

Docent Dates

Lectures will be announced as available.
Coffee at 9:15
Meeting at 10:00

December 3

Meeting & Lecture

December 8

Holiday Party
Molora's Home

January 21

Meeting & Lecture

January 26

Book Group 2 PM

February 4

Meeting & Lecture

February 18

Meeting & Lecture

March 4

Meeting & Lecture

March 18

Meeting & Lecture

April 15

May 6

May 20

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Sandro Botticelli (and possibly Assistant) *The Annunciation*, ca 1490-95. Oil, tempera, and gold leaf on walnut panel, 19 1/2 x 24 7/16 in. Glasgow Museum. On view at SBMA Feb 8–May 3, 2015 INTERNAL USE ONLY

Dear Docents,

This year I am blessed to spend the Thanksgiving holiday with my family in Louisiana. Nine and 1/4 people for three meals, a walking—but not yet talking—baby (the 1/4 person), a puppy, and a sister's new boyfriend to integrate into the mix. After Thanksgiving Day dinner, the gentlemen left to get the boat ready for our annual Thanksgiving ride down the Cane River and the younger ladies headed to the kitchen to do dishes. There are perks to being a family matriarch and my older sister and I dropped onto adjoining couches to rest after a day and a half days of cooking. I commented to her how it was so much work for a 45-minute meal. She agreed and said maybe it isn't worth it. As I drifted off for a nap, I thought about why we do this craziness every year.

Holidays mark the seasons, the years, and our lives. My sister and I have not celebrated every Thanksgiving together but we have celebrated many at the same table and when we are apart, we always call each other. A family is a constant, after all, even when the members are separated. But over time, families expand as



Molora Vadnais
President

babies are born and people pair up, and then they contract as members pass on, children grow up and move away, and partners are lost. Constancy and change, change and constancy: It's a seemingly endless process, a circle of life, if you will. This year, my family is small. I do not remember when I have only had to feed 9 and a 1/4 people on a Thanksgiving Day. Usually it is at least 15.

This year our museum is also undergoing a profound time of change and it is a time of contraction and sometimes sadness. In January we will be down to only the Asian gallery, antiquities and the Ridley Tree gallery. We will be a small family for a while. In February, for a short time, we will enjoy *Botticelli, Titian, and Beyond* and a small Latin American show in the family resource center. Beyond that, the schedule is still in flux. Right now it really is time to just keep the family going.

A time of contraction can be a blessing as it offers one the opportunity to slow down and act with intention. Next week, we celebrate our annual holiday party, which under Joan's leadership, is shaping up to be the best one yet. Later this month, we will gather again to celebrate the life of our colleague Marty Molof.

Barbara Boyd is looking for researchers to delve deeper into our collection, while Ralph and Mary Ellen are developing a new syllabus to make our provisional training even stronger. Kathy Eastman is working this year to build our student Powerpoint team and provide this important program with new equipment. Kathryn Padgett and Shirley Waxman are working hard on a pilot program to provide Powerpoint talks on art to community groups. This program is slated to begin in February. We are using this year's lull in special exhibitions and the uncertainty in the schedule to strengthen all of our regular docent programs, our interaction as a group, and our presence in the community.

I thank you for the commitment, love, and care you give to our program, each other, and our community. Because of each of you, I know that our family will remain strong and whole into the distant future.

Molora 🍷

From Our Vice President



Joan Dewhirst

Pictures tell the story of our visit to the Huntington Library on November 3rd. The weather was picture-perfect.....and the gardens as well. The Huntington is gifted with a rich trove of art but there is never enough time to see it all.

To everything there is a season and a time to every purpose. December is a time of celebration.....and celebrate we will at our Holiday Party on Monday, December 8th! Come join us for this year's festive event at the home of Molora Vadnais----221 EAST Constance Avenue---- located behind the S.B. Mission. Please RSVP by December 3rd to me at:

dewhirst@aol.com.

May all the joys of this special season be yours.

Joan

Photos provided by Pma





From Our Adult Teams



Christine Holland, Adult Teams Co-Chair

In October, Docents toured a total of 324 visitors on 55 tours with an average of 6 visitors per tour.

October's tours went as scheduled except for one cancellation due to docent illness, and the cancellation of one evening of Ten Talks due to power failure shutting down the museum. However, I am sorry to report that there were many tours with zero visitors: 2 Highlights, 2 Sculpture, 2 Portraits, 1 Art To Zoo and 1 Asia.

Thank you, Docents, for your continuing excellence and professionalism.



From Our Research Chair



Barbara Boyd

At this time of thanksgiving I just want to mention again how thankful we all are for the contributions of our generous researchers!

We have a research need for an upcoming show, if you have a bit of time. Two paintings from our permanent collection will be included among paintings in the much-anticipated Glasgow exhibition coming up this winter. Of the two works, we need research for *The Martyrdom of Pope Caius*. Can you help us out?

All of our wishes for a very happy Holiday Season to come!

Barbara 🍷



The Martyrdom of Pope Caius
Piero de Giovanni (Lorenzo
Monaco) ca. 1394-5.

INTERNAL USE ONLY

SBMA Book Group



Laura DePaoli

Our book club meeting will be at 2 pm on Monday, January 26 at Laura DePaoli's home, 645 Stoddard Lane in Montecito, to discuss *Essays on Mexican Art* by the great Mexican poet **Octavio Paz**. This is a wonderful, beautifully written book of fourteen essays and is offered in anticipation of our upcoming Latin American photography exhibition. For anyone who hasn't yet had an opportunity to research and study our Latin American collection, this is a wonderful introduction written by one of the world's great poets.

"The Nobel Laureate's poetry and defenses of his craft, his writings on politics and culture, his literary and historical explorations of his homeland (Mexico) and the world at large, all rank among the most important works of our time. Paz's new book will reveal to his English-speaking audience that he is also a first-rate art critic."

From *The Los Angeles Times* review, http://articles.latimes.com/1993-06-27/books/bk-7467_1_octavio-paz.

Thank you to Shirley Waxman for hosting our November meeting. Stephanie Amon lead the discussion of *Camera Lucida* by Roland Barthes & *What Photography Is* by James Elkins. These two theoretical books provide a basis for examining and rethinking some of the things we take for granted about photography and are two of Stephanie's favorites. Happy reading! 🍷

Laura DePaoli

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Museum Visit: Botero

By Christine Holland



We recently enjoyed a fabulous visit to Colombia to visit friends and get acquainted with Bogotá and Cartagena. One of the most enjoyable tourist moments for me was our visit to the Botero Museum in Bogotá .



It is located in a beautiful old colonial structure, with galleries arranged around a courtyard. The art collection was donated by Colombian master artist Fernando Botero, Columbia's most famous artist, and is considered the most important donation in the Country's history. The donation was given to Colombia's Central Bank (Banco de la República) and includes 123 works of art by Botero. The techniques used in such pieces are mainly drawing, watercolors, oil painting, pastels and sculpture.

I had not known much about Fernando Botero (b. 1932) and really enjoyed seeing a large display of his paintings and sculptures. His biting sense of humor is much evident, and the works really showcase his excellent craftsmanship. Also on display are works by Picasso, Chagall, Renoir, Monet, Pissarro, Miró, Dalí and even some USA artists such as Rauchenberg and Motherwell.

Two oddities in the collection were Botero's portraits of Courbet and Cezanne, both done in 1994. I hope you enjoy these photos even though the quality is bad.



Corbet



Cezanne

A Little Mohr Conversation: Interview with Kathryn Zupsic

By Lori Mohr

Kathryn on a visit to Philadelphia



Kathryn was a docent at SBMA for 12 years before moving to San Francisco. She and Shirley Waxman taught the provisional class of 2006-2007, which was my year. Last week Kathryn visited our museum to give an inservice. She agreed to tell us a little about her world as a docent at the Fine Arts Museums, San Francisco (FAMSF), which includes both the Legion of Honor Museum and the de Young. As always, Kathryn is giving 100% of her volunteer self to these Museums, from mastering the lengthy training program to gallery touring as well as giving presentation in the community.

Our interview was conducted by phone with follow-up email.

Lori: Kathryn, tell us about your training program at FAMSF. How is it different from ours?

Kathryn: Our training program is only offered every seven to eight years, and the training itself is three years long! There were 100 provisionals in my class, with an attrition rate of about 25%, which I think is identical to SBMA. My class of 2011 graduated 75 provisionals.

Lori: Three years, wow! Did you have to wait to get in?

Kathryn: I did, for a couple of years. They take in such a huge class, so there's a big gap between classes.

Lori: How many docents make up your council?

Kathryn: We have 206 active docents, with 10% men, like SBMA.

Lori: How was the three year program structured?

Kathryn: We all attended weekly lectures in the auditorium, but for our gallery sessions we were divided into seminar groups of 15. This made it both manageable and offered the best environment for learning and practicing in a small group. My seminar group stayed together for the entire three years without a single dropout, and just like at SBMA, if you remember from your provisional year, we bonded with each other over the thrill of learning about art and the terror of giving gallery presentations.

Lori: What about the research component?

Kathryn: That's one huge area of difference. In my program, we had to write a one-page research paper on an object, with extensive endnotes, AND give a timed three-minute gallery talk on it to our seminar group every other week for two years.

Lori: That's very different. Did people complain?

Kathryn: [Chuckles] Yes. We complained *endlessly* about the amount of work. And unlike SBMA, our objects were assigned to us rather than chosen by us, so it wasn't unusual to spend hours and hours preparing a paper and talk on a piece we disliked intensely and would never use on a tour.

Lori: What was the rationale for that?

Kathryn: The idea was that the provisionals would teach each other about the art in each gallery — our permanent collection — and it actually worked very well. So we present to each other, half of us one week, the other the next. We gave our first 3-minute talk in our second week of training!

Lori: Oh, wow. You learn the permanent collection from both Museums?

Kathryn: Exactly. That's why the training period is so long. We have an enormous collection spread out over two museums. The Legion of Honor (European) and the de Young (everything else), and we're trained in both. The de Young has the bulk of the Museums' anthropological holdings, which includes significant

pre-Hispanic works from Teotihuacan and Peru, as well as indigenous tribal art from sub-Saharan Africa. The Legion of Honor collection spans more than 6,000 years of ancient and European art. So there's a lot to learn.

Lori: That's intense, really an immersion program. What about the evaluation process?

Kathryn: Our seminar leaders were seasoned docents and they critiqued our presentations and papers, which are now posted on the docent website.

Lori: You have a docent website. I have to ask...do you have a newsletter.

Kathryn: Noooooo....it's all we can do to keep the touring scheduled and updated on our website.

Lori: With that many docents, I guess! So this format of researching and presenting went on for three years?

Kathryn: In our third year of training we were given our choice of classes in specialized areas, such as Ancient Art, Works on Paper, Sculpture, Textiles, or American or European Decorative Arts. We were required to take at least three classes but could take all of them if we wanted.

Lori: Is art history woven in through learning about each piece?

Kathryn: While FAMSF provides the docents with excellent lectures year after year, they don't offer a chronological art historical survey at any time. I cannot tell you how much I benefitted from the excellent training I'd received at SBMA. I've noticed that I have a pretty strong grasp of the big picture of art history, and I know that came from my years as a docent at SBMA. You also do a great job of pounding in those formal tour elements (don't walk on a transition, always say the date and title, etc.). But most of all you really excel at teaching an interactive style of touring, using questioning techniques and a relaxed, conversational touring style. Patsy and Jill [Finsten, former Director of Education] were really big proponents of that, way before we started incorporating it into our program here. My class in 2011 was the first to really implement it. I was way ahead of the game, very comfortable in that style of presentation, coming from SBMA. And that conversational style, I think, is important for visitors. As docents we become so knowledgeable, but the goal is to break down that knowledge, make it relevant, so that people come away with not only information, but a truly enjoyable experience. We want them to come back!

Lori: Exactly. Kathryn, what is your touring commitment for Active Docent status?

Kathryn: We're required to give 24 tours a year, which can include student tours. Our continuing education lectures are held once a week, and we are encouraged to attend most of them but only required to attend those in our areas of specialization and those relating to special exhibitions we're touring.

Lori: This is going to sound silly, but are you doing research beyond your own tour preparation?



Legion of Honor Museum

De Young Museum



Kathryn: I personally do not do extra research for the docent council, but quite a few docents do. We have a European Study Group and an AOA Study Group (art of Africa, Oceania, and the ancient Americas), and they write

research papers and make presentations to the docents several times a year. I've branched off in a different direction, with the Community Speakers Program (CSP).

Lori: Tell me about that.

Kathryn: My visit to SBMA was to give an inservice on this, my favorite program at FAMSF. I'm one of twelve docents in our Community Speakers Program who write and present PowerPoint talks out in the community — at libraries, clubs, senior residences and businesses. We also give talks in the Museums' auditoriums, mostly on weekends. I absolutely love creating these talks, putting together the visuals with a narrative and trying to come up with a presentation that's both entertaining and has some educational merit. It's like making a little movie. I'd say I spend 80% of my volunteer docent hours working on CSP talks. So far I've prepared three special exhibition talks (*David Hockney, Modernism from the National Gallery*, and *Keith Haring*). I've also prepared one permanent collection talk entitled *The World of Jane Austen*, which is about our collection of British paintings and porcelain. Right now I'm working on a talk about art and fashion in the time of Marie Antoinette.

Lori: It sounds to me like you have a lot of latitude in constructing these talks. What a satisfying thing for a docent to do! What about your Education department? How does your council interact with it?

Kathryn: Our council is very self-sufficient. We do all our own training and evaluations for adult tours, and arrange all the continuing education lectures, which are open to the public.

Lori: Explain how that works, the continuing education.

Kathryn: The continuing education is all done by our council. We have an Education Chair on our Docent Council Board. That chairperson has a committee, which is responsible for lining up speakers. And they do a *fabulous* job. We get experts in every field to come speak — university professors, curators — offering wonderful scholarly lectures.

Lori: You mentioned student touring. Tell me about that.

Kathryn: The Education Department provides the student tour training. Touring students is optional in our docent council. Plenty of docents choose to do it because it helps fulfill our annual touring requirement of 24 tours...and because they like working with students, of course. I don't tour students because I volunteer as a drawing teacher at a local middle school, which has lots of disadvantaged kids. That outreach satisfies my need to work with kids.

Lori: You do that in addition to being a docent at FAMSF?

Kathryn: I'm kind of winding down with teaching role after five years, but this middle school was what I got involved in while I was waiting that couple of years for the docent program to start.

Lori: It's clear to me, Kathryn, that you love art, love educating the public. You offer a tremendous service to your community. What is the most exciting thing about your docent role?

Kathryn: Obviously the opportunity to create presentations, talks I'm personally excited about. But it's also the constant stream of big special exhibitions that makes it exciting. Because they're so crowded, we tour the really

popular shows using headsets, and our audiences are limited to 25 people. I actually like the headsets; the visitors stand in front of the art and the docent stands behind them, so they get to see everything up close. And the docent speaks very softly into the microphone; there's something surprisingly intimate about it. When the gallery is packed, the people on the tour blend in with all the other visitors until you say something like, "if you look to the right you'll see..." and 25 of the 80 heads in the room turn to the right in unison.

Lori: That's funny.

Kathryn: The downside of these fabulous special exhibitions is that so many docents want to tour them. We use a lottery system, and as many as 70 docents will be selected to tour a major show. This means we each get only three or four tours. We have lots of requests for private tours, but that usually amounts to one extra tour per docent. Over the past year we've stationed extra docents in the galleries during peak times as "zone docents," which gives us another opportunity to talk about the exhibition.

Lori: What is a "zone docent"?

Kathryn: These are docents who stay in one or two galleries and answer visitor questions about the special exhibition art. We do this for Friday night events, plus Saturday and Sunday afternoons for an hour or two during peak hours for visitors not on the Special Exhibition tours.

Lori: I guess you can spare a few when you have so many docents...70 for a major show!

Kathryn: [Giggles]. Yes, there are a lot of us. One of the things I miss most about SBMA is the wonderful sense of camaraderie you foster among the docents. The docents at FAMSF have great, close friends, too, but the organization is just too big for it to encompass everyone. Docents tend to be friends with their seminar groups or a few individuals. There are many, many docents at FAMSF I'll never meet. At SBMA the docent council feels like one big family. 🍷

BARRON'S COVER

| SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2014

Billionaire Art Museums *(submitted by Molora)*

"While smaller museums will never have the firepower of the big institutions, going forward, all arts organizations will have to find new avenues for funding. Although the challenges between them may come down to scale, the impact does not. As Frederick Janka, director of development at the Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Barbara, notes, "A \$10,000 gift to a smaller museum can make a huge impact, and the donor will see a deeper engagement with the institution. To get to that level at one of the larger institutions, you have to give millions."

For the rest of this story, click on the link. http://online.barrons.com/article/barrons_cover.html

THE LAST PAGE



Class of 2006-2007 on our first road trip as the Fab 5, to the Huntington Museum.

Marty Molof

June 8, 1936—November 13, 2014



2014

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