

Docent Dates

February 6

9:00 AM Coffee
10:00 Mtg/Lecture

February 11

Westmont Tour

February 20

9:00 AM Coffee
10:00 Mtg/Lecture

Feb 25

Book Group 1:30
Kathy Eastman's

March 6

9:00 AM Coffee
10:00 Mtg/Lecture

March 20

9:00 AM Coffee
10:00 Mtg/Lecture;
Announcement of
nominated 2013
officers

April 3

9:00 AM Coffee
10:00 Mtg/Lecture

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PAGNEST, Amable
Louis Claude
French, 1790 - 1819

Portrait of Madame Forster

Early 19 th Century
H. 35 7/8" - W. 28 3/4"
Graphite, wash, black
chalk, and oil on
unfinished canvas
Gift of Wright S. Ludington
1954.3

As we bid farewell to *The Artful Recluse* and the special exhibition touring team goes through artful withdrawals, we offer our hearty thanks for their stellar performance with this nuanced and challenging exhibition. The team's scholarly approach with months of preparation in advance paid off in tours both engaging and instructive for our visitors. With the volume of special requests, the team offered an unusually high number of tours.

Thank you Mei Chih Ho, Shirley Dettmann, Mary Eckhart, Queenie Scheurwater, and Jacqueline Simons! Susan Tai is to be congratulated for producing the scholarly, internationally-praised exhibition that is also traveling to the Asia Society in New York City. She has certainly drawn praise for the Santa Barbara Museum of Art through the excellence of this historic show.

Now we are *California Dreaming* with Doug McElwain, Paul Guido, Patricia Sullivan Goss, Jerry Jensen, Ellen Lawson, and Nyna Mahan. This exhibition has been extended into mid-June, taking the place of the portrait exhibit that was cancelled. Flexibility is a key strength in docenting, and we are thankful for this team's willingness to tour six months instead of the original three.



Kathryn Padgett

Ricki Morse and her team are preparing for the Latin American exhibit, *Myth and Materiality*. Excitement is brewing with this exhibit—there are several pieces included that even our senior docents have not seen! Who knew we had such a rich variety of Latin American Art in our permanent collection?

As a Docent Council, we are proud of our contributions to the Santa Barbara Museum of Art and know we are appreciated. Still, public accolades are especially pleasing. Docents were featured prominently at the Museum's Annual Preview Meeting on January 23rd, a gathering of museum staff, major donors, Board of Trustees, etc. Several PowerPoint presentations included images of docents conducting both adult and student tours. Director Larry Feinberg explicitly thanked docents for our dedication to public education. Ken Anderson, Chair of the Board of Directors, talked about docents providing a valuable service to the Museum, and our own Patsy Hicks, Director of Education, expressed appreciation for the quality of our volunteer work and the number of hours we give to the museum.

At this meeting the curators gave a peek into upcoming exhibitions: *Myth and Materiality; Labour and Wait; Danny Lyon; Divola; and Eugene Delacroix*. They also discussed recent acquisitions.

As always, I am deeply impressed with the caliber of work that each and every one of you does for the SBMA. Your tours make art accessible to the viewing public, young and old. You are muses for children, founts of knowledge for adults, and cultural connections for senior citizens. As a council, we are the embodiment of the Museum's mission. It is apparent to me that the staff deeply appreciates the richness and texture you bring to the educational program.

Thank you for everything that you do!

Kathryn

Message from Vice President Vikki Duncan



The Book Group will meet on February 25th at 1:30 pm—see page 5 in this edition of *La Muse*—for a lively discussion of two works by Latin American authors, infusing cultural flavor and the spirit of magical realism into our much anticipation of *Myth and Materiality: Latin American Art from the Permanent Collection, 1930-1990*, which opens on the 16th of this month.

San Francisco Trip Participants, the confirmation of optional activities you plan to participate in, as well as your trip deposit, are due now. Checks are payable to the SBMA Docent Council and may be given to me or Rachael Kriepps. Also, thank you to Rosemarie Gebhart for suggesting a visit to Balmy Alley to view the many murals anchored by the works of the 1960s Bay Area Chicana and feminist muralists. If you have any questions or comments about the San Francisco trip, please email me vikki.duncan@verizon.net.

A private tour for SBMA docents of the Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot exhibition at the Westmont Ridley Tree Museum of Art in Montecito is planned for Monday, February 11th, at 1:00 p.m. (see notice at the end of this message). Our tour was suggested by Susan Billig and Christine Holland, and at the invitation of Mooneen Mourad, who in addition to her docenting at SBMA, is the Chair of the Council at Westmont

College this year. Contact Susan Billig suebillig@gmail.com if you would like to attend the tour and might want lunch together beforehand.

Thank you to those who signed up to host a Provisional Luncheon. Gabriella Schooley will be in touch with you early this month to confirm your date and discuss details. If you have considered hosting and now know your availability, please email Gabrielle Schooley gschooley@verizon.net and me yikki.duncan@verizon.net to say, "Yes," to hosting or co-hosting a provisional luncheon.

Boston Trip Planning

Thank you, Christine Holland and company, who are shaping our first East Coast art trip in several years. If you would like to receive the preliminary itinerary and have not already emailed or signed the interest sheet, send your request to Christine at cholland@west.net.

Docents are genuine sweethearts for the many suggestions for our activities!

Vikki

TOUR COROT EXHIBIT AT WESTMONT

The Westmont Ridley-Tree Museum of Art is presenting *Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot: Highlights from the Lady Leslie Ridley-Tree Collection in Context* January 31-March 23. We will tour the show on **Monday, February 11 at 1 pm**. Susan Billig will send around a sign-up sheet at the Docent Council Meeting on Wednesday February 6. There is a limit of 20 for this tour. Let's meet for lunch in Montecito at 11:30, then drive to the college. See you there.

Student Touring



Ann Robinson
Student Teams Chair

The Provisionals are coming! The provisionals are coming! January is the "kick off" month when the provisionals begin their assignment observing student tours. As I met with the class to discuss visual literacy as one goal of student touring, I was reminded of my own introduction as a neophyte provisional and the welcoming response my classmates and I received from active docents.

Student touring is an essential part of the training program. Beyond classroom discussion and reading, learning comes through observing student tours and provisionals developing their own tours. With active docents, they have the opportunity for sharing ideas and techniques on creative ways of engaging students with art, which is both an anxiety-provoking and exhilarating experience. Open and creative discussion with experienced docents allows provisionals to observe the high standard we set for ourselves in this council.

We all know the importance of this "hands on" training. There is no substitute for practice. Welcoming provisionals on our tours is a great opportunity for each of us to practice the mentoring part of our docent role.

Come graduation day, all of us will have had a vested interest in preparing the new class of docents for our museum.

Ann

By Molora Vadnais and Laura DePaoli, Co-chairs, Adult Teams



Molora Vadnais

In December, docents gave 49 regular adult tours. Four planned tours had no visitors. There were three special request tours: One *American*, one *Highlights*, and one *Artful Recluse*.

The number of visitors per tour varied widely:
 Weekday Highlights: 3.8 visitors per tour
 Saturday Highlights: 3.2 visitors per tour



Laura DePaoli

Sunday Highlights: no tours offered
 Weekday Focus: 4.9 per tour
 Saturday Focus: One tour offered with no visitors
 Sunday Focus: 3.75 visitors per tour

Artful Recluse Weekday: 15 visitors per tour
Artful Recluse Saturday: 10 visitors per tour
Artful Recluse Sunday: 15.2 visitors per tour

California Plein Air Weekday: 6 visitors per tour (only one tour offered)
California Plein Air Saturday: 16 visitors per tour (only one tour offered)
California Plein Air Sunday: 10 visitors per tour (only one tour offered)

Ten Talks 6:10: 10.75 visitors per tour
 Ten Talks 7:10: 8.5 visitors per tour

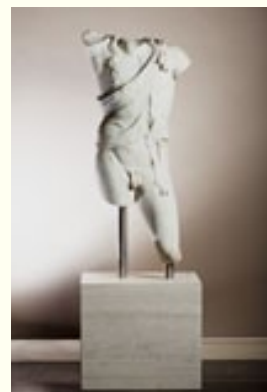


Colin Campbell Cooper, *California State Building*, 1916 oil on canvas. California Plein-Air Exhibition, SBMA

Artful Recluse continued to draw in visitors and *California Plein Air* seems to be poised to do the same. The first three months of Ten Talks have been a tremendous success and in January, the team is experimenting with a 5:10 PM talk to see if that time would be more popular than the 7:10 as currently scheduled.

Tremendous thanks to the nine docents who signed up to tour the new antiquities family tour this summer. All were wonderful candidates. In the end, ardent desire and seniority (in most cases by one year) were used to choose the team. Congratulations to Gail Stichler (team leader), Sneh Singh, Ralph Wilson, and Sylvia Mabee. The team's first order of business is to choose a name. If you have any good name ideas, please send them to Gail.

Molora





Sue Billig

Monday Feb 25 at 1:30

Two fiction books have been chosen to read this month that will continue the Latin American theme for better understanding the romantic culture behind the works in the up coming exhibit *Myth and Materiality: Latin American Art from the Permanent Collection, 1930 - 1990* (Feb 16 to May 26, 2013).

In both stories, lovers are forbidden to marry but "magic realism" follows them through out their lives. One story is light-hearted, while the other is heartbreaking.

Like Water for Chocolate (1989, 5 stars, 256p, also a movie.) by Laura Esquivel, received great reviews when it came out in 1989. It is set on a ranch on the Texas/ Mexico border in the late 19th century. Mama Elena, a widow, had 3 daughters, Rosaura, Gertudis and Tita. The older daughters are available to marry, but the younger, 15-year-old Tita, will spend her life serving her mother. She can not marry, or entertain men. Of course she is the daughter who falls in love with Pedro, who offers to marry 17-year-old Rosaura to be close to Tita.

Unconsumed passion ignites several mystical happenings. A chain of tragedies and bad luck include tears that form a stream and a shower that turns into fire. Each chapter begins with a recipe for a genuine Mexican meal.

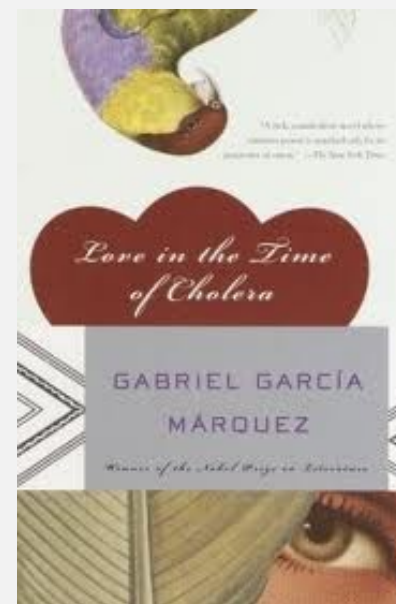
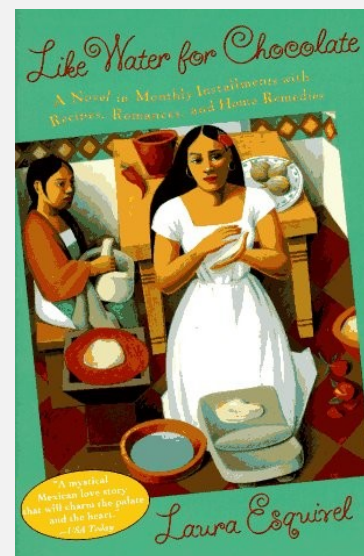
Award winning, Love in the Time of Cholera by Gabriel Garcí-a Márquez is set in Colombia. (1988, 4 stars, 348p. also a movie). "In their youth, Florentino Ariza and Fermina Daza fall passionately in love. When Fermina chooses to marry a wealthy, wellborn doctor, Florentino is devastated, but he is a romantic. As he rises in his career, he whiles away the years in 622 affairs—yet reserves his heart for Fermina. Her husband dies at last, and Florentino purposefully attends the funeral. 50 years, 9 months and 4 days after he first declared his love for Fermina, he will do so again."

"There are delightful and stunning moments contrary to fact, told with the same unblinking humor—presences at the foot of the bed, an anonymously delivered doll with a curse on it, and the sinister parrot." Love is regarded as a "magical reality".

Sue

Feb 25, 1:30
Kathy Eastman's House
2012 Anacapa St
Please RSVP to Kathy
682-1950
eastmankathy@yahoo.com

Upcoming Dates:
April 8 & May 13





Irene Stone
Nominations Chair

Nominations for the 2013-2014 Docent Council Board are now open! As described in Section 8 of the Docent Council Bylaws, the Nominations Committee is composed of the Nominations Chair/Past President, President, Vice President, and Education Department representative.

This body will accept nominations for a slate to be announced at the **March 20** meeting, at which time additional nominations may be made from the floor. Election of officers and chairpersons will be by majority vote at the **May 1** Docent Council meeting.

We all appreciate the wonderful service provided by the dedicated and hard-working members of the Board. Consider offering your service or nominating another docent to continue this long tradition of generous and responsible involvement. It is a wonderful way to learn more about the workings of the council, influence policy, and certainly enjoy camaraderie and enhanced friendships.

Please contact me at famstone5@gmail.com or at 805-453-2004. I look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you!

Irene

TEN TALKS By Ann Hammond



Being in the museum after hours—this is a very different experience from *Nights* and, in fact, different from the general Highlight tours I am used to on the weekends.

For Ten Talks we choose our own pieces, just as we do with Highlights tours. But Ten Talks is a bit easier because the pieces do not need to be related, which means they don't need a transition. We are only talking about one piece per ten minute session and the audience will probably be a different group, hopefully, for the second talk. I like to do Van Gogh's *Outskirts of Paris*, and Max Pechstein's *Die Alte Brucke/The Old Bridge*.

The Ten Talks have been well attended, with a mix of out of town and in town guests. I have done two Thursday nights, both of which were well attended and very enjoyable. There is a different atmosphere in the evenings, quite vibrant in fact. The first Thursday I was there I met an Englishman and his sister. He not only knew my neighbour of 25 years in central London, but he lived in the same block of flats that my daughter lived in for 10 years!

The second Ten Talk I gave was the week between Christmas and the New Year. The first group had 24 people and the second had 20. And a different audience each time—very gratifying. These groups are larger than we're generally used to with Highlights, so it's a good touring experience in that way as well.

There is very much the need to 'sweep.' Although there is a notice at the museum entrance, those visitors I spoke with were not aware of the Ten Talks that evening, which was surprising. But it's still new.

And of course the reward is not only the pleasure of touring, but there's a glass of wine too! I have not partaken of the snacks as yet, but they look very appetizing.

So cheers, and I hope the programme continues!

Ann

By Josee Martin



It's a Highlights tour on a rainy afternoon, a perfect museum-going day. There is a couple from San Luis Obispo waiting to come on the tour. It's their first visit to the SBMA. I had prepared my notes carefully since I hadn't done Highlights for a while; I checked some of the artists on-line again. Didn't know that Van Gogh painted those lilacs right outside the window of his room while staying at a sanitarium, nor that Roualt burned three hundred of his paintings near the end of his life because he could not finish them. These are nearly always the tidbits that visitors love to hear. I made a copy of *The Scream* to go with the Munchs, just in case.

After the Lilacs, the man on my tour wants to see ALL the Van Goghs. There is only one other, I explain, but he's delighted with the *Lamplighter*. He had rented the movie, "Lust for Life" with Kirk Douglas, now wants to read the book. We continue. They both love the Monets. The Munchs? Not so much. We move on to the American art, Bierstadt and Blakelock elicit little response, nor the Robert Henri, but they've seen Bellows' art before, "My son who plays baseball has a calendar of his paintings," the woman tells proudly. So, of course I have to add that Bellows turned down an offer to play professionally for the Cincinnati Reds. They admire the Remington sculpture, and she would like to have the Severin Roesin still life for her living room. Ah, the pull of decorative art.

I decide to be brave and launch into "The Artful Recluse" after having gone on three separate tours with Jacqueline Simons, Gwen Baker, and Queenie Scheurwater. Each of them distinct and inspiring. I had been hesitant about the show initially, so many mountains, trees, gorges delicately lost in the mists. But with such excellent guides, I came to really appreciate the amazing brushwork, the range of subtle colors, and of course the fascinating historical backdrop. I chose four works ending in the last hall with the superb "Plants of Virtue." My audience of two has been hushed throughout this section, but the man finally comments, "I don't go for Asian art much, but hey, this stuff is something!" His companion nods in solemn agreement.

We're now on the landing with Martin Kersel's "Charms". The atomic baked potatoes, the upside-down dollhouse, and red chair hanging just a few feet away. I think, but do not say, 'from the sublime to the ridiculous'. But they love it. There's a lively debate between them as to whether it's art or not. Just as Julie Joyce told us at a docent meeting, "It's about the conversations that Kersel's works generate..." Engagement, isn't that what we want?

It has been nearly an hour, a few parting words, a sincere thank-you and I take my leave. About half a minute later, there is a tap on my shoulder.

It's the man again. He asks my name. I tell him. He grabs my hand to shake it, "Nice to know you, Miz Martin," as he presses a folded bill into my palm. "Just to show our appreciation." I'm really off-guard. I sputter, "that's very kind, but we're volunteers who just love to..." He looks disappointed as I hand back the folded twenty-dollar note. "I can't accept tips, but you can drop it in the donation box if you like." I try to look grateful.

When I go to the red sign-out book. I glance at the donation box. There are several fives and lots of singles. Perhaps they hadn't come past yet.

By Ricki Morse



Our Latin American touring team for *Myth and Materiality, Latin American Art from the Permanent Collection, 1930-1990*, is in high anticipation and full research mode for the opening on February 16th. With over a dozen works we have never before viewed (most of them from a 1994 bequest by Charles Storke and a few more recently from Mercedes Eichols), we are in for marvelous surprises. One of the two loans to the exhibition is a large 1955 Diego Rivera oil on canvas, a needed addition. Though our Siqueiros holdings are remarkable and unique among museums, we have only works on paper by the other two *Trés Grandes*, Diego Rivera and José Clemente Orozco.

Flower Vendor on the Road to Cuernavaca seems a perfect place to begin our discussion, as Rivera's images have become the popular symbols of Mexican art, almost to the point of parody. However, we find as we spend time with his work, notably at his 2000 retrospective at LACMA, his complexity and exploration of an art beyond revolution are appreciated. The search for his own voice among all the renditions of folk craft, muralistic history and Mayan celebration remains strident and dominant. Much like Siqueiros, the devout revolutionary who excoriated Rivera in our painting, *Aesthete in Drama*, the artist wins out over the politician, especially in our great Siqueiros, *Hill of the Dead*. The bones of the earth surge up out of the hill with a power and explosive energy that mark Siqueiros the artist beyond his politics. With these two great paintings in our collection, we have the opportunity to really "get" Siqueiros. And once we've got him, he's got us. We would know him anywhere.



Our exposure to Rivera on our home walls is more limited. But this large oil painting provides us with an additional view of his work, which renders his recurring nationalistic themes, not only through the image of the woman along the road from Mexico City to Cuernavaca holding her two bouquets for passersby, but of the mountainous lake landscape. The figure asserts itself proudly and powerfully before the landscape, demanding our attention, determined to survive, to prevail. It also rings true to this day, as flower vendors circle the cars at the border crossing or even on the streets of Santa Barbara. We can't wait to see the work itself!

One of the earliest works in the exhibition from 1932 belies the clichés surrounding Latin American art, that it is folksy, colorful, and derivative.

Joaquín Torres-García, (1879-1949) Uruguayan,
Composition, 1932, Oil on canvas,
Museum purchase 1997-69

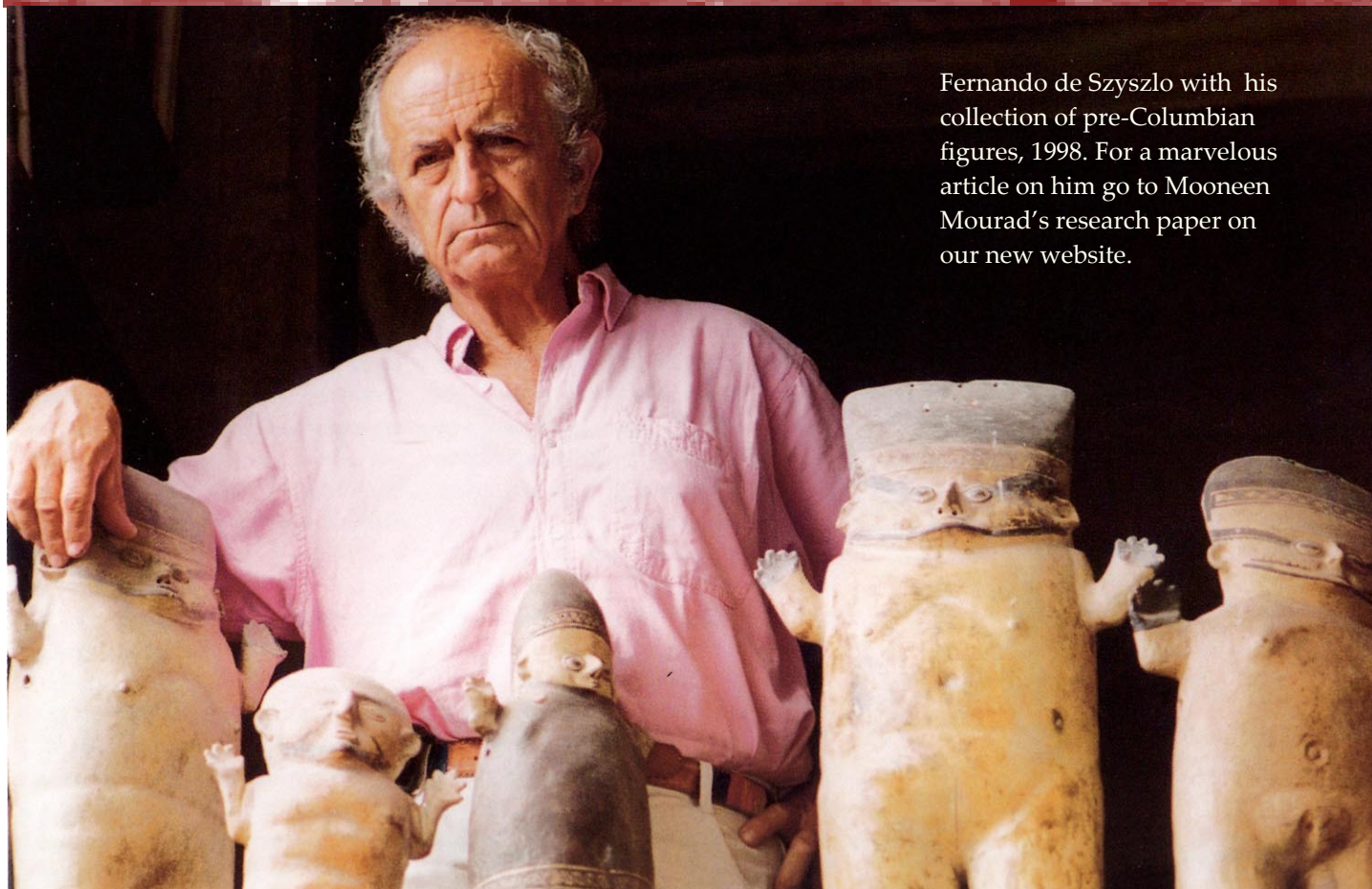
Joaquin Torres-García's *Composition* embodies his unique philosophy which he termed "constructive universalism," but first, a little background. Torres-García, born in 1874 to a Uruguayan mother and Spanish father, returned to Europe at 17 and didn't return to Montevideo until 1934. Our painting, a very important Museum purchase, provides an entry into his evolving vision. He imagined a new Art of the South, symbolized by his upside down map of South American, now free of colonialism, ready to assume the leadership of a vision grounded in the work of the ancient indigenous cultures. His Montevideo school, Taller Torres-García (TTG), taught the next generations of South Americans a new approach to art, one based in a tradition older than that of Paris,



Fernando de Szyszlo (b. 1925) Peruvian, *Mar de Lurin*, 1989, Acrylic on canvas Gift of Jerry and Mary Kay Gardner, 1997.73

more universal than the European schools. Arising from the use of symbols by the Mayan and Incan peoples, Torres-García proposed an art which would rely, as the ancients did, on geometry and symbols to form a universally understood language of art. Rather than mythic, his symbols are segments of daily life on the planet, presented in flat figuration and angular drawing in mitigated colors. The emphasis is on the universality of line and balance, of the similarities throughout the world of human existences. The nationalism and divisive political movements of the early 20th century, which are embodied in the Marxist muralist movement, are rejected in favor of an optimistic universalism. This work encourages viewer participation, and you will feel even more comfortable with presenting it after you read Laura De Paoli's excellent paper on our web site.

One of the more recent works in the exhibition from 1989 broadens our view of Latin American art even further. Fernando de Szyszlo [duh **seize** low] reaches back to both the European tradition and the ancient Peruvian culture, to the Italian Renaissance for his use of paint and to the endemic Peruvian culture his symbolism. Born of Polish father and Peruvian mother of mixed Indian heritage, he later visited Poland to explore his heritage and found no connection there. He then identified himself unequivocally as Peruvian. However, he did spend his twenties in Paris and Florence, studying the layering of oils in Renaissance paintings and beginning to develop his own unique style. The subject in most of his works is an amalgam of abstraction and figuration, beautifully combined in our *Mar de Lurin* (Lake of Lurin, previous page). Though the Lurin area is now a desert, he treats it as an arena for his imagination, raising horizontal sculptures or ancient figures or totems out of the lake bed, surrounding them with the lapping of flowing



Fernando de Szyszlo with his collection of pre-Columbian figures, 1998. For a marvelous article on him go to Mooneen Mourad's research paper on our new website.

waters. Much as Tamayo contrasted the vertical landscape with the horizontal figure, de Szyszlo suggests the ancient thrusting into the present in a sort of remembrance ritual.

Very much a man of the modern world, de Szyszlo lives and is active in Peru today, though he spent most of his mid-life years in New York City and environs as a Professor of Art at Cornell University and as a lecturer at Yale University. He is widely and eagerly collected, appreciated particularly for his use of paint and color. He was drawn to acrylics for their vibrant color, favoring the magentas and deep blues available. As he began to work in acrylic he was deeply disappointed, finding the paint flattened out, like nail polish, leaving the wonderful color but a lifeless glossiness. He began to apply a wax coat which could be molded with the flow of the images as an undercoat. His continuing experiments resulted in surfaces with shadows, subtleties, and substance. As he added transparent glazes, coat after coat, and thin layers of color onto the contoured painting, he achieved his goal—the texture and depth of layered oil paint with the luster and palette of acrylic. As we stand before his work, we feel we can see into the surface, somehow sharing the experience of the ancient emerging image.

See you in McCormick for a re-experiencing of Latin American art from our excellent collection, one of the best on the West Coast. And I hope you will join the touring team in helping visitors to experience the depth, beauty and relevance of modern Art of the South.



THE LAST PAGE

NEW WEBSITE: <http://www.docentssbma.org/wordpress/>

In the second of three presentations, Mike Ramey will introduce the many search functions of the new website at the Docent Council Meeting on February 6. More than 300 posts and nearly 100 pages of information are now available to be searched by artist, object, medium, date, tags naming similar features or categories, and custom searches.

Vikki Duncan

Website Team

EDITOR'S REQUEST

With provisional luncheons on the horizon, I think it would be fun having a photo from each to include in La Muse. An image with a name offers one more opportunity for us to get to know the new class, one provisional at a time. So if someone at each luncheon—other than the host/hostess—will send me a jpg, we can all share in these wonderful events. *Lori*



ROME.- Mexican artist Javier Marin poses next to his sculptures during the opening of his De 3 en 3 exhibition in the Romes Macro Testaccio Museum on December 19, 2012. De 3 en 3 is running from December 20 to February 2, 2013. AFP PHOTO / VINCENZO PINTO. Submitted by Ricki Morse

Comments?

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