

Docent Dates

January 13

Docent Book
Group meets,
2:00 PM, home of
Christine Holland

January 15

9:15 Coffee
10:00 Meeting
Geri Servi,
Research Presenta-
tion on *Pair of
Monkeys*; Julie
Joyce on *Aycock
and Stuart*

January 29

9:15 Coffee
10:00 Meeting

February 5

9:15 Coffee
10:00 Meeting

Save April 9

Spring Bus Trip

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*Praises to the Mother
of God, ca. 1550-1600.*
Unknown artist
Egg tempera on wood.
Silver Revetment
SBMA

Happy New Year!

I hope you enjoyed memorable holidays and are welcoming 2014 with energy and cheer. Our fall experience was rich, with Delacroix and Divola, rediscovery our own Byzantine icons; continuing education lectures and visits to LACMA and Westmont; the 2nd Docent Art Show; being honored as 2013 Local Heroes;

our holiday party and the warm hospitality of Guy and Vicky Strickland.

January brings two new exhibitions, one exploring the role of drawing in sculptor Alice Aycock's creative process, the other surveying Michelle Stuart's unexpected engagements with the natural world. The Aycock and Stuart team is preparing tours to follow the January 26th openings, and Julie Joyce will offer insights into both artists' work at our Council meeting on January 15th.

At that meeting we also can look forward to the first of the research presentations by our New Active Docents. Geri Servi will share her findings on the *Two Monkeys* sculpture by an unknown Japanese artist currently on view in the Asian Galleries. We also will meet the new staff member in the Education Department.

A reinvented, Sci-Art Family Resource Center is ready to be explored, and we are invited to February's gala—the Inaugural Ridley-Tree Education Award honoring former



Vikki Duncan
President

docent and Museum supporter Nancy B. Schlosser, and in support of SBMA's Education Department's dynamic programs. This year, those programs include a partnership with UCSB's Gevirtz Graduate School of Education's *Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math Initiative*, integrating approaches to science and art under California's new Common Core State Standards and Next Generation Science Standards. More than ever, our docent sense of wonder and thoughtful appreciation of art as well as our methods of investigation are recognized for the constructive habits and strengths they develop in analyzing and interpreting visual data.

Our thoughtful investigations in good company will continue when the Docent Book Group meets on January 13th at Christine Holland's home to chart a course for 2014. (See announcement on page 4).

As we begin our winter activity, I wish you and your families the best of the New Year.

Vikki 

From our Vice President




Molora Vadnais

Guy and Vicky Strickland's beautiful mountain home, a crisp but sunny day, and food fit for King Louis XIV (and bountiful enough for his whole court) set the stage for a great holiday party. Many thanks to Guy and Vicky for not only opening their lovely home for this year's holiday party but for working tirelessly throughout the event. Thanks are also due to Andrea Gallo and Linda Adams of the social committee and to Ann Robinson, Kathryn Padgett, Vikki Duncan, and Barbara Boyd for setting up and cleaning up and to Irene Stone, Doug McElwain, Lori Mohr and Vikki Duncan for pouring libations and cleaning up.

Unfortunately, the Palm Springs weekend had to be cancelled because there were not enough participants to receive any group discounts. Thanks to travel committee members Christine Holland and Irene Stone for helping to organize the weekend.

This month the Techniques Team visited the Getty Villa for demonstrations on Fresco painting techniques (*Jean Smith and Linda Adams, right*). The team was able to hold natural pigments and fresco and to see a fresco being painted. The team had the opportunity to ask questions of Getty Center experts on ancient painting techniques applicable to fresco, painting on marble, encaustic, and egg tempera.

The team also visited Chantal Garierty at RTEC, who demonstrated pottery techniques from clay preparation to firing. The one-on-one interaction with Chantal stimulated a subsequent discussion and questions regarding ancient pottery. Thank you, Chantel, for taking time to share with the team your vast knowledge and love of pottery.

The team has several more scheduled demonstrations by artists on technique but will soon face the challenge of turning all of this information into interesting and informative tours for our visitors. The team could use one more member. If you are interested in joining, please contact Christine Holland or Mary Eckhart. 



From our Student Teams



Ann Robinson
Student Teams, Co-
chair with Sylvia Mabee

Last month members of the Docent Council were honored as “heroes” for our contribution to this community. It was thrilling and humbling to receive such recognition. As I reflected on the role of the Student Teams and their commitment to the Museum mission, I immediately thought of one team in our midst that is sometimes forgotten because they work quietly, under the radar, so to speak.

They are truly the “unsung heroes” in bringing their love of art to a challenging group of young adults. In that spirit, I would like to recognize docents on the Junior/Senior High Touring Teams.

These 13 docents are at-the-ready in responding to Rachael’s requests from the Education Department. They are frequently on standby and can be notified 2-3 weeks prior to a scheduled tour which consists of 25 to 75 students, plus teachers. Since tours can be scheduled on any day of the week, the team will vary depending on docent availability. This results in a new team on any particular touring day.

When I asked members why they chose this team with all its complexity and difficulties in planning ahead, the response was unanimous: *It’s incredibly rewarding; I’m in touch with the future generation; There are so many positive experiences which bring me back year after year!*

This year we are fortunate to have three docents volunteer to lead this distinguished student team: Gail Stichler, Teda Pilcher and Karen Howsam. On the touring day, they serve as team leader, organizing students and teachers into groups and often handling difficult time schedules.

As Student Team Coordinator, I am privileged to shine the “spotlight” on this Junior/Senior High Touring Team and, on behalf of the Docent Council, thank each and every one of you for your commitment and passion in serving this young population at an important time in their artistic education.



From our Adult Teams



Christine Holland
Adult Teams Co-chair
with Mary Eckhart

In November 2013, docents toured a total of 430 visitors on 56 tours, with an average of 7.7 visitors. Numbers remained steady for all categories of tours.

There were 4 tours which had 0 visitors but otherwise, attendance numbers were strong.

There were three evenings of *Ten Talks*. The Talks attracted small groups for two nights, but on November 14, with museum attendance high, there were 60 visitors on 3 tours given by 2 docents. The “extra” tour was in the Delacroix gallery.

There were 3 Special Request tours given in November, for the Delacroix exhibit, for a total of 65 visitors.

The docent teams continue to do fabulous work! Congratulations to all. 



Ralph Wilson

The Docent Council got an early holiday present in December when all 11 of the amazing provisionals passed the 3-Minute Talks, their first step to active docentdom. Although a few of the class were unable to attend the Holiday Party, those who did were welcomed warmly by Council members, and I think we can all agree that we have a remarkable group of provisionals.

With the successful completion of the first major assignment, the class members are now writing their research papers, having selected their objects. Webmaster Mike Ramey and Research Chair Barbara Boyd talked to the class about the guidelines and process for writing the paper. The final paper is not due until January 30, when it will be vetted by the Education Department and

the appropriate curatorial staff.

Upon completion of the paper we will start working on the 8-Minute Talks as well as commencing our survey of the history of art, with several Active Docents volunteering to lecture the class about their areas of interest. It will be a busy but stimulating and fulfilling term for all of us.

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

From our **Research Chair**

Barbara Boyd
Research Chair

Congratulations to our first three researchers whose papers cleared curatorial review: Ralph Wilson (Charles Arnoldi's *Landfisher*), Jean Smith and Sneh Singh (*Water Festival, Krishna and the Cowgirls*, and *Autumn Full Moon*). These papers enrich our understanding of the art and make our tours so much more engaging!

The Research Paper Guidebook is now on the website: simply click on Art in the headline bar on our home page, select Research Process in the drop down menu. A link will appear.

I would like to put a call out for 5 researchers ready to start the new year doing a paper for *Heavenly Bodies*.

All the very best for the New Year!

Barbara

Docent Book group

All are invited to join a meeting on January 13th at 2:00 p.m. at Christine Holland's for a discussion about the direction of The Docent Book Group. We will be thinking about possible new structures.

One idea is to choose a topic for each meeting (a conversational "Salon" type of gathering) in addition to, or instead of, a discussion based solely on a certain book.

If you plan to attend, please email Christine to let her know you will be there. We welcome all docents.

Holiday Party 2014









By Amanda McIntyre



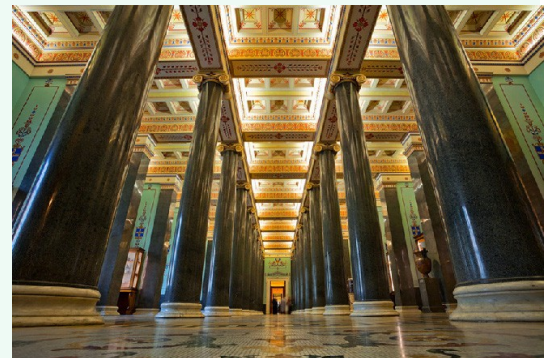
The Hermitage Museum in the center of St. Petersburg on the Neva River is a former residence of Peter the Great and then Catherine the Great. The building was standing by 1759, but finishing work continued into the 1760s. The name Hermitage in French means "a place of solitude"....ahem...on a brisk September day we were among some twelve to fifteen thousand visitors being herded, pushed and rushed through the vast rooms and splendid displays of art—both decorative and architectural, all immense in both scope and emotion.



Catherine the Great had a reputation as a patron of the arts, literature, and education. She professed to know little about fine art and relied on a few men who had both knowledge and taste.

Art works in the Museum began as Catherine's personal collection. She set off on a massive shopping spree accumulating some four thousand works of art from European aristocrats: whole collections from Saxony (Count Bruhl), France (Baron Crozat), England (Sir Robert Walpole) and many more. With the help of advisors she added collections of cameos, intaglios, drawings, engravings, numismatic items (coins, currency etc.) including the libraries of Diderot and Voltaire, both of whom she had read in great depth. Catherine craved the prestige that Vienna and Paris had with their fine art museums and filled the Winter Palace and the Hermitage walls, floors and even the ceilings with her abundant purchases.

Her successors continued to purchase art, such as the contents of Malmaison Gallery in Paris—former home of Empress Joséphine, Napoleon's first wife. Then along came Nicolas I who, along with a wave of reconstruction through the majority of the Palace, chose to deaccession over one thousand works of art that he deemed had "little artistic merit". Not to worry: two Leonardo de Vinci pieces became part of the collection in the mid 19th century.



Twelve-column Hall

At the start of WWII, the collections were evacuated to the Urals for safekeeping. Some masterpieces were sold to aid the financial crisis. The Winter Palace was hit by two bombs, exploding through the windows onto the interior of the exhibition rooms, causing major damage. But in late 1945 the evacuated art was returned, restoration of the damaged buildings began, and the museum reopened to the public.



Detail: **The Peacock Clock**
1779-81 James Cox
Craftsman: Friedrich Jury

To encompass all the collections—some 350 rooms worth—takes four or five days. The average tourist is allowed a mere four hours. The herding begins at the State Ambassadors staircase of marble and gilded columns in St. George Hall, remarkable architecture in scale and rich in detail.

A rest stop at the Peacock Clock (English), an engineering marvel with a touch of humor, then into the New Hermitage with a few all-too-brief moments to see Raphael's (small) *Conestabile Madonna* amidst a throng of



Conestabile Madonna, Raphael,
1502-1504 Tempera in canvas
6.9 x 7.1" For educational use only

other viewers....then Rubens, Rubens, Rubens....glory upon glory...twenty-four works of Rembrandt van Rijn, one of the largest collections of work by this artist in the world. The portrait of his wife, Saskia, in the guise of Flora depicts his love for her and shows his mastery of portraiture. The largest work is the *Return of the Prodigal Son*, painted late in life when he was no longer

wealthy or well-known. It is especially rich in tonalities and illusive shadowing of the five figures.



Flora, Rembrandt van Rijn
Oil on canvas; 125 x 101 cm
For educational use only



The Return of the Prodigal Son
1665-1669, Rembrandt van Rijn
For educational use only

One of Rembrandt's favorite pieces, Danae depicts the mother of Perseus as she welcomes Zeus, his father. The eighty-ten-foot painting nearly met its demise

in 1985 when a deranged visitor slashed it with a knife and assaulted it with acid. It took twelve years of careful restoration and it now hangs in the Rembrandt rooms. Only a small group of us was allowed in at a time. Every minute we were permitted to view his works was a treasure as other visitors were kept waiting, some very impatiently.

On to the Spanish School of Zurbaran, Velazquez and Murillo.

Not a minute to see antiquities or the many sculptures in the Jupiter and Dionysus Halls! After my asking



Danae, between 1636-1643, oil on canvas
72.8" x 79.7" For educational use only

five times, a way was found to access the second floor galleries, previously housing the ladies-in-waiting and now containing 19th and 20th century French Art—behold the Cezannes, Van Goghs, Gauguins, and two whole rooms of post impressionist masterpieces, such as Matisse's *The Red Room* and *The Dance*, (bottom left) exploding with vibrant colors, and two



more rooms of Picassos, a feast for the eyes and the soul.

Time to gather coats, seek a comfort station and board the bus. Rushing through art—whew! The experience was all too brief, all too rushed, and vastly over-crowded, thus my regrets.

Yet half a loaf is better than none.
Thank you, Catherine the Great!



Art Makes You Smart:

Josie Responds to Research Reported in the New York Times Nov 23, 2013



"When the [Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art](#) opened in Bentonville, Ark., researchers were able to determine that strong causal relationships do in fact exist between arts education and a range of desirable outcomes."

Well, yes. And they had to do studies to prove it? Give me a break! I wish they'd spent that money on art supplies instead of sociologists. Even the most inexperienced nursery school teacher knows art makes kids smart.


Every educator, regardless of degree or certification, learns it the moment she puts out the art materials. The children come to life, it's not the three R's anymore. Regardless of what euphemisms we call these activities, e.g. social studies, numerical applications, nature study, senior problems...bring on the paint, the clay, charcoals, pastels, tempera, water-colors, crayons, Hooray! The kids can't wait.

Whether they're pasting, coloring, collaging, weaving yarn, modeling clay, or arranging autumn leaves and seed pods on a shirt, carefully collected on a shirt-board, they're having a good time. And even more importantly, they are the masters. They get to choose what to do with those precious materials. My favorite teacher mentor used to say, "It's really the only chance that child gets to make a pure choice in the classroom." And when the child enters the museum, especially as the article points out, the less privileged child, a wide world of choices opens up to him.

If I sound a bit terse, it's because I am beyond outrage at the lack of public school funding, the diminution of dollars for the arts, for music, drama, dance over the past two generations. Yes, there was a time when every public school in Los Angeles County had an art consultant who would hold monthly workshops for us novice teachers, often taking over a class to demonstrate some new medium or technique. Every elementary school had an orchestra. An orchestra! With instruments, screechy violins, and tinny trumpets, but to the children who might never own or touch a flute or a viola, it was a dream come true.

When I taught 5th grade the social studies unit was the Westward Movement. My advisor, Jane Kievit, made sure I got in contact with one of the district art specialists who came to my class to show slides of the *Buffalo Hunter*, the works of William Harnett's *Oregon Trail*, the incredible wilderness painting by Albert Bierstadt. We visited the Southwest Indian Museum to get a feel for the culture of the indigenous people who were here long before the white man. Then we came back to class and made coil clay pots. Crescent Heights Elementary School, my first teaching post, had its own kiln that the janitor would fire up and unload when the pots were done. He cared about art too. I like to think some of my students might have kept their small handmade pinch pots that were such treasures—1961. I still have all of my son's that he made at Oakwood.

It's not even about making kids smarter, though making that point just might help rejuvenate a bit of funding. It's about making our kids more human, more humane in that sudden rush of insight when they discover their linkage as they connect themselves to the beauty and spirit of their ancestors, their forbears. It's a thrill that no electronic device can convey. Only art can fire up such passion.

Perhaps we need to give tours for legislators since now they have "measurable evidence" that art makes you smart. Perhaps they'll even come around to understand that beauty isn't measurable, though it is soul-saving and life-enriching. 

Congratulations to SBMA Curator Karen Sinsheimer!

LA Times Art Critic Christopher Knight picks John Divola in Best of 2013!

Christopher Knight's ten best art moments of 2013

BY CHRISTOPHER KNIGHT,

December 20, 2013, 7:00 a.m.

In this time when news is disseminated ever more quickly, we asked our critics to list the best of culture in 2013 in tweet form: 3-venue retrospective of John Divola's photos was too far-flung, but worth the 268-mile drive to see it all <http://lat.ms/1cneWLA> #Top10art



John Divola: As Far As I Could Get
Opens October 13

Scarlett's New Email is elkhazensscarlett@gmail.com



Samurai at Portland Museum of Art

Submitted by Barbara Boyd

Lori, Mohr Editor
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