

Docent Dates

Summer
Break

Class of 2016

Photo by Pma



Dear Docents,

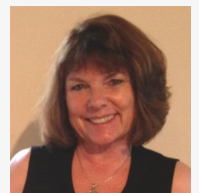
Our Education Dept once again hosted a fine reception to help us celebrate our New Actives, Patty, David, Erika and Joanne. Thanks to Pma, we have photos of the event.

The docent museum-fest in NYC organized by our now Docent of the Year inspired me to keep the exploration going. My first stop was The Huntington in Pasadena (National Parks), followed by the San Francisco de Young, which included a tour of the American collection.

Ricki's article last month goaded me to re-examine California Figurative Art, so SFMOMA was a must-see. The generous gallery spaces are perfect for showcasing the Fisher Collection—a trove of 1,100 contemporary works from artists such as Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, Alexander Calder, Willem de Kooning, Richard Diebenkorn and Chuck Close. Critics say this addition catapults the museum into the league of NYC's MOMA and the Tate Modern in London. Finally, I re-visited the Asian Museum, finding more meaning in the art as a result of our *Puja & Piety*-related lectures.

The museum-fest continues in this issue with Ann Hammond reporting on the L.A. Road Trip orchestrated by Nicola Gershen, Barbara Boyd commenting on the Ojai visit to see Kim Smith's work, and Ricki's submission about falling in love—docent style—in Switzerland. Our Maholy-Nagy team will appreciate Joan's submission of a review by Peter Scheldahl on a retrospective at the Guggenheim. By popular demand, I have published Michi's Graduation speech, and you'll also find a bit on my Cuba trip (March 2016). Happy reading.

Lori

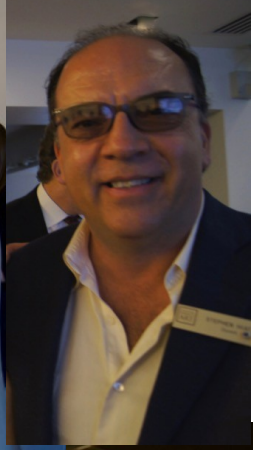


Lori Mohr, Editor

Graduation & Awards Ceremony



Photos by Pma Tregenza



From our **Research Chair**
Summary for 2016



Barbara Boyd

This year, we generated an inventory of art works from our permanent collection still in need of research, or that could benefit from updating. As a Council, we are grateful for the wonderful contribution from those who submitted papers as we continue to build our data base of information available on the Docent website.

I am taking this opportunity to publicly thank each researcher:

Erika Budig, Pierre Bonnard's "Nude against the Light";

Anne Miller, the Kenneth Price sculpture, "Izaak";

David Reichert, Colin Campbell Cooper's "California State Building, San Diego Exposition 1916";

Patty Santiago, Ray Strong's "Requiem for Maynard Dixon";

Joanne Singer, Rodrigo Moya's photograph, "Life Isn't Beautiful (*La vida no es bella*)";

In preparation for the large "Puja and Piety" exhibition several useful papers were submitted, including:
Jean Smith: 1) background on Pichvais wall hangings; 2) information on three Pichvais: Krishna and the Cowherds, the Autumn Full Moon; 3) Illustration to Ramayana; and 4) Jal Vihar (Water Festival); 5) an update of her research paper on Yamantaka (Vajrabhairava);

Mei Chi Ho on Krishna as Srinathji at Annakuta.

These research papers were added to those already posted for the *Puja & Piety* exhibition: Hollow Brick with Tigers and Bi Disk, Bodhisattva of Compassion Guanyin, Horse with Lady Rider, Façade of a Jain Household Shrine, and Gandhara Buddha.

In addition to each researcher named above, much thanks goes to Rachael Krieps and the Education Department for unearthing additional information and images, not always a easy task, coordinating the delivery of papers to our curators, and supporting students creating their PowerPoints for presentation to the Council.

Loree Gold and Mike Ramey's efforts have been invaluable in updating and maintaining our website .

Barbara Boyd

From our **Community Speakers Program**
Shirley Waxman



Team Leaders Kathryn Padgett
and Shirley Waxman

We are open to expanding our team! Join us and see for yourself how it works as you create your own interesting, informative, and lively talk on a topic of your choosing related to our permanent collection. If you are interested, contact me or Kathryn. Training included! shirleywaxman@gmail.com or kpadgett@cox.net

July 15: Puja & Piety

E.P. Foster Library in Venture (on Main St.)

July 23: European Artistic Revolution: 70 Amazing Years- 1867 & 1937

Santa Barbara Central Library (next to the museum)

Bus trip to Hauser, Wirth and Schimmel Gallery and The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA

By Ann Hammond



It was a wonderful day trip, thanks to Nicola's organisation! She had visited the Hauser beforehand, so that made things go smoothly. Nicola also had prepared a list of restaurants in the immediate vicinity to give us. Smart.

Our first stop was the Geffen, a huge warehouse-type space, formerly a police car storage facility in L.A.'s Little Tokyo district. The exhibition, *Don't Look Back: The 1990s at MOCA*, focused on major concerns and changes, referencing the AIDS crisis, birth of the internet, the Clinton

administration, consumerism, the Starbucks craze, and the beginning of our throw-away culture.

The art was indeed very contemporary. I'll just mention one piece (above)—a metal-handled shopping basket containing various tools...a hanger, a piece of metal shelving—standing alone in the middle of the second floor. It was very interesting, the entire exhibition, made more so because our docent was extremely knowledgeable.

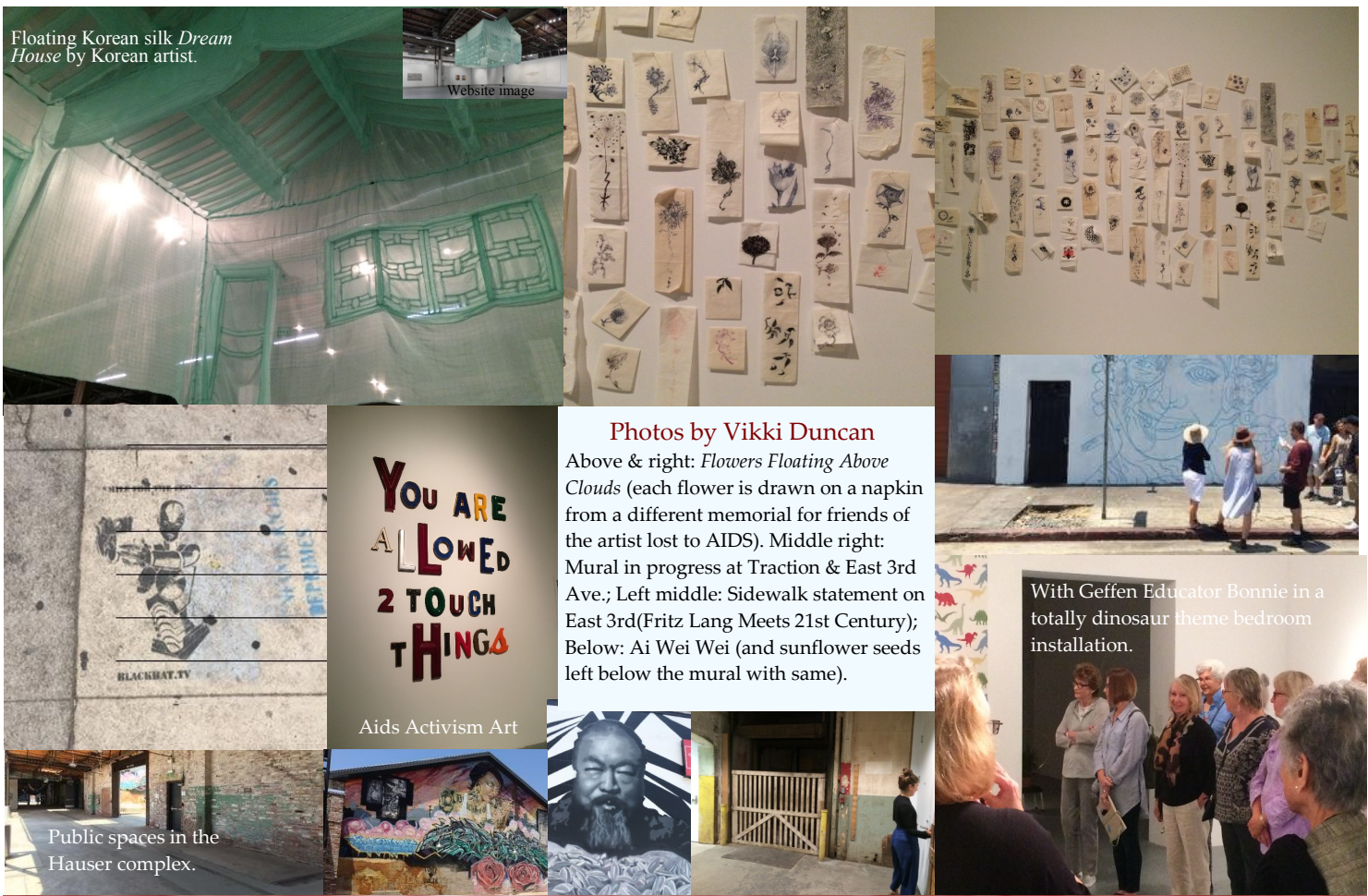
Arriving at the Hauser after a five-minute ride, we first went in different directions for lunch, meeting afterward at the museum. The building was wonderful, a restored granary in which they have left many original elements. Over the entrance hall were discreet emblems of ears of wheat!

Our previous lecturer, Jenni Sorokin of UCSB, gave us a tour attended by other visitors as well, adding up to more than 60 people! The exhibition of works by women sculptors was stunning! Hard to choose a favourite artist, but I will. I had already fallen in love with Louise Bourgeois's work in the 1990s when she had an exhibition in the Serpentine Gallery in Kensington Gardens, the main piece being a huge metal SPIDER, which she did in her 90s.

This is a wonderful show, full of surprises from women artists whose abstract works were radical after WWII, and that comes through to the viewer. As Jenni said, these women were true pioneers. 🍷



Louisebourgeois.com



Floating Korean silk *Dream House* by Korean artist.

Website image

Photos by Vikki Duncan

Above & right: *Flowers Floating Above Clouds* (each flower is drawn on a napkin from a different memorial for friends of the artist lost to AIDS). Middle right: Mural in progress at Traction & East 3rd Ave.; Left middle: Sidewalk statement on East 3rd (Fritz Lang Meets 21st Century); Below: Ai Wei Wei (and sunflower seeds left below the mural with same).

Aids Activism Art

Public spaces in the Hauser complex.

With Geffen Educator Bonnie in a totally dinosaur theme bedroom installation.

Falling in Love Again, St. Gallen, Switzerland

By Ricki Morse



Going to Europe has always had the aura of falling in love for the first time, or again, and on this trip I fell in love with the medieval city of St. Gallen in northeastern Switzerland, just a hill away from a great view of Lake Constance. Early a textile producer, St. Gallen evolved from linens to cottons to laces to unequaled machine embroidery. In the local textile museum, along with an English-speaking docent (arranged by my hosts), we viewed displays of fabrics and garments and books of fabrics and laces amounting to a unique collection of centuries of artisanship, style and culture—even a display of Amal Clooney’s wedding dress embroidered in St. Gallen.



Garments designed from machine-embroidered fabrics at the Museum of Textile, Saint Gallen

This small city, now about the size of Santa Barbara, grew from the Abbey of St Gall in its center, which is now home to one of the great medieval libraries in Europe, housing over 2000 hand-transcribed volumes in, among others, Greek and Latin and Celtic, in a tiered round room



decorated with ornate wood carving, an ethereal painted ceiling and a communicative creaking wooden mosaic floor. The story goes that Gallus, an itinerant Celtic monk, fled Ireland to escape the Normans in 617 CE and arrived in what was then a forest near Lake Constance, where he established his hermitage and welcomed other traveling priests with their treasured books and bibles. Later generations of priests built the abbey and the library, drawing the local population to surround the cathedral with their homes and shops.

By the late 20th century the textile industry had been replaced by research in renewable energy, computer and precision technology, and it is this last iteration which evolved into The Art Foundry (Sitterwerk), an establishment to flutter any docent heart. My host has witnessed the development of the Foundry since his friend, Felix Lehner, bought an abandoned industrial complex in St. Gallen, not certain what he wanted to do



with it but sensing the possibilities. What evolved is breathtaking. His Art

Above: The Main room in the Abbey Library of Saint Gall; *Right:* Arranged around the walls of several rooms in a large warehouse in the Art Foundry are the works of Hans Josephsohn, Swiss sculptor (1920-2012). This extensive archive is managed, exhibited and curated by Ueli Meinherz who showed us through the collection. As a young man, he was Josephsohn’s assistant and through the years became his friend, trusted ally and ultimately the keeper of his legacy.



My friend Edi Haenseler and I visiting the Josephsohn collection and sharing responses to the sometimes enigmatic sculptures, guided by its curator, Ueli Meinherz.

Foundry now houses the work of famous Swiss sculptor Hans Josephsohn, modern clay figurative works in which the clay itself dominates, giving only hints at the figure within. The figures emit a sense of the art history of the figure and yet, more significantly, allow the viewer's presence to complete the work, calling out the full possibility which the clay only suggests. Since Josephsohn died a few years ago, the complete archive of his work is housed here, curated by Ueli Meinherz. Walking through the hundreds of clay figures with Ueli, the power of Josephsohn's vision becomes manifest. He celebrates the not yet delineated, the implicit, the subliminally suggested. As doctors we know that immersion in an artist's work allows us to "get" their vision. So I now have a new friend in this subtle and powerful sculptor.

The Art Foundry also houses apartments for visiting and invited artists, a dynamic library of books and materials (which self-sort and organize thanks to implanted microchips), a complete metals foundry and, most fascinating of all, a complete 3-D replicating and enlarging laboratory which produces intricately detailed wax replicas from disassembled pieces of the maquette or model, enlarges them, and through the lost wax process, casts the parts in metal in whatever size and material the artist elects, assembles them and ships them to their originating artists all over the world for installation. Artists in residence study in the library and experience



Above: The artist's model from which the parts were duplicated and enlarged by 3-D processors.

the materials first hand in the materials library. Imagine being able to hold in your hand actual hunks of every white marble or black obsidian in the world.

After we lunched in their cafeteria with the thirty some artists and artisans who constitute the staff, Ueli guided us through the process of 3-D reproduction, beginning with the model of a stemmed rose which in its final form will be 25 feet tall and installed in an American city. You will have to watch for it, as the Foundry does not talk about its artists or the destined venues.

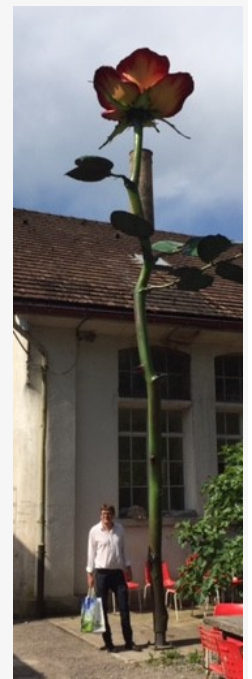
We examined the artist's original model, which had been disassembled, a single rose leaf fed into the 3-D reproducer, enlarged, emerging as a detailed wax duplicate of the original ready to be cast in aluminum by the lost wax process. Since the final sculpture will be over 25 feet tall, a lighter metal was appropriate. Edi just visited the Art Foundry last weekend and sent me this picture of the completed work, currently standing at the foundry, letting the sun and elements have their way with the newly applied surface paint, testing for fading and stability, before its journey to the United States.

Below: A single rose leaf, enlarged and duplicated in wax, cast in aluminum through the lost wax process.

Experiencing this astonishing process first hand, I re-understood how art happens. It is not talent, but that's part of it; it is not skill, though that's part of it. It is imagination and creativity and vision, all very illusory qualities. Remembering the defenses of cognitive art, I could see how they would be called for in understanding this whole replicating process. But when we confront the huge soaring single rose stem, we feel something more meaningful than was expressed in the model. The artist envisioned this final revelation, long before we could even imagine it. 🌹



Right: The final work, being testing for weathering at the Art Foundry.



Ojai Art Gallery 525 Showcases Docent Kim Smith's Work



Kim Smith

What a good turn out we had, and a thoroughly wonderful day with Kim at an Ojai art gallery filled with her canvases.

We learned about the motorcycle chrome reflections that inspired this series. Afterward, our group had lunch in a garden setting at Papa Lennon's next door, and got to enjoy more time hearing about Kim's current and upcoming projects. The afternoon was wonderful in every way.

Kim has earned her place as one of the talented gems among us.

Barbara Boyd



Kim works in a variety of media. She explained her work to Lori Mohr in an email. *"My pieces are about many things, looking for abstraction and beauty in something not usually thought of that way, pushing myself as a painter to merge impressionistic realism with abstraction."*

The painting photos are by Kim, gallery shots by Vikki Duncan.



THE FUTURE LOOKED BRIGHT

A Moholy-Nagy retrospective at the Guggenheim, by Peter Scheldahl

Submission suggested by Joan Dewhirst and reprinted with one-time use permission from the New Yorker,
June 6 & 13, 2016 issues

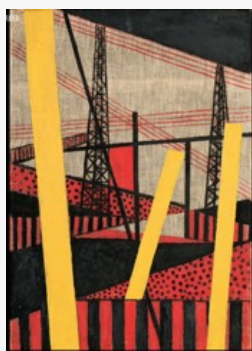
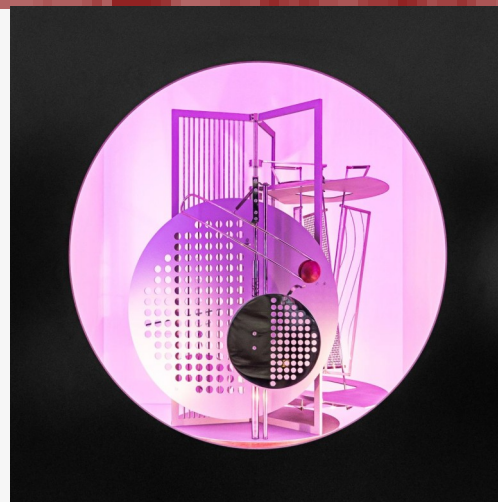
My favorite work by the Hungarian-born painter, sculptor, photographer, filmmaker, designer, writer, teacher, and all-around modernizing visionary László Moholy-Nagy, the subject of a powerful retrospective at the Guggenheim Museum, is a one-of-a-kind gizmo (*right*): “Light Prop for an Electric Stage” (1930). It’s a sleek, motorized medley of finely machined rods, screens, perforated disks, and springs in metal, glass, wood, and plastic, set in a box with a circular cut in one side.

The gleaming parts—a sort of industrialized synthesis of Cubist and Constructivist styles—reflect a play of colored electric lights inside the box. The work was designed for a purpose, but its primary function is to fascinate. Its rhapsodic inventiveness—there had never been anything like it before—puts it in a class of twentieth-century utopian icons. “Light Prop” exudes optimism for a world not only bettered by technical know-how but set on a whole new footing. That dream keeps recurring, of course. But creative people of no other period dreamed bigger and harder than those in Europe and America between the world wars, when concatenating economic, political, and social disasters fed faith in the gospel of progress.

Moholy-Nagy finished “Light Prop” in Berlin. He’d moved the black obsidians, after teaching at the Bauhaus in Dessau, in order to concentrate on a career as a commercial and stage designer, while still collaborating with his former colleagues Walter Gropius, Marcel Breuer, and Herbert Bayer. An electric company backed the research and the engineering required to create the piece. It was his talisman. He took it with him in 1934, when, after the Nazis’ ascent to power, he moved first to the Netherlands, and then to London, and, finally, in 1937, to Chicago, where he directed the New Bauhaus school. Two years later, he founded the School of Design, which survives today as part of the Illinois Institute of Technology; the institution became what the art historian and curator Elizabeth Siegel, writing in the Guggenheim show’s catalogue, calls “his overarching work of art.”

The fragile original “Light Prop” resides in Harvard’s Busch-Reisinger Museum, where it is sometimes turned on during gallery talks. At the Guggenheim, a working replica occupies the “Room of the Present,” a dazzling futuristic environment—including a serpentine steel-and-glass room divider, Bauhaus lamps, plans for buildings and domestic interiors, photographs, films, and posters—that Moholy-Nagy conceived for a museum installation in 1930, but which went unrealized in his lifetime. (He died of leukemia, in 1946, at the age of fifty-one.) I kept returning to the “Light Prop” as the peak of a variegated show that reveals surprising hints of soulfulness in the great experimenter.

Moholy-Nagy is generally not my kind of artist. Scientifically inclined and pedagogical, he seems bent on improving me. But excessive confidence is only too human, too. Besides the extreme historical drama in the arc of his development, there is personal pathos in the sense that his commitment to rational abstraction deflected—or sacrificed, even—his softer yearnings. I hadn’t known that, before he became an artist, largely self-taught, Moholy-



“Radio and Railway Landscape” (1919-1920)



"Nuclear I, CH" (1945)

Nagy aspired to be a poet. His later paintings break from his wonted mode of aesthetic demonstration to express emotion. Some, with flares of color and receding grids adrift on airy gray grounds, are infectiously free-spirited and fanciful. And he did late wonders with Plexiglas sculptures and reliefs. Having received his terminal diagnosis, he began to abandon rigor in favor of delight. But consider "Nuclear I, CH" (1945) and "Nuclear II" (1946), depicting spheres—fireballs—in which abstract elements jumble and tatter: scientific progress climaxing, horribly, at Hiroshima. The implied admission of evil that stalks even the best of intentions casts a shadow back across a career that began in repressive self-invention.

Moholy-Nagy was born in 1895, to a Jewish family in a Hungarian region of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. (The conductor Georg Solti was his mother's second cousin.) When he was young, his father abandoned the family, and László adopted the surname Nagy from a maternal uncle. (Moholy is from the name of the town in which he lived.) He studied law, and then served in the Austro-Hungarian Army in the First World War, until an injury (a shattered thumb) placed him on reserve duty. While convalescing in Budapest, he became involved in revolutionary political and avant-garde circles.

After the collapse of the short-lived Hungarian Soviet Republic, in 1919, he went first to Vienna and then to Berlin, where he thoroughly absorbed the aesthetics of Constructivism. In 1923, he joined the original Bauhaus, in Weimar, teaching its foundation course and leading its metalwork shop. His interests expanded from painting to photography—cameraless exposures that he called "photograms" and "new vision" pictures, involving unusual points of view—and Dada-flavored photomontage, which usually consisted of tiny cutout figures engaged in zany or enigmatic dramas, beautifully arrayed.

He continually wrote theoretical books and articles advancing a utopian strain of high modernism. In 1928, he collaborated with the brilliant art historian and critic Sigfried Giedion on a book that derived aesthetic and technical principles from recent industrial feats. A particular focus was the Marseilles Transporter Bridge, built in 1905 by the engineer Ferdinand Arnodin, which used a suspended gondola to carry people and traffic across the old port. (It was blown up by retreating Germans in 1944.) The bridge served Giedion and Moholy-Nagy as a sort of tuning fork for an evolving visual music of innovations whose beauty was at one with their use and significance. (Not incidentally, it provided a fabulous subject for odd-angled photographs.) The aim was a sense of tradition that dismissed museum art and rooted itself in products of everyday necessity. The artist's role was to indoctrinate the public: Moholy-Nagy noted that one of his exhibitions was arranged in order to "be handled and understood by the simplest individual."

An introduction to the Guggenheim catalogue by the curators Carol S. Eliel, Karole P. B. Vail, and Matthew S. Witkovsky adduces Moholy-Nagy's influence on the "serial attitude" of nineteen-sixties minimalism: art realized not in unique forms but in repeated modules. Still mildly sensational are three enamel paintings, from 1923, of an identical abstract design in different sizes. A factory made them, he claimed, from specifications that he had conveyed by telephone. Less compelling are his abstract oil paintings from the twenties and thirties, mostly deploying geometric planes that change color where they seem to overlap. They radiate expertise and some appealing tactile nuance, in their contrasts of blunt brushwork and raw canvas (Moholy-Nagy strove to train his students' sense of touch by requiring them to explore surfaces with their eyes closed), but one canvas is very like another: less a fulfillment than an illustration of the artist's pictorial aesthetic, which was exacting in execution but monotonous in feeling.

You would hardly know, from this show, that Moholy-Nagy shared an era with Picasso and Matisse. Perhaps chalk it up to the First World War and the Russian Revolution and a fissure in Western culture between

art that maintained conventional mediums and art that subsumed them in a romance with social change and new techniques. The former held firm in France; the latter flourished in Germany. Americans could thrill to both at once, as interchangeable symbols of the "modern." It was in America, while he was dying, that Moholy-Nagy seemed to realize and begin to remedy the imbalance, exposing the heart that had always pulsed within the technocratic genius. To be a student of his then must have been heaven. ♦

From our **Membership Chair**
Speaking at the Graduation and Recognition Ceremony



Good evening!

Last year was my first year as Membership Chair and I had the great privilege to learn more about you. This year, I found a even greater privilege.....that is, learning from you!

Every year all of us together give a reported total of 19,000 public and research hours. If "time is money", why are we giving our fortune to this place?

Michi Ho

We do it because most of us are at a stage of our lives when the concern is less about searching for meanings but more so about enriching our spiritual journey. To me, the museum is both a temple and a path to help us along that enlightened journey. It's a place filled with beauty that warms our heart and meets the needs for our soul...

Each one of us walk in with an open and pure mind, ready to perform our own Puja and piety.

The curators, along with the education department, feed our desire for knowledge...for special focus tour, we devoted passion to particular one goddess, for students and highlight tour, we need them all, so we devoted tons of time and labor of love to all goddesses. We impart some insights and learn something of ourselves in the process....that's why we do it.

Through the Puja we learned to deal with the unpredictable through yoga moves....meditation, controlled breathing, and flexibility. We also learned that compassion without action can make us weak, and knowledge without wisdom can make us indifferent. By working together, helping one another and leaning from each other, we find balance and harmony...that's why we do it.

Each one of us are uniquely different as we are at different stage of self realization. When we share our research, we create joyful memories with what each of us brings to the table. When we tour, we help people see the extraordinary in the ordinary and often they are affected deeply.

So, you see we're not only devotees, we are gods and goddesses as well....that's why we do it.

In searching for the ultimate goal of Nirvana, a stage of absolute joy, I like to bow to you...my fellow docents,
Thank you for another enlightening year!

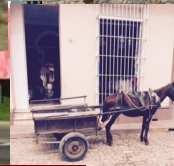
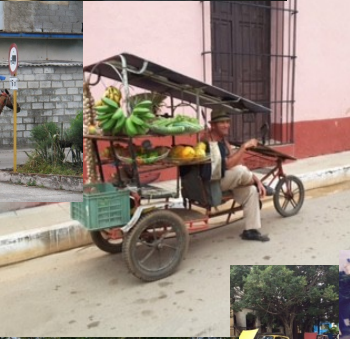
Today, our Puja is to those who are being recognized for their dedicated 5, 10,15, and 20 years of service Let the Puja begin with the five year pin presenter, Christine Holland.

Thank you!

***La Muse will keep us connected during the summer.
Share your travels, museum visits, photos and art-related
announcements right here. LM***

Lori Mohr, Editor
Mohrojai@aol.com





In Cuba, horse-drawn carts and bike taxis supplement public transportation. It costs one peso to ride a stifflingly crowded bus; the average salary is 20 pesos a month. Otherwise Cubans stand along roadsides with change in a pay-to-hitchhike approach. Vintage cars are prized as sources of income, driving nostalgia-starved tourists in Havana. New parts are expensive and hard to get. Small sedans made in China serve as rentals, but repairs are costly, so when they break down, they stay broken.

This seemed true of most things we saw in Cuba, which may explain the exquisite innovative spirit driving a country that has learned to do without.

From Lori's Cuba Journal



All photos by fellow travelers