

Docent Dates

**March 6**

9:00 AM Coffee  
10:00 Mtg/Lecture  
*Myth and Materiality:  
Latin American Art  
from the Permanent  
Collection 1930-1990;*  
Melinda Gondara  
PowerPoint Presenta-  
tion, Teda Pilcher,  
New Active Docent

**March 20**

9:00 AM Coffee  
10:00 Mtg/Lecture;  
Announcement of  
nominated 2013  
officers; California  
Impressionism, Jean  
Stern, Executive  
Director, Irvine  
Museum

**April 3**

Bus Trip to LA

**April 8**

Book Group Meets

**May 7**

3:30 Information  
event for prospective  
provisional class.

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Danny Lyon, *SNCC workers outside funeral*, The Menil Collection, Houston, © 2012 Danny Lyon/ Magnum Photos. Courtesy the Edwynn Houk Gallery and Dektol.wordpress.com

It's fully launched! the new website is our sole site, as the old one has been shut down. Due to the fact that this is no longer a public site, you will be unable to find the old site using a search engine (i.e. Google, Bing, Yahoo). Be sure to bookmark the Url during your first visit to the new site so you may return easily. I encourage you to spend time poking around the new site and getting familiar with it. [www.sbmadocents.org/wordpress/](http://www.sbmadocents.org/wordpress/).

Architects of this site, Mike Ramey, Vikki Duncan, Loree Gold, and Irene Stone have invested a great deal of time to assure that it is organized, interesting, and easy to use. As we move forward the website committee will continue to add content, refine existing content, and add new features. Please contact Mike Ramey if you are experiencing difficulties getting on the new site.

Our docents are very excited about touring both the *Myth and Materiality: Latin American Art from the Permanent Collection, 1930-1990* and *Danny Lyon* exhibitions. Many thanks to Ricki Morse for leading the very able team touring *Myth and Materiality*: Faith Henkin, Steve Hiatt, Sue Skenderian, and Irene Stone; and to Loree Gold for leading the equally able team for *Danny Lyon*: Laura DePaoli, Gail Elnicky, and Amanda McIntyre. The opening reception for these two shows on Saturday, February 23rd was well attended.



Kathryn Padgett

It is already time for us to begin planning for next year's provisional class. The annual information meeting will be held in Mary Craig Auditorium on May 7th at 3:30. Please encourage your friends, tour participants, and other interested parties to attend. You are our best recruiters in bringing future docents to this very important class! In that vein, I welcome and encourage you to attend this fun event as a great opportunity to act as our best ambassadors in conveying the richly rewarding endeavor of being a SBMA docent.

A special thank you to Vikki Duncan and her committee for working so diligently on our trips to San Francisco and Boston. Looking at the preliminary itineraries, I am confident these trips will be extremely interesting, rewarding and fun. Please contact Vikki if you would like to attend either of these trips.

I'd like to offer a few gentle reminders. First, please check your calendar each day so that you do not miss a scheduled tours. It creates an embarrassing and awkward circumstance for the museum when a docent fails to show up for either an adult or student tour. Second, as a courtesy to our presenters at the Docent Council meetings, we need to be settled in our seats in the auditorium by 10:00 with cell phones and other electronic devices turned off.

Thomas Kaufmann from Otojoy has graciously donated the loop hearing system to the SBMA. This system is designed to enhance the volume level of events in Mary Craig Auditorium and is now fully functional for those who have hearing aides compatible with a loop system. If you wish to determine if your hearing aide can be set for this system please contact Otojoy or your audiologist.

As always, I deeply appreciate all that you do to make this Docent Council a successful and vibrant part of the Santa Barbara Museum of Art.

### Message from Vice President Vikki Duncan



Dear Docents,

This month, we say good-bye to winter, but not before sharing a report on the docent visit to the Corot exhibition at Westmont College on February 11th. Tour organizer Susan Billig reported on a lively lunch before hand, a knowledgeable guided during, and an exhibition that is worth a second look. She added that seeing a number of Corot's hung together let one focus on the subtleties and distinctions among the canvases. If anyone would like to organize another visit so that up to twenty docents can have a similar experience, please step forward! The exhibition continues through March 23rd.

Our spring Docent Council agenda has many events and activities. Check the home page of our web site <<http://docentsbma.org/wordpress/>> for announcements, and remember to hold the following dates in your busy calendars:

**April 3rd** — Bus Trip to Los Angeles to see America Tropical

**April 8th** — Book Group

**May 7th** – Provisional Recruitment Event

**May 13th** –Book Group

**June 7th** –Graduation and Service Awards

Have you received and responded to an invitation to a Provisional luncheon? If you have not replied, please contact your host or hostess and Gabriella Schooley, [gschooley@verizon.net](mailto:gschooley@verizon.net), right away. Your prompt responses are of great help in finding seats at luncheons for those with schedule conflicts and finalizing the guest lists.

The sign-up sheet for the Spring Bus Trip to see Siqueiros' mural *America Tropical* and visit the Historic District with lunch on Olvera Street will be circulated again at Council Meeting on March 6th, and email sign ups, [vikki.duncan@verizon.net](mailto:vikki.duncan@verizon.net), are gladly taken.

The Docent Council will host guests at the Museum on Tuesday, May 7th at our annual docent recruitment event. We reach a sizeable number of prospective docents through publicity for the event, yet our most effective recruitment is the introduction you offer, talking about being a docent and encouraging and your friends, acquaintances, and Museum visitors to apply for the Program. Email me at [vikki.duncan@verizon.net](mailto:vikki.duncan@verizon.net) if you willing to help in any way at the event and reception on May 7th.

As always, suggestions, comments, and constructive criticism are welcome at any time!

Vikki

## Student Touring



Ann Robinson  
Student Teams Chair

I am delighted to share with all of you a response from Pma Tregenza, one of our provisionals, regarding her experience in contacting docents to observe and then present her first student tour. The generosity of spirit that Pma and her classmates discovered is the essence of this docent council. We are looking forward to the energy and enthusiasm the provisionals bring to the council. Thank you Pma for taking the time to share your experience with all members of the council.

Hi Ann -

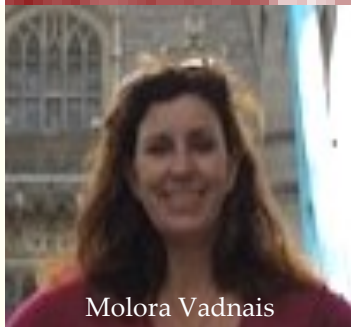
I wanted to thank you for your piece about us in *La Muse*. It was so wonderfully supportive. We are all working hard to be great docents and having the encouragement from all the other docents makes an important difference.

Yesterday three of us completed our maiden voyages by conducting our first student tours. I had the wonderful Irene Stone. They went extremely well. Two of the docents who took us under their wings were also being evaluated on their tours. I thought that was quite magnanimous of them, don't you?! One of my classmates and I spoke on the phone today and agreed that the student tours are going to be tremendous fun. Many of us, myself included, would like to go out to the schools with the PowerPoint presentations.

Thanks again, Ann.

Be well, Pma

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



Molora Vadnais

In January, docents gave 47 regular adult tours. Four planned tours had no visitors. One tour was cancelled because the docent did not show up.

There were seven special request tours: Four Artful Recluse, one *California Impressionism*, one combination *American* and Highlights, and one combination *Artful Recluse* and Highlights.



Laura DePaoli

The number of visitors per tour varied widely:

Weekday Highlights: 3.8 visitors per tour (exactly the same as last month)

Saturday Highlights: 5.75 visitors per tour (up from 3.2 from last month)

Sunday Highlights: no tours offered

Weekday Focus: 6.75 visitors per tour (up from 4.9 for last month)

Saturday Focus: 8 visitors per tour (no tours given last month)

Sunday Focus: 10.25 visitors per tour (up from 3.75 visitors per tour for last month)

*Artful Recluse* Weekday: 11.25 visitors per tour (down from 15 visitors per tour for last month)

*Artful Recluse* Saturday: 15 visitors for the one tour offered (10 visitors per tour last month)

*Artful Recluse* Sunday: 29.3 visitors per tour (up from 15.2 visitors per tour last month)

*California Plein Air* Weekday: 10.5 visitors per tour (up from 6 visitors per tour from last month)

*California Plein Air* Saturday: 0 visitors for the one tour offered

*California Plein Air* Sunday: 16.5 visitors per tour (up from 10 visitors for the one tour offered last month)

Ten Talks 5:10: 9 visitors per tour

Ten Talks 6:10: 11.5 visitors per tour (up from 10.75 visitors per tour for last month)

Ten Talks 7:10: 6.3 visitors (down from 8.5 visitors per tour for last month)

*Artful Recluse* closed strongly with numerous special requests and large weekend turnouts. Many kudos to the hard working *Artful Recluse* team. *California Plein Air* has also seen strong numbers. It will be interesting to see how this small exhibit fares with the opening of *Myth and Materiality* and *Danny Lyons*.

The experiment with a 5:10 Ten Talks is now complete. We are looking at the numbers and will make a decision on whether to keep the current 6:10 and 7:10 format or change it to maximize attendance. For now, the 6:10 and 7:10 format will stay in place.

Molora Vadnais





Sue Billig

### Monday April 8 at 1:30

Santa Barbara Art Museum Book Group will have it's last meeting for 2012-1013 on Monday, April 8 at 1:30. The place will be announced. The Art Forger by Barbara (B A) Shapiro

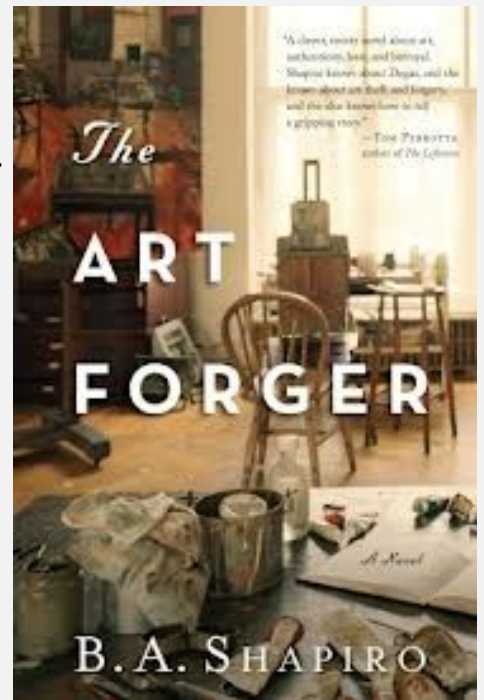
Just in time to read before the docent trip to Boston, The Art Forger reminds us of the greatest unsolved art heist. In 1990, 13 works, worth over \$500 million in today's dollars, were stolen from the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum.

Barbara Shapiro offers a suspenseful, alternative version of the history of the collector and her art. Starving artist, Claire Roth, barely makes a living from her paintings. What keeps her afloat is her knack for reproducing, in oil, famous masterpieces for a company that will provide them to order. She is very good at painting layers on top of layers of glazes to get the look of deep colors and age.

Enticed by an art dealer, Clair agrees to copy a certain Degas in exchange for a one-woman show of her own paintings. She receives the "original" and is surprised to find it is one of the stolen Gardner paintings. But is it? She suspects that the "original" is a forgery. If it is, where is the real Degas bought by Isabella Gardner? And how is she going to stay out of jail?

By looking over Claire's shoulder, maybe you will learn a few forgery skills or at least be able to spot one.

Can you name the art stolen from the Gardner?  
Answers on the last page.



Sue



### NOMINATIONS for the 2013-2014 DOCENT BOARD ARE OPEN



Irene Stone  
Nominations Chair

The slate will be announced at the **March 20 Docent Council Meeting**; nominations will be taken from the floor.

Please contact Irene (453-2004 or famstone5@gmail.com) to nominate yourself or another docent.

Thank you,  
Irene





Sue Skenderian  
Evaluations Chair

I would first like to say a very big thank you to those doing this year's evaluating and those of you being evaluated.

The preparation, introduction to and presentation of our collection by docents to our visitors has been professionally done and enjoyable to observe. The feedback from evaluators has been generous and positive, celebrating the caliber of our docents and the individual tours they have constructed.

Preparing to tour *Myth and Materiality* makes me feel empathic to all of you who have been or will be evaluated. Mining the material and learning about the pieces is so exciting—I would like to include everything I know, all that I have found!

This would, of course, overwhelm the best and most patient of visitors, and reminds me to watch my time as I encourage each of you to do. Forty-five minutes is our outside time frame and we should work very hard not to exceed this parameter. We should leave our visitors wanting more rather than feeling overwhelmed and exhausted.

Good pacing comes with practice and experience. How long we spend at each work, the number of pieces we tour, and travel time between works are all factors to be taken into account when calculating the total time of each tour. I know we all have lots to share, but it will be a better tour if you allow visitors time to take it all in along the way, so please watch your time carefully.

My thanks to all of you who are involved in the evaluation process and all of you touring this 2012-13 docent year.

sue skenderian

### A Note from Dwight Coffin



My family and I sincerely thank so many Docents for your support and concern during the last seven months of my wife's and my illnesses. It was a very rough time for us both, but we were constantly cheered and encouraged by your wonderful notes, cards and offerings of food.

The Docent Council is a terrific organization of great people who care so much for each other. I look forward to returning to touring and seeing all of you on a regular basis.

much appreciation for all you did for Tina and me,  
Dwight Coffin



By Sean O'Hagan, art critic for *The Guardian*, Nov 2012

*Reprinted with permission*



Jeff Wall's *A Sudden Gust of Wind (after Hokusai)*, 1993, *Photograph*

Facebook was launched in February 2004. By November 2011, an estimated 100 billion photographs had been shared via the social network. By April 2012, Facebook users were posting photographs at the rate of 300 million per day.

Leaving aside the estimated 11 billion photographs uploaded to image-based sites such as Flickr and Instagram, we have already entered a realm where the numbers are so vast they begin to lose their meaning. In a feature on new trends in photography, published in *Frieze* magazine in November/December 2011, the American artist and writer Chris Wiley made a direct link between the post-digital image overload and photography's ongoing crisis of meaning: "It is indisputable that we now inhabit a world thoroughly mediated by and glutted with the photographic image and its digital doppelganger. Everything and everyone on Earth and beyond, it would seem, has been slotted somewhere in a rapacious, ever-expanding Borgesian library of representation that we have built for ourselves. As a result, the possibility of making a photograph that can stake a claim to originality has been radically called into question. Ironically, the moment of greatest photographic plenitude has pushed photography to the point of exhaustion."

Photography, it seems, is experiencing a prolonged crisis concerning not just its role of depicting the world around us – through portraiture, reportage or documentary – but its form and its function, its very meaning. The creative response has been, to say the least, interesting. In 2011 Michael Wolf received an honourable



John Stezaker's *Siren Song V*, 2011, Photograph

mention in the World Press Photo awards for photographs that he had selected from Google's Street View, photographed on his computer screen, cropped and blown up. Is Wolf a photographer? Or is he a curator of images? Or is he, as photography's purists (of which there are many) would have it, simply another conceptual chancer?

In September 2012 the prestigious Deutsche Börse photography prize was won by John Stezaker, who doesn't take photographs at all. Instead, he works with found photographs, most often publicity stills of long-forgotten film stars, which he slices then merges with other stills to make uncanny collaged portraits that seem surrealist in intent. Stezaker would be the first to say that he is not a photographer, but an artist who uses photography in his creative practice and, in doing so, interrogates the medium and its role as a so-called documenter of truth, reality and celebrity culture.

The previous year's Deutsche Börse shortlist featured the work of Thomas Demand, another artist who uses photography but in a very different way, creating lifesize models of real rooms and offices that are loaded with historical or social significance in terms of recent German history. He then photographs the created sites, which are often blankly unreal and denuded of detail, before destroying the models. The photograph is the only existing record of a bigger conceptual process.

Consider, too, the work of one of the giants of contemporary American photography, Gregory Crewdson, whose elaborately staged tableaux often resemble cinematic dreamscapes. In different ways, the work of all of these artists is about the nature of the photographic – the making of the images, rather than the taking of a photograph. Here, as with much conceptual art, the process seems to be as important as the end result. How cruelly ironic, then, that we are simultaneously witnessing the sudden death of the process that has defined photography for so long, a procedure that began with the insertion of a roll of film into a mechanical camera and ended, via the contact sheet, the dark room and a tray of chemicals, with the printing of a single image on photographic paper.

The tsunami of digital technology has swept away, or is threatening to sweep away, so much that was not that long ago taken for granted: rolls of film, the film camera, dark rooms, processing labs, contact sheets, Polaroids and Kodachrome. As with recorded music and, imminently,



Cindy Sherman's *Untitled Film Still*, 1978, Photograph, Cindy Sherman/Courtesy of the artist



printed matter, photography is a world in which all that once was solid is becoming immaterial.

And yet, for all that upheaval, photography, in all of its forms, continues to prosper. There are currently more than 100 annual photography festivals worldwide, from Brighton to Bamako and beyond, as well as several big photo fairs such as Paris Photo, Miami Photo Fair and the just launched Unseen in Amsterdam. Meanwhile, in London and New York, over the past decade or so, a host of new photography galleries have opened. This year the Photographers' Gallery – Britain's main exhibition site for contemporary photography – reopened in a newly redesigned building in the centre of London.

There is an attendant flourishing trade in photography books, whether vintage or new, and a burgeoning self-publishing scene. At Tate Modern, meanwhile, the first curator of photography, Simon Baker, was appointed in 2009. If photography is undergoing a potentially terminal crisis, it appears to be a vibrant, exciting and innovative one.

Consider, too, the rarefied world of the global art market, where the dealers and collectors who made pop stars out of Damien Hirst and Jeff Koons have belatedly canonised the likes of Andreas Gursky, Jeff Wall and Cindy Sherman with often hair-raisingly high prices. If you want to know how swiftly and radically things have changed at that level, the prices, as ever, are a good indicator. Back in 2006 the most expensive photograph in the world was a pictorial landscape, *The Pond – Moonlight* by Edward Steichen, which fetched £1.6m at auction. Taken in 1904 by an early pioneer of the form, it is photography's equivalent of an old master. The following year, though, a photographic print by Andreas Gursky, entitled *99 Cent II Diptychon* (2001), fetched £1.7m – the tipping point in terms of contemporary art photography's commercial ascendancy.

At present, the three most expensive photographs in the world are by living conceptual artists: Jeff Wall, Cindy Sherman and, at the top of the league, Gursky, whose print *Rhein II* (1999) fetched £2.7m in auction at Christie's New York in November 2011 (below). It is, for the time being, the most expensive photograph ever. It is also, sceptics might say, one of the most uninteresting photographs ever: a large-format landscape in which the river Rhine sits between two swaths of green grass under a grey sky. Like several of Gursky's works, *Rhein II* is a digitally manipulated image – a factory building and some dog walkers were removed from the original photograph by a high-end version of Adobe Photoshop. When asked to comment on this, Gursky said: "Paradoxically, this view of the Rhine cannot be obtained in situ, a fictitious construction was required to provide an accurate image of a modern river."

Make of that what you will, but the fact remains that the most expensive landscape photograph in the world right now is of a scene that never existed. What, then, of photography that is not primarily concerned with the photographic or the conceptual? What of documentary,



reportage, portraiture and street photography? These more traditional forms are thriving too, and being constantly reinvented in response to the relentlessly mediated world we inhabit. Increasingly, the lines between genres are becoming blurred, though. Is Paul Graham, winner of the 2009 Deutsche Börse prize and the 2012 Hasselblad award, a documentary photographer or an art photographer? Or is he neither? Or both? Are the large-format, inordinately detailed works by Mitch Epstein in his American Power series, or Edward Burtynsky in his Oil series, part of the landscape tradition or the documentary tradition? Is the term "street photography" an adequate description of the urban lightscapes captured by Trent Parke?

Do these generic terms even matter any more in the (post-) modern world? Where do we place the luminously intimate work of Rinko Kawauchi or the often provocative "conceptual documentary" style of Pieter Hugo? Photography is adapting to survive – as it always has.

The coming of the cheap, relatively complex digital camera and the smartphone means we are living in the age of the techno-amateur. This has undoubtedly changed the world of photography on one level: there are millions – billions! – more images being made, shared and stored than ever before.

One sometimes wonders what the future holds for reportage in the age of citizen journalism, in which a single dramatic image can be captured on a bystander's mobile phone camera and instantly broadcast around the world over the internet. The shooting of the Iranian anti-government protestor Neda Agha-Soltan in June 2009 was captured in this way and became the most widely witnessed death in history.

For all that, no amount of technology will turn a mediocre photographer into a great one. Nor, in conceptual terms, will it transform a bad idea into a good one. For that you would still need to possess a rare set of creative gifts that are still to do with seeing, with deep looking.

Photography, like print media and music, is certainly at a turning point, as the current art market most dramatically shows. But it was also at a turning point during the early- to mid-1960s, when artists such as Andy Warhol and Ed Ruscha were questioning its traditions and its modes of representation through the use of photographs in their artistic practices. You could even argue that Ruscha's artist's books of serial photographs, *Twentysix Gasoline Stations* (1963) and *Every Building on the Sunset Strip* (1966), are among the most influential postwar photography books.

Whatever upheavals it has witnessed, photography has endured. It continues to do so, even as we drown in a sea of uploaded images whose sheer quantity mediates against their meaning. Photography, in more ways than one, thrives on a crisis. The instant endures.



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

## THE LAST PAGE

### EDITOR'S REQUEST

I would love someone to volunteer to take a few photos of the Provisional Information Event on May 7 at 3:30. If anyone is willing, please let me know.

Thanks, Lori

### SOMETHING NEW

There is a new interesting way to connect with art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Their new series called "82<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>" is a program of one or two short curator talks (2 minutes each) sent to you by e mail each week. It's really great! For information and sign-up, go to:

<http://82nd-and-fifth.metmuseum.org/about>

*Submitted By Christine Holland*

### Answers to Book Group Quiz:

Rembrandt "Storm on the Sea of Galilee"

"A Lady and Gentleman in Black"

"Self Portrait etching"

Vermeer "The Concert"

Degas "After the Bath"

"Three Mounted Jockeys" ink on paper

"La Sortie du Pelage" pencil/watercolor

"Cortege aux Environs de Florence" pencil/wash

"Program for an Artistic Soiree" charcoal

Flinck "Landscape with an Obelisk"

Manet "Chez Tortoni"

Chinese Ku (vase)

Flag pole finial for Napoleon Silk Flag

Comments?

[Mohrojai@aol.com](mailto:Mohrojai@aol.com)

*Lori Mohr, Editor*

