



Class of 2013 *Photo by Doug McElwain*

Graduation never fails to wow me. There's something inspiring about witnessing provisionals on the brink of active docent life. It brings back memories of one's own milestone moment on the stage—the feeling of accomplishment, the bonding with classmates, the joy of being included in a group eager to embrace you. All very heady stuff, like the feeling of "lift" on takeoff that Patsy referenced, an adrenaline-fueled moment of exhilaration mixed with anxiety.

But what I love about the ceremony is not just the thrill of the new, but honoring the old. The service awards offer a time capsule of our council. Listening to each introduction, I was awed by what these elders have given us, and I say elders not in the sense of age—although these women have passed a few life stages in the course of docenting—but elders in the sense of those with established honor in the organization. Their accomplishments speak to our council's evolution: the board positions they've held and decisions made during their tenure; the countless exhibitions they've toured; dealing with docent communication via mail and phone before we entered the digital age a decade ago; La Muse before it had a name. The list goes on. All of these represent the amalgam of energy burned in building our infrastructure.

This is our history, our heritage, our tradition, personified in volunteers who reflect the day-to-day commitment that morphs into years, yielding a cohesion that comes when history is honored as a living presence while we grow, evolve, assimilate new members.



Lori Mohr, Editor

Each honoree's work stands as a stroke in the masterpiece that is our docent council, each one's work adding to the composition, making us who we are. And like any great work of art, it's hard to imagine how different it would look without any given brushstroke.

There's always one moment during the ceremony that grabs at the heart, a perfect example of what we get as docents on a personal level, beyond the education, even beyond the art. For me that moment came when Barbara Rudiger introduced her dear friend, Jan Lynch.

It was a short introduction. Not because there wasn't a page worth of accomplishments Barbara could've shared—including the trials and tribulations Jan has overcome, her dogged determination—but because after a few sentences of introduction, Barbara was overcome with emotion. BAM! The impact of what that journey has meant, for both Jan and Barbara—the power of friendship, the significance of sharing our lives as docents.

Yes, it's about the art. Yes, it's about serving. But it's also about discovering exquisite joy in sharing that commitment with a docent who has become a true friend, the feeling so strong that you choke on words of introduction.

I hope one day I will be on that stage receiving a ten or twenty year pin, and that the friend who introduces me shares the feeling expressed by those docents who introduced the honorees at graduation.

Because history worth keeping doesn't make itself. It's caring about each other that imbues the experience with value. And makes us docents worth honoring.

Lori Mohr

Photos by Doug McElwain





Photo by Jim Christiansen



Docent of the Year

Photo by Jim Christiansen











Bad Boy, My Life On and Off the Canvas

by Eric Fischl and Michael Stone, Crown Books, NYC, 2012.

Reviewed by Ricki Morse



Eric Fischl's autobiography is satisfying on many levels, probably most markedly in the unabashed directness of his voice. Much like the intimacy of his paintings, he allows us access to his innermost thoughts, whims, judgments and missteps, all seasoned by his swift wit and unself-conscious presence. In addition to his personal history, the book explicates the explosion of art theories and techniques

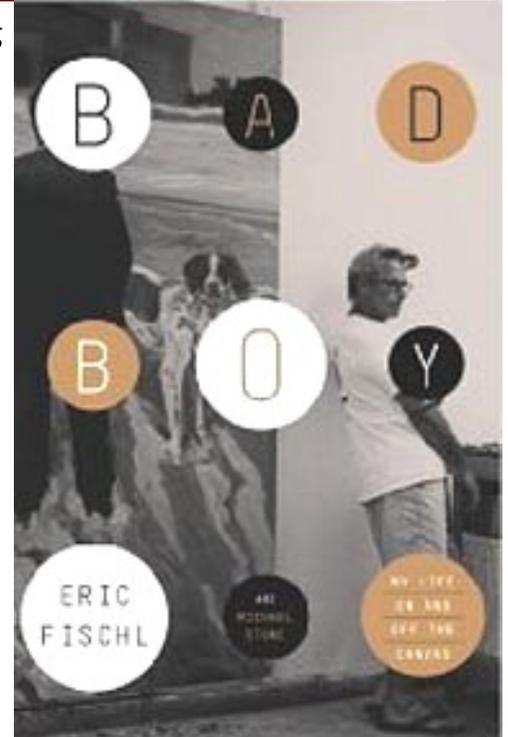
of the 1980s which surrounded his coming of age as an artist. We meet his colleagues and teachers, first in Phoenix and then at CalArts in Valencia, and ultimately in New York City, following the neo-expressionistic outpouring as artists turned away from minimalism and responded to the freeing fling of pop art which welcomed the return of the image.

He takes us inside his own daily struggle to find an authentic expression of his uniqueness as a painter, moving away from abstraction toward more and more explicit images, particularly of the female nude body. Relying on instinct rather than concept, he takes us through the process of discovery within particular paintings, allowing us to experience his search for the exact image which ultimately captures his inner vision.

The book is enriched by contributions from his siblings, other artists, and friends, inserted between the chapters. These other voices reinforce our sense of truth and depth in Fischl's descriptions of his experience, providing other viewpoints of events, from a roaring artistic dispute between Fischl and David Salle on a street corner in Soho, to Steve Martin's musings on his long annual walks with Fischl on St. Bart's.

Central to Eric Fischl's existence are his childhood experiences with his alcoholic mother, a beautiful, wildly imaginative, increasingly unpredictable woman whose repeated attempts to take her own life seared the family. She ran through the house nude, once even apprehended by the police running nude through the neighborhood. She fought incessantly with their father, wild raucous exchanges which often ended in lovemaking, much to young Eric's confusion. Most confusing was the middle class veneer of a happy, prosperous Long Island family which the children were cautioned to maintain. This barrier between what went on in the house and how the family presented itself in public is one Fischl's paintings continue to penetrate, most markedly in *Bad Boy*, 1982, shown in his breakthrough exhibit in New York City. It was this exhibition which catapulted Fischl into the top echelon of new painters, termed neo-expressionists, and led by Julian Schnabel, with his broken plate strewn canvases.

Eric and his wife April Gornik moved from barely making it in New York City on \$1000 a month





with her waitressing and his art packaging and transporting job to the six-figure sales of his paintings. The marriage has survived his notoriety, cocaine-fuelled partying, and her second-fiddle role to his celebrity. April is a widely collected landscape painter of silent, awe-inspiring scenes, still and yet vibrant. She and Eric shared a commitment to the real, to the history of art as representative of life. Both have been appalled by the rise of Jeff Coons' kitsch ceramics, made by assistants, and Damien Hirsch's formaldehyde sharks.

We are drawn into the story of Eric's maturing artistry and character, through celebrity, into an established position in the art world, emerging from the crash of the art market in the late '80s into what Eric sees as the commercialization of the current art market. His uncompromising pursuit of his artistic goals, finding out what it is he is attempting to reveal, allowing the unexpected to appear and take over a canvas—these are the hallmarks of Fischl's mature work, which he shares easily and openly with his reader. It is this transparency which forms the core of the book.

He takes us through his process in the making of *Bad Boy*. The canvas is filled by the rumpled sheets of a bed on which lies a nude woman, legs open and relaxed, seemingly unaware or dismissive of the presence of an eleven year old boy whose back is to us at the front of the picture. The nude figure is striped by sunlight coming through a bamboo screen. We almost miss the image of the boy's hands rummaging through her purse on the dresser. Improbably enough, faced with a blank canvas, Fischl was thinking of de Chirico's bananas ("the greatest bananas ever"). He painted a bowl of fruit to the right front of the canvas, then the window and bed. Next came the relaxed musing nude. In the ensuing days he added many other figures, including himself, then painted them out, finding nothing just right until the boy appeared. The bowl of fruit is still there. Fischl says, "Each one of my paintings is like a journey, a process to excavate nuggets of emotion, artifacts of memory, the treasures buried in my unconscious. My imagery evokes feelings that were once too painful or too ephemeral or too embarrassing to articulate or even to remember."

Eric Fischl's is a journey which enlivens us as readers. He opens possibility, invites eccentricity, pierces false propriety. This book has allowed me to see into the artistic process more fully and with more certainty. Enjoy!

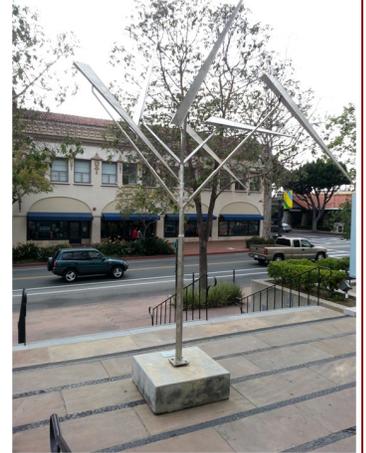


NEW RESEARCH PAPERS
 Curator-vetted Papers by New Active Docents



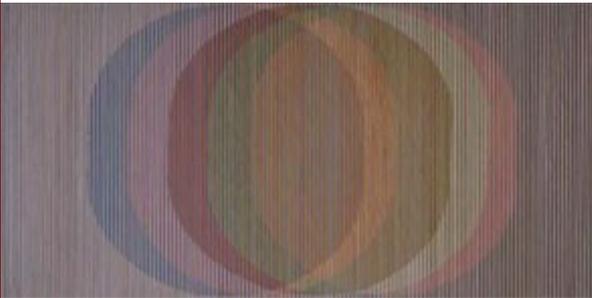
Wilhelm Lehmbruck
 German, 1881-1919
Torso of the Pensive Woman,
 1918 Painted plaster
 Pma Tregenza

George Rickey
 American, 1907 - 2002
Six Random Lines
Eccentric III, 1992 - 1999
 Stainless Steel 170 x 41 x
 35" Christy Close

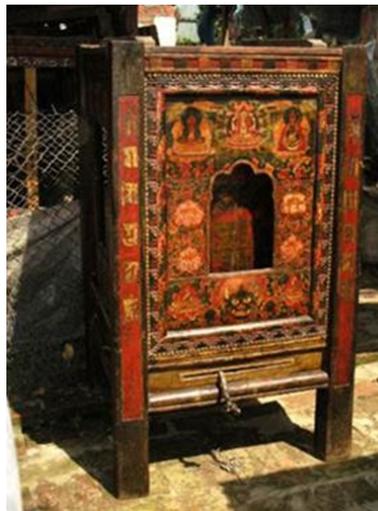


Pair of Monkeys Japanese, Muromachi period (1336-1573)
 Wood with traces of pigment and painted crystal eyes 16 3/4 x
 14 7/8 x 10 1/2" (left) 17 x 15 x 11 3/4" (right) Geri Servi

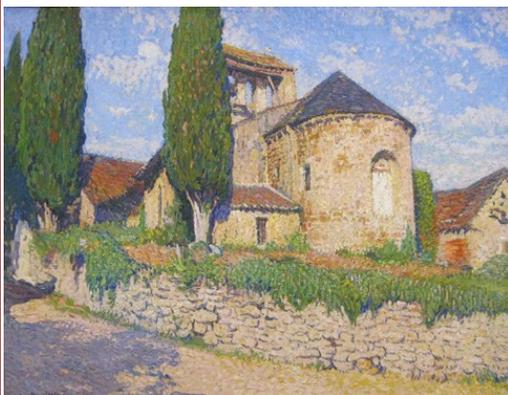
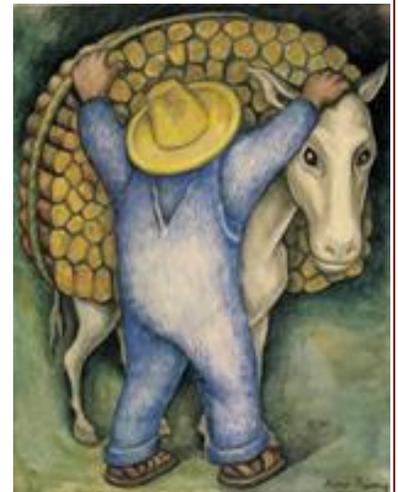
Diego Rivera
Man Loading Donkey with Fire-wood, 1938
 Graphite and watercolor
 on paper Michelle Milakovich



Physichromie 352, 1967
 Carlos Cruz-Diez, Venezuelan 1923,
 Cardboard, casein, and cellulose acetate
 inserts mounted on wood 24 x 47 5/8 x 1 3/8"
 Carlos Hernandez



Prayer Wheel
 Western Tibet, 17th-18th c
 Pigments on Wood
 56 x 31 x 30 1/2" Nicola Gherson



Henri-Jean-Guillaume Martin
 French, 1860-1943
View of a Bastide, c. 1926
 Oil on canvas 32 X 42 1/4" Sheila Prendiville



"Vase of
 Anemones"
 Andre Derain
 Denise Klassen



Sue Skenderian

In the June issue, a note of thanks for evaluators and those evaluate in 2012-2013 was mistakenly under the subject heading "Senior Outreach." I regret the error. Sue's note is below.

I would like to thank the evaluators and those evaluated during this docent year 2012-13. Those evaluating were thoughtful, thorough, professional and positively constructive in their comments to docents. And you docents who were evaluated this year, thank you so much for your diligent preparation of information and presenting your tours in such unique and interesting styles. We are an amazing group of docents and this process once again validates the abundance of talent in the SBMA docent program. Evaluations this year proceeded seamlessly all due to everyone responding responsibly to their assignments and that made my job an easy one.

Thank you all again and I appreciate the time and effort expended on both sides- evaluators and those being evaluated.

sue skenderian

Summer in London

Submitted by Ann Hammond



For those of you travelling to London this summer, there's much to see! Here's a sampling of museums and galleries.

TATE BRITAIN

Lowry and the Painting of Modern Life: 20 June - 3 Sept

Patrick Caulfield: 5 June - 1 Sept

Gary Hume: 5 June - 1 Sept

TATE MODERN

Ellen Gallagher - AxME: until 1 Sept

Ibrahim El-Salahi - A Visionary Modernist: 3 July - 22 Sept

Saloua Raouda Choucain - Paintings, Sculptures and other Objects; until 20 Oct.

COURTAULD GALLERY

Collection of Gauguin's paintings, works on paper and sculpture brought together for the first time - 20 June - 3 Sept

VICTORIA & ALBERT

Treasures of the Royal Court: until 14 July

Davie Bowie Is: until 11 August

Club to Catwalk: London Fashion in the 1980s, 10 July - 16 Feb 2014

WALLACE COLLECTION

The Discovery of Paris: 20 June - 15 Sept

RA (Royal Academy)

Summer Exhibition: until 18 August

Mexico: A Revolution in Art 1910-1940: 6 July - 29 Sept

NATIONAL GALLERY

Vermeer and Music: The Art of Love and Leisure, 27 June - 8 Sept

Michael Landy: Saints Alive, until 24 November



Left & right photos by LM

Next Docent Council Meeting September 18

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Lori, Mohr Editor