

Docent Dates

March 4

Meeting & Lecture

March 18

Meeting & Lecture

March 23

Book Group Meets 2pm

Home of Irene Stone

April 1

Meeting and lecture

April 15

Spring Bus Trip

(NO MEETING)

April 25-27

Road Trip to Stanford



Pietro Aldi, *A Painter and His Model* Glasgow Museums, Archibald McLellan Collection, purchased 1856
INTERNAL USE ONLY

Dearest Docents,

I hope you are all enjoying the little bit of winter we have this year. The *Botticelli* exhibition is beautiful but with roses starting to bloom, the fruit trees flowering, the aroma of jasmine wafting through the air, and the shiny, clean green grass, it is hard to decide whether one wants

to be inside or out.

Congratulations and thanks are in order to Wendi Hunter for her presentation on Tintoretto's *Portrait of a Venetian General* and to Monica Babich for her presentation on Lorenzo Monaco's the *Martyrdom of Pope Caius* given after the last docent council meeting. The research presented on these pieces was scholarly, informative, and fun! And, a special thanks to Sophia McCabe for her overview of the works on paper part of the *Botticelli* exhibition.

I apologize, but I must again cancel the Lararium training scheduled for March 4. I will contact the three people who were interested and set up an alternate training time.

Sincerely,
Molora 🍷



Molora Vadnais
President

This Issue

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Joan Dewhirst

The response to our spring events calendar has been extraordinary! The art available at each of these venues promises a rewarding experience for all who plan to participate.

BUS TRIP TO WESTWOOD – WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15TH

We'll stroll through the trove of treasures in the UCLA Sculpture Garden, learn about unusual rubbings and innovative architecture in two new Hammer Museum exhibitions, and savor special works by iconic masters such as Titian, Gauguin, and John Singer Sargent in the Armand Hammer permanent collection.

DEADLINE for receipt of checks: WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1ST COST of this trip is \$75 per person, which includes lunch,. Make checks payable to: SBMA Docent Council. I will be collecting checks after meetings or you can place yours in the Vice-President box in the Docent Council Office.

Mailing address: Joan Dewhirst 193 Coronada Circle S.B. 93108

ROAD TRIP TO STANFORD UNIVERSITY – APRIL 25, 26, 27

Sunday April 26th will be our day for touring. We'll begin at 11:00 AM with a private tour of the Anderson Collection, housed in its own building, with over 100 major works of modern and contemporary art on display. After a short lunch break, we'll drive to Fi-Lo-Li Gardens for a self-guided tour of the environs of this estate, ablaze in stunning colors of spring. When you sign-up for the event, please include the names of family and friends who will be accompanying you.

There is no entrance fee for the Anderson Collection, but I need to confirm the total number in our group by **WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18TH**.

The charge for touring the Fi-Lo-Li Gardens is \$15 per person.

Deadline for receipt of these checks: WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1ST. (Checks to SBMA Docent Council)

If you can find a free hour on your calendar before March 28th, I highly recommend a visit to that little gem of a place in Montecito --The Ridley-Tree Museum of Art at Westmont College. A new exhibition titled "Rembrandt and the Jews" features 21 of Rembrandt's etchings of Jewish and Old Testament subjects. Use a magnifying glass to truly appreciate the magnificent technique Rembrandt employs with his figures. Don't miss "St. Catherine", 1638. This etching is now thought to represent Rembrandt's wife Saskia in the guise of St. Catherine of Alexandria. As with the portrait of St. Catherine in our *Botticelli, Titian, and Beyond*, the spiked wheel peeks out from behind her robe.

Ridley-Tree Museum Hours: Monday-Friday 10 am-5pm; Sat. 11am-5pm.
Closed on Sunday. There is no admission fee.

From Our Student Teams

The report this month celebrates Docent Barbara Ruediger in the following interview by Student Teams Chair Kathy Eastman. The Docent Bio column will return as its own featured piece in the April issue of La Muse.

DOCENT BIO

Did you know this about BARBARA RUEDIGER?



How did you decide to become a Docent?

I came to SBMA on a school tour with my son's 3rd grade, was intrigued and asked the Docent about the program. I have been a Docent and touring students for 34 years and acting a team leader for 32 years. I love the spontaneity of students and the exchange of ideas.

What would you like us to know about you?

I am a book lover with a large collection, especially art books. I also collect bookmarks from around the world and each book has its own bookmark.

What person, place or thing is most important to you?

Most important is my family. My husband and I have been married 55 years. We have 2 children, 5 grandchildren and our cat Heidi.

If not a Docent, what volunteering would most suit you?

I was a Hospice volunteer for 5 years and would like to work with Hospice again.

What was your most memorable travel or life experience?

It was a Docent trip to Florence in 2000, led by Jill Finsten during her first year with SBMA. I have been on many Docent trips – Paris, Amsterdam, NYC, Philadelphia and Washington DC.

What would you like to do that you haven't done?

I would love to go to Spain and Portugal to experience their art and culture.

What is one thing you would never do again?

This is a no brainer. I will never ride a horse again. I went trail riding with my son for an hour many years ago and I was terrified. The back of the horse was too high off the ground and we ended up riding through underbrush and a stream. 🐾



Barbara at the ceremony where she earned recognition for her 30 years of service to the Docent Council.

From Our **Adult Teams**

Christine Holland, Adult
Teams Co-Chair

.January Adult tour figures held steady as compared with previous months. Visitor numbers usually total in the mid- to high 300s. In January, docents toured 377 visitors on 57 tours, with an average of 6.6 visitors per tour. Some tours had quite large groups. Several docents reported starting with a small number and gathering many more visitors as the tour progressed.

There were no Special Request tours. One of the *Highlights* tours had no visitors, and also four *Highlights* tours and one *Europe* tour were cancelled because the galleries were closed for installation of the new exhibit. However, for some of those time slots, we were able to substitute an *Asia* tour.

A reminder to examine closely the touring calendar sent out by Rachael at the start of each month. Although your valiant Adult Team leaders and Education Department staff strive for perfect coordination, there could be an instance in which there's a difference between the two calendars. So please scour those calendars for your tour dates. Thank you!

Christine 

The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts (3)

DON'T MISS: FEB. 28-MARCH 6

Beauty Near the Beach
Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Santa Barbara, Calif., until May 3



Explore five centuries of Italian painting in "Botticelli, Titian and Beyond," which draws from the Glasgow Museums. At left, Bellini's "Virgin and Child,"

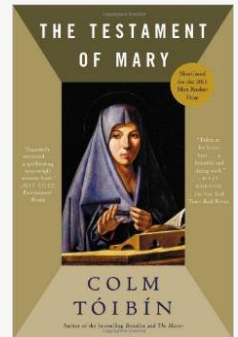
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SBMA Book Group



Laura DePaoli

For our March book club selection we will be reading “The Testament of Mary” by Colm Toibin, a novella that relates to our wonderful *Botticelli, Titian and Beyond* exhibition and takes advantage of the author’s upcoming appearance at the SBMA. The author was inspired by two Renaissance paintings, a Titian and a Tintoretto. The book was on the short list for the 2013 Man Booker Prize, and is quite controversial. It imagines a very human Mary, close to the end of her life and living in exile, as she tries to piece together the memories of the events surrounding her son’s life and death, and hold onto what she perceives as the truth.



The book is short, about 100 pages, and is an absorbing read. Colm Toibin will be here at the museum on Thursday, March 12 at 3 pm for a reading and discussion, and then we’ll be holding our own discussion on Monday, March 23rd at 2pm (see below). Vikki Duncan has volunteered to lead our discussion and everyone who has read the book has thoroughly enjoyed it. If you would prefer the audio book, Meryl Streep narrates, and she is fantastic.

If you’d like to know more and read an excerpt of the book, The Guardian has several excellent pieces:

<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2012/oct/19/inspiration-testament-mary-colt-toibin>

<http://www.theguardian.com/books/video/2013/oct/11/booker-prize-2013-colt-toibin-the-testament-of-mary-video>

Please plan to join us on March 23rd. 2pm
RSVP to Irene Stone,
2035 Las Tunas Road, SB
famstone5@gmail.com or 962-7496.

In Our Own backyard

J.M.W. Turner exhibit at J. Paul Getty Museum

Read the review by Christopher Knight , February 25, 2015

<http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/arts/museums/la-et-cm-knight-turner-review-20150224-column.html#page=1>

M.W. Turner, "Regulus," 1828-1837, oil on canvas. (Tate London / 2014)



Lasting Artistic Influence of Renaissance Painting

By Ralph Wilson



Seeds of Change

The European Renaissance (c. 1400-1600) developed following a time of darkness throughout all of Europe, caused by wars, the Black Death, and religious disputes. The Renaissance, or re-birth, of the arts found its greatest flowering in Italy, and forming its roots were four interconnected developments:

A belief in the importance of man and the secular condition (Humanism);

A revival of Greek Classicism and its celebration of the human body;

A mastering of techniques to create the illusion of depth on a flat surface;

A greater realism in the depiction of the human face and form.

Along with these societal changes were historical occurrences which influenced the renewal of the arts. The chaos within the church was a direct result of the rise of Humanism with its emphasis on the secular rather than the spiritual. There was also a renewed interest in ancient learning and art, and more and more people were questioning the role of the church in their lives.

Economic changes greatly altered most aspects of life. Because of its strategic location, Venice was the center of trade from the east and controlled most of the commerce in the eastern Mediterranean Sea. The subsequent wealth of its citizens made it perhaps the richest city of Europe. Meanwhile, Florence became an international banking center, and its banking families established branches in the major cities of Europe. Indeed, the purity standard for all European coinage was the Florentine gold coin known as the *florin* (Annenberg). The rise of capitalism and the spread of wealth meant the church was no longer the only patron of the arts, for individuals could not only purchase but also commission great art from the finest painters of the time.

Renaissance Art Is Born

The initial incubation of Renaissance art occurred in the 14th century when painters began to portray the human body more realistically and to give the suggestion of depth in the pictorial plane, as Giotto (c. 1267-1337) demonstrated in the frescoes (1300-1311) in the *Basilica di San Francesco* (Basilica of St. Francis) in Assisi, Italy. Later in the 14th-century artists were following Giotto's example using tempera, the common medium of earlier centuries. Because tempera paint dries so quickly and cannot be mixed, modeling and shading are extremely difficult. However, painters such as Agnolo Gaddi (1350-1393) used layers of tempera to approximate color mixing in order to relieve the pictorial flatness of earlier art, as in his *St. Ursula* in the Santa Barbara Museum of Art collection [Fig. 01]. Picturing faces and bodies with paint became easier in the 15th century following developments in oil paints in Venice. With the versatility and accessibility of oil paint and the discovery of canvas as a support (again, popularized in 15th-century Venice), many new art techniques were developed by the Renaissance painters to enable them to reproduce their visions more accurately and expressively.



Fig. 01

The New Techniques

Linear perspective, foreshortening, *sfumato*, and *chiaroscuro* are a few of the artistic techniques developed during the Renaissance. We often take for granted these artistic techniques, forgetting that prior to the Renaissance they were unknown. This brief survey discusses some of these methods, illustrates how artists used them in paintings of the Renaissance period, and shows examples of more modern works using the same techniques, which are as relevant today as they were some 500 years ago. Finally we look at *colorito* and *disegno*, two painting styles which during the Italian Renaissance became distinguishing characteristics of the two great artistic centers of the period, Venice and Florence.



Fig. 02

Linear Perspective

Art of the Middle Ages usually appears flat and two-dimensional. Typical paintings most often depicted saints, members of the Holy Family, and other religious figures with an abundance of gold background and little or no depth of field. The *St. Lawrence* (c. 1370-75) of Niccolò di Buonaccorso from Glasgow Museums is a particularly fine example [Fig. 02]. Much of the art of this period was designed as devotional pieces for the inspiration of the viewer, and anything the paintings lacked in accurate portrayal of the human figure could be explained by their spiritual value and intent to glorify God, exemplified by the rich gold adornment.

Leon Battista Alberti (1404-72) published *On*

Painting in 1435 and offered the first explanation of what we call linear perspective. The basic concept to change a two-dimensional perspective to a three-dimensional perspective is that converging lines meet at a single vanishing point, and all shapes get smaller in all dimensions with increasing distance from the eye. Painting could now relate to the viewer's real vision



Fig. 03



Fig. 04

and not just to a heavenly illusion.

In Glasgow's collection *The Annunciation* (c. 1490-95) of Sandro Botticelli [Fig. 03] is an excellent example of fundamental linear perspective. A more contemporary use is seen in David Hockney's photographic collage *Brooklyn Bridge: #7, 1983* in the Santa Barbara Museum of Art's collection [Fig. 04].

Foreshortening

Just as linear perspective gave depth to a painting's background, foreshortening gave depth to an object or figure in the composition that is projecting towards the viewer. The right arm of the Child in Giovanni Bellini's *Virgin and Child* (c. 1480-85) is an



example of the artist establishing perspective within a very short span, the length of an arm [Fig. 05]. Note how the arm contrasts with the awkwardness of St. Lawrence's hands and arms in the Buonaccorso panel. George Bellows similarly uses the Renaissance development in the active horse in *Steaming Streets* (1908) in the SBMA collection [Fig. 06].

Fig. 05



Fig. 06



Fig. 07

Sfumato

Sfumato (Italian *fumo*, 'smoke') is a painting technique in which lines are intentionally blurred and given what is best described as a fuzzy appearance. It often is most notable on the contours of faces and hands. Several Renaissance masters employed *sfumato*, especially Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) and Giorgione (c. 1477-1510). Da Vinci's *Mona Lisa* (1503-06) has facial features and hands which lack sharp details and evoke in the viewer that ethereal, enigmatic response which so often characterizes descriptions of the image. In Glasgow's



Fig. 08

collection examine Carlo Dolci's *Adoration of the Magi* (c. 1633-34) [Fig. 07]. While Dolci is rightly praised for the detail of his compositions, particularly his treatment of fabrics, he is also praised for his use of the contrasting style of *sfumato* to soften the faces of the figures and bring a greater sense of warmth and emotion, exemplified by the kneeling king on the right. A more recent example is SBMA's *Femme à la Chemise Blanche* [Woman in a White Slip] (c. 1900) by Auguste Renoir in which the painter adds softness and mystery to the woman's portrait by the use of *sfumato* [Fig. 08].

Chiaroscuro

Sfumato is closely related to but should not be confused with *chiaroscuro* (Italian, 'light-dark'), which refers to manipulating lights and shadows to create intense, almost black areas of a painting in contrast with other very bright areas usually from a single light source. Caravaggio (1571-1610) and his followers are easily recognized by their use of *chiaroscuro*, as seen in the 17th-century painting by Giovanni Baglione *St. Catherine of Alexandria Carried to Her Tomb by Angels* (n.d.) in SBMA [Fig. 09] and Glasgow's *Virgin and Child with St Anne* (c. 1614-17) by Antiveduto Gramatica [Fig. 10]. *The Pardon* (1872) by Jules Breton in the SBMA collection is a more recent example of the *chiaroscuro* technique [Fig. 11].



Fig. 09



Fig. 10

Competing Styles

Disegno and Colorito

Any discussion of Italian Renaissance painting must include mention of the two competing styles of the 15th century—*disegno* (Italian, ‘drawing’ or ‘design’) favored by the Florentine artists and *colorito* (Italian, ‘color’) by those of Venice.

Disegno was originally associated with Florentine artists Botticelli, da Vinci, and Michelangelo, who used drawing as the basis for the composition of a work. The style resulted from years of copying models and developing an eye for detail.

On the other hand, the Venetian painters, including Giorgione and Titian, composed their work by the direct application of color onto the canvas or panel without first drawing the design. *Colorito* results in emphasis on creating a beautiful picture without necessarily being a slave to exactitude. Brushwork delineates strong contours as well as broadly applied patches of warm colors, impasto, and texture of the brush stroke on the rough canvas. Indeed, *colorito* was possible only after the pairing of oil and canvas (Ilchman, 31).

Michelangelo called the use of oil paint “lazy” Venetian art (Nichols, 50). Giorgio Vasari, in his discussion of Titian’s works in *Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors & Architects* (1550) writes that Michelangelo said, “it was a pity that in Venice men did not learn to draw well from the beginning” (Vasari, IX.171). For his part, Titian had learned to draw but after working with Giorgione, he



Fig. 11



Fig. 12



Fig. 13

readily adopted his teacher's style,

to give to his pictures more softness and greater relief, with a beautiful manner; nevertheless he used to set himself before living and natural objects and counterfeit them as well as he was able with colours, and paint them broadly with tints crude or soft according as the life demanded, without doing any drawing, holding it as certain that to paint with colours only, without the study of drawing on paper, was the true and best method of working, and the true design (Vasari, IX.159).

Even though each artist believed he used the only true approach to art, we recognize the greatness of both. We appreciate the careful detail of the Florentine artists when looking at the 19th-century *Portrait of Mademoiselle Martha Hoskier* (1869) by Adolphe-William Bouguereau [Fig. 12] in the SBMA collection or the exactitude of the photorealism of contemporary artist Richard Estes. At the same time we can enjoy the flair of Berthe Morisot's *Portrait of Marthe Givaudon* (1892) [Fig. 13], also in SBMA's collection, or the sweep and spontaneity of Karel Appel's brushwork.

The 16th-century debate over the merits of *disegno* or *colorito* were surely no more heated than those of the academics versus the impressionists in the 19th century. In the continuum of art history, it is these challenges which provide the impetus towards new paths of discovery. For the inventiveness of both the Venetian and the Florentine painters of the Renaissance, we better enjoy the variety and depths of art.

Other Innovations

Renaissance painters contributed many additional techniques and themes to the history of art. These include, but are not limited to the following:

Unione

Cangiante

Depiction of the human figure

Introduction of light into art

Narrative, including continuous narrative

Depiction of emotion and personality

The rise of portraiture

Any one of these areas would be worthy of further research to demonstrate the genius of the Renaissance artists and the debt later artists owe these creative and innovative individuals.

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THE LAST PAGE



On February 15th Karen Sinsheimer, our Curator of Photography, gave a Birnam Wood dinner party for 100 guests honoring her molecular biologist husband's 95th birthday. Friends and family gathered, from children, grandchildren and great grandchildren, to colleagues, to university friends from his days as Chancellor of UC Santa Cruz.

Pictured next to Bob Sinsheimer (in the red shirt) is his old friend and undergraduate roommate at MIT, and behind are Lorna Hedges, Ricki Morse, and Karen Sinsheimer. Lorna has been involved with the Museum since 1969, serving as a Docent and Trustee, as well as Education Committee Chair.

Lori Mohr, Editor
Mohrojai@aol.com

