanks to Patsy Hicks, Rachael Kriepps, Karen Sinsheimer and Lisa Volpe for arranging the special tour of John Divola and to LACMA and its photography department for offering free admission. 





Ann Robinson
Student Teams Co-chair
with Sylvia Mabee

It is a sheer delight to hear the squeals of surprise and experience the visual attraction for students when they enter the current exhibits: *Totally 80s*, *John Divola: As Far As I Could Get* and *Delacroix*. Students are elated with the variety of materials on display, the pictures of faraway places transporting them to a distant country in another era.

John Divola's photographs elicit personal stories of animals and imagery. The simplicity of the images; white on black invokes responses of dreamland, and illusion. Docents are reporting that these exhibits have totally captured the students' attention and, consequently, they are able to spend more time on the main floor of the Museum.

The student museum tours which started In October and completed through the end of December 2013 will guide **780 students** representing **15 schools** through these exhibits. Our classroom presentations will be viewed by **633 students** in **8 elementary schools**.

I am deeply appreciative for all of your creativity, endurance and commitment in engaging children with Art in schools and in the Museum. 🍷

Adult Touring



Christine Holland
Adult Teams Co-chair
with Mary Eckhart

In October 2013, SBMA Docents toured a total of 411 visitors on a total of 62 tours, with an average of 6.6 visitors per tour.

Highlights remains steady as compared with previous months.

Portraits had a lot of interest, with an average of over 7 visitors per tour.

Both special exhibits have had very good attendance so far, with *Divola* welcoming 9.3 average per tour and *Totally 80s* welcoming 7.3 average.

Ten Talks had an average this month of 12.5 visitors per tour.

Ten Talks, it must now be admitted, is a huge success for the museum and the docent council, with a string of months with very good attendance and enthusiasm from the visitors. It seems to be an excellent way to reach out to people who might not be regular museum patrons, to help connect them with the art and hopefully build long-term interest.

There were no Special Request tours in October.

There were a few scheduled tours for which there were no visitors, but otherwise, attendance on all tours was good, with 6.6 as the average number of visitors per tour.

The Docent teams continue to do fabulous work. Congratulations to all. 🍷

From our Provisional Instructor/s



Ralph Wilson

The provisional class members faced their first major assignments in November. They handled the vocabulary quiz with apparent ease, and we are in the process of completing the 3-Minute Talks. We as co-trainers are always gratified to learn something new from the provisionals' Talks, whether about current exhibition pieces or familiar works in the Museum's collection.

They will select their topics for a Research Paper in the final meeting before the holiday break.

Provisionals Monica Babich and Kim Smith participated in the Docent Art Show, and Wendi Hunter and Mym went with the active docents on the bus trip to LACMA. I'm sure you already have met them and other provisionals at the Docent Council meetings. However, at the Holiday Party on December 9 the mentors will officially present each provisional to the Council, and I hope you will introduce yourself and welcome them to our Docent family.

Provisional Instructors: Kathryn Padgett, Mary Ellen Hoffman, Ralph Wilson 🖋️

From our Treasurer

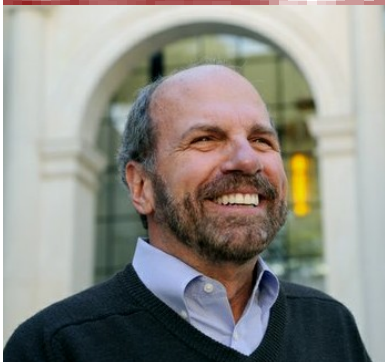


Ralph Wilson

A reminder to the Docent Council—if you need to be reimbursed for expenses for the many activities we enjoy as Docents, you must complete a *Request for Payment* form. Copies are available in my mailbox in the Docent Office. Before returning the form to me you need signed approval from either Vikki or Molora if the expense is greater than \$50.00. I can approve lesser amounts, but I still need a completed form.

Submitting just the receipts to me delays your reimbursement since I must complete the form and obtain the approval signatures. 🖋️

From our Evaluations Chair



Paul Guido

I have received very few evaluations from the teams that began touring in October.

Please send me your evaluations as soon as they are done.

Thanks.

Paul 🖋️



Barbara Boyd
Research Chair

The *Heavenly Bodies* photo exhibit is scheduled to open in Spring 2014. As you can see from this photo it is going to be wonderful! Please let me know if you would like to research one of these works.



Jenny Okun, *Mars Orbiter 1*, 2008 Inkjet print.


Finally, the updated Docent Research Paper Guidelines Handbook is ready to edit and post on the website. A big thank you to all who helped provided input and review it. Please check it out on our website when it is posted and know that I will be delighted to hear feedback, including any problems you spot, and any further ideas that you come up with that will make it better!

Our amazing Asian Team has been hard at work making sure that every piece in the collection has a solid research paper. Also, they have been compiling a list of everything that has been researched, research in progress, and works that still needs research. A huge job and we thank you! If you haven't already, please let them know your favorite pieces to tour in the Asian collection and they will prioritize that research and get it online for you.

Gail E., Jean, Jacqueline and Michi hosted a well-attended Asian Salon for all who had expressed an interest in researching Asian Art. They demonstrated a vibrant 4 Square, "tour based" approach in researching art works and explained how this facilitates preparation of the outline for a 2 page research paper. This 4 Square approach addresses each of the four main ways people learn and experience art, answering questions such as: What is the meaning, symbol, story or myth of this piece?; What is the material, method, artist or school?; What is the cultural context or style of that time period?; What relationships does this piece have to other art objects in our collection or other collections?

Each question is answered in reference to a visual cue in the art. A demonstration of how this becomes the bones of a research paper was shown with an Asian piece, with all present adding in some information of interest.

We are all aware of how much work is done by special exhibition teams in preparing their tours. I have been contacting team leaders, seeking a way to expand the use of some of their reliable and "juicy" information online so that all touring docents can make use of this material as they introduce visitors to one or two pieces during their tours. The leaders have responded most generously. We will continue to look for ways to interface with this information, which generally isn't structured like a traditional research paper. But, as Ricki Morse said, the information is in fascinating "bits and pieces". Perhaps these bits would make excellent "Comments"?

A special thanks to Ricki for jump starting this collaborative effort by sending two excellent pieces on *Totally 80s* artists: an excellent short essay on "Being Francesco Clemente" by Salman Rushdie, as well as an interview with Karen Carson at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WlsRVnAfCMU>. 

SBMA Docent Book group



Sue Billig

I've enjoyed leading the book group, but after two years, I've decided it's time to step aside and let someone else take over the role of organizing. Many docents have been engaged reading interesting books and having entertaining discussions with the Book Group, so I'm hoping someone will take over the role of organizing when the new year begins.

Here are book ideas for new dates offered after the new year. We were scheduled to read "The Monuments Men" by Robert M. Edsel around the time the movie premiers in January or February. These men from the U. S. Army discovered Hitler's stolen art treasures. "Empty Mansions" by Bill Dedman will be welcome because it is about our former resident, Huguette Clark, and her "empty" estate at East Beach. "The Goldfinch" is by Donna Tartt and it is reviewed by Stephen King in the New York Times Book Review. An adult's life becomes dangerous because, when he was a boy, he took a painting called "The Goldfinch" from the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

These all sound like good reading. Please call me to talk about my tips for leading the group. 🍷

Susan Billig 965-9505

Congratulations Exhibitors, and Organizers, on the Success Of "Del Mano"



Vikki Duncan

The crowd attending the Del Mano ("by the hand") Art Show at Ridley Tree Center on November 10th was treated to a dazzling array of works, chatted with docent artists, and enjoyed spectacular fare by Denise Klassen and the finishing touch of an ikebana centerpiece by Geri Servi at the open air reception.

Ridley Tree Center's Luria Room was turned into a virtual gallery, thoughtfully installed with the work of 16 docent exhibitors: Stephanie Amon (oil painting and ephemera), Monica Babich (drawing), Loretta Berlin (ceramics with succulent sculpture), Susan Billig (jewelry), Isabel Downs (fiber arts--quilting), Rosemarie Gebhart (assemblage and print making), Loree Gold (photography), Ann Hammond (oil and watercolor painting), Francis Hallinan (sculpture), Sylvia Mabee (jewelry and stained glass), Doug McElwain (photography), Lori Mohr (collage), Mooneen Mourad (ceramics), Jean Smith (sculptural figurines), Kim Smith (oil painting, clay sculpture), and Gail Stichler (mixed media).

The event planners did a fantastic job! Thank you Gail Stichler (docent contact), Francis Hallinan (curator), Stephanie Amon (publicity), Denise Klassen (catering); and Linda Adams, Stephanie Amon, Molora Vadnais and Gail Stichler (variously: purchasing, gallery installation, check-in, and reception hosting); and SBMA Docent Program Manager Rachael Kriepps. Our thanks also go to SBMA Museum Artist Itoko Maeno, and Alfonso Bravo, Ridley Tree Facilities Technician, who were on location to assist in hanging the show.

To everyone to suggested and supported our second show, a great thank-you. Do we need to wait five years for another Docent Exhibition? 🍷

By Ann Hammond



Our 2nd Docent Art Show was a great success thanks to the leadership of Gail Stichler, Francis Hallinan , and Stephanie Amon.

What a pleasure to discover the hidden talent of our docent council. We were given a visual delight of many different mediums including oil, acrylic and watercolour paintings, charcoal drawings, sculptures, photography, jewelry, stained glass, collage, prints and a variety of textile work. And the wonderful and tasty culinary art of Denise Klausen.

Thanks to all the organizers and participants we spent a lovely afternoon with good company and pleasures to delight the eye.

Here's hoping for a repeat performance. 🇺🇸

Most images courtesy of Mooneen Mourad



The culinary artistry of Denise Klassen





A Little Mohr Conversation
 Interview with SBMA'S Nancy Rogers

By Lori Mohr



The following is an excerpt from an interview in 2008. Nancy will be our lecturer at the December 4th meeting.

Lori: Nancy, walk me through the process of framing a work that comes into the museum—either through our purchase or as a gift.

Nancy: A lot of times, when an oil painting comes in, from whatever era, there's not a lot of documentation about frames. It's only in the last 15 years that we're taking a resurgent interest in frame making. If you look in the file,

there's a lot of provenance on the work—who painted it, when, who their influences were, etc. And then there's not a notation about the frame; that's very common. So, when something comes in now, we make a notation: whether it has a frame, doesn't have a frame, what the status is. When the registrar looks at it, we note if it's been handled roughly, is the frame damaged, so it kind of gives a little bit of telling. But you can only make guess-timates.

Lori: There's no way to know if it's the original frame?

Nancy: [Slowly, shaking head] No. If you had a museum collection, and you had as much as 10% with original frames, that would be a bonanza.

Lori: Why is that?

Nancy: Well, if you think about it, when somebody buys a painting, it's a piece of ownership. And if you buy it in a gallery, well, maybe the dealer chose that frame for merchandizing, for marketability, or maybe it was put on really quickly just to have something on it. Or the dealer puts something on it. Maybe it comes in with nothing. Or with something that looks really... shaggy, and the dealer will put something else on. And then the collector will come along to purchase it and say, "I really love the painting but I don't love the frame." And then they frame it. And then if the other partner doesn't like it, wants it to match the décor, you have another frame change. So in a painting's life, by the time it's donated to an institution, it's had many lives.

Lori: And the frame may or may not be era-appropriate.

Nancy: Well, those are things that we look at. Often the curators make that determination...and myself. We'll dialogue about what's looking right. Aesthetically is it pleasing? Does it overwhelm/underwhelm the painting? Was the frame put on to match the residence but it really doesn't work? That's often the case. But you know, in many cases, there are collectors who have educated eyes and they do make selections that are appropriate.

Lori: So the frame selection is subjective and not necessarily historically accurate.

Nancy: It's subjective. When we get traveling exhibits from other countries, they have a different aesthetic than us; they're making choices that are very different in feel and nuance. Work from Latin American countries—their colors are brighter, bolder; they're using reds and greens and painted surfaces. It's just a different aesthetic. It's refreshing! We learn about their cultures by the frames they put on—and obviously, the paintings—but you really get a different feel, and it's nice when that happens.

Lori: You don't change those; they stay on for the exhibit.

Nancy: Yes. But when a painting is donated, then yes, occasionally we make a change. But you have to keep in mind: let's say you have a painting that was done in 1810 and it had a frame on it for the last 80 years. Do we call it an original frame? No. Do we call it an artist made frame? No. An artist chosen frame? No. But is it, loosely speaking, an original frame to that painting? [Pause] Yes. And there's a gradation. Many things that Wright Ludington gave us had frames there's little documentation—frames maybe a dealer chose, or he chose for his residence, and maybe they don't fit the era. However, they're still appropriate. And we've left many choices like that.

Lori: Did artists, for example, the Impressionists, typically frame their works or did the buyer frame them?

Nancy: Both. For the Impressionists, we do have certain examples of frames and notebooks with documentation. Like Prendergast paintings; Prendergast designed his own frames. We know this by his letters and his notebooks and many of those still survive on his paintings.

Lori: Is there a resurgent interest in frame making?

Nancy: I think there's an ongoing interest in looking back at older craft as we have fewer and fewer artists. I think we're looking back at how artists prepared frames and asking about the impact of that craft. You see this trend in art making in general - photographers taking an interest in making tintypes, making ambrotypes. I think there's a trend in looking back at craftsmanship and how does craftsmanship reflect who we are as a society? What role does it play?

Lori: Is that because today's frames are likely to be machine-made molds rather than hand-carved wood?

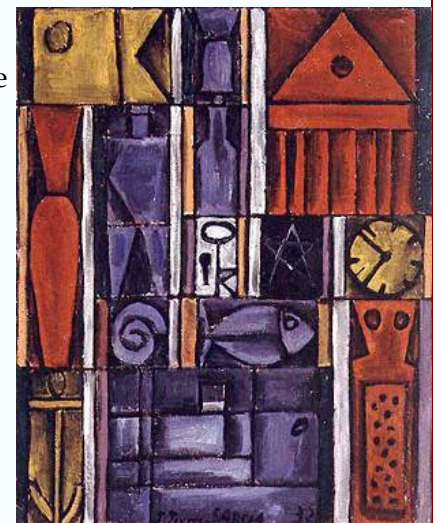
Nancy: You'd be surprised; there are contemporary guilders, contemporary carvers with high level craftsmanship frame making. The George Bellows—we had an opportunity when [curator] Robert Henning was here to re-evaluate our *Steaming Streets*. You kind of make these determinations about your time, your budget, and then given your parameters, what kinds of changes you want to make and why you want to make them. The frame the Bellows had on before was underwhelming and not particularly appropriate, so we changed it. And we didn't have a lot of time for that project, so we hired out. We had a carver and we made some choices. Here's the raw [shows me section of frame] and you can see it built in two pieces, carved and prepared w/ yellow clay before it got gilded and toned. So, this is what's on *Steaming Streets*.

Lori: When do you actually get involved in the mechanics of frame making?

Nancy: We have two curators now...I don't make beautiful frames just to make them. It's all exhibition-driven. Because we haven't had a European paintings curator, we haven't had any projects. So, I'm really looking forward to when we get our modern and contemporary person on board and we get another European curator and I'll get to re-visit antique frames again.

Lori: How much does a frame affect the price of a painting when we go to purchase with museum funds?

Nancy: Good question. Well, I think there are categories: there's the painting we acquire that has no frame—the Torres-García—that came in with nothing and we created a frame for that. What has an impact is like that Eakin's piece. And Van Gogh painted frames, I think there's one in existence, maybe two. Over time, these hit the dumpsters; people want the painting but I-want-it-to-match-my-living room-I'm gonna change-it. At a certain caliber, *that* frame—it's



Joaquin Torres-García
Composición [Composition], 1932
Oil on canvas

yellow, I've seen it in pictures—would that make an impact on the sale price? Yeah! But generally speaking, when we're making acquisitions, evaluating, does the frame come into play? Not a great deal. If you have a painting that's five-six million bucks, are you paying attention to the price of the frame? Not particularly, it doesn't have a big weigh-in; it's an accessory.

Lori: But aesthetically it has impact.

Nancy: A really good painting is going to stand alone; a mediocre painting with a good frame is going to make it look better; a substandard painting with a good frame is going to make it look...okay. And the opposite can be true. We had a Ludington painting come in and the frame it came in on was wonderful—we still have it, we sent it out for conservation. When it came back, I worked on it further. It was on our Braque and it may have been fantastic in his home, but it was so bold, and such a big, screaming, colorful thing...it was really hard for it to work in the gallery. It sort of overtook the painting; it's like having the football player accompany the ballerina to the prom!

Lori: It all has to work together, as an individual work and as part of the collection.

Nancy: Yes. On that frame, we never had any documentation. Did the artists choose it? Did the dealer choose it? Did Wright choose it? Or a decorator? It's possible Wright chose it, but we didn't have any evidence with which to make that determination. So once again, based on Robert Henning's determination, and we all talked about what was happening, we put something else on it.

Lori: Tell me what you do on a daily basis, Nancy. I mean, obviously you do framing and you do some frame restoration. But when I came in, you were working on hinges for the *Made in Hollywood* show.

Nancy: Because we're producing so many photography shows and because I handle all the works on paper that we have here—some 25,000—I deal with them as they come in. Say this photography show, for instance—the photographs come in, they come in a plastic sleeve in a box from the Kobol Foundation. I measure them, I mat them, and I hinge them with mulberry paper and archival hinges—they attach the artwork to the mat—then I mix the powder and water to make the paste that holds the artwork on the mat, then I put them in these purple heart travel frames, which are a purplish color instead of straight black. You've seen them a hundred times on view; they're really simple, they're strong. These photographs will go on view in July and then they'll travel in our frames to different venues all over the planet, wherever Karen has set it up.

Lori: Tell me about your background. How did you get here?

Nancy: I got my degree in Fine Art from UCSB and I could produce art work, but, you know, I got out and realized I had not one class on presentation. I mean, every artist must do this. You produce work on paper or on canvas and then in order to show it, you have to decide what to do next. If I lived in Europe, they have that guild system where you learn your craft and work in your craft and become proficient, you're building your skill level year by year. But what do you do here? Well, you learn through the School of Hard Knocks. I got into a shop, I took classes; you have to create your own apprenticeship opportunities. In the last 15 years, there are more books on frame making, historical perspectives on frame making, the art of the craftsmanship. And also, the American tradition is very different from the European tradition in looking at the manufacture of frames.

Lori: Explain what you mean by that.

Nancy: The European tradition is huge! America, we're such a young country, just a blip on the map. Typically, the American view of frame making is a little bit simplified, they dropped these detailed, highly ornate frames to create new, more elemental types of surfaces.

Lori: Those ornate frames do feel like old Europe.

Nancy: Yes, with whatever adjectives you want to add: fussy, overdone, overblown. There's a time there where we're accustomed to seeing heavy, gilded French frames with those shells and cartouches on everything. We've come back a little from that and said, "You know what? This isn't quite appropriate."

Lori: Are those heavy, gilded frames still the preference in Europe?

Nancy: Oh, yes. The way that started, there was that whole system of the kingships, the Louie's—Louie the 13th, Louie the 14th, the Regent—one of the kings was so young, I think he was nine—but he was assigned a Regent and the Regent made his own frames! So we had the Regency period. Louie the 15th, the 16th...they would install carver/gilders in their palaces. They would take off all the frames of the last guy and they would create all new frames with their own cartouches and their own logos, their own insignias and really make their mark on design.

Our Berthe Morisot just went out. That's a Louie the 14th; it had all these curlicues and these rectilinear cuts. But in America, we don't have any of that type of tradition; we value individuality, so we're lucky, we have individuals making their marks. You have to keep in mind, in the big



picture, frames were designed as an extension of the interior of the building, designed by architects. Like Frank Lloyd Wright, he designed the furniture, he designed the frames, the whole interior. You have architects thinking about the light; northern European with its colder, cloudier, darker climate, tiny windows, less light in the room. So, in the northern European tradition, generally speaking, you'll have a typical portrait in a really long frame. But it has a function—the light comes in that itty bitty window and hits the gilded side of the frame and reflects light. It illuminates. Spanish frames? Warmer climate, bigger windows, more light, more interior light. Spanish frames don't function like northern European; they're not reflecting anything, so they slope or at the very least, they're flat. Whole different function. Most of those [northern European] frames and paintings were made when there was only candlelight in interiors. And you've got these gilded frames and the light is captured or reflected...it would've been so beautiful to see the actual light levels. Granted, you can't have people walking around the museum holding candelabras, but I really thirsted to see the way it was viewed when it was made. It's such a different experience.

Lori: I'm thinking again of the Impressionists and how thrilled they were to paint outside in the light.

Nancy: By that time, though, the turn of the century, we have gas lighting coming in. You have to look at how the frame was functioning, and you have to look at the history of lighting: whale oil lamps, then gas lamps come out first in Glasgow, Scotland, of all places, and they're mostly in opera houses first and civic arenas and then ever so slowly it comes into suburbia. But it didn't happen fast.

Lori: In the evolution of framing, how did we go from elaborate to simple?

Nancy: Georgia O'Keeffe wanted a simple, simple frame and he [the framer] was the first to make metal frames at her request; they were welded aluminum. Then they got modified through the '60s and '70s. Now, we can go to Art Essentials and buy a metal frame. So, it's radically different from the European style.

To read this interview in its entirety, click on the link below.

<http://docentssbma.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/LaMuse-2013-December-Interview-NancyRogers.pdf>



Courtesy of the Santa Barbara Independent

Local Heroes

Docent address change: **Patricia Kruse 290 Moreton Bay Lane #3 SB 93117**

Lori, Mohr Editor
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