

Docent Dates

Council meetings start at 10 am, with coffee at 9:15.

September 21

Meeting, Lecture TBD

October 5

Meeting, Lecture TBD

October 19

Meeting, Lecture TBD

November 2

Meeting or bus trip

November 16

Meeting or bus trip

December 7

Meeting, Lecture TBD

December 21

Meeting cancelled in lieu of Holiday Party



Wyndham Lewis,
British 1882-1957,
Red and Black Principle,
1936 Oil on canvas.
Gift of Wright
Ludington. From
*British Art from Whis-
tler to World War Two*,
INTERNAL USE ONLY

Dear Docents,

We may have not had meetings, but we have been busy this summer with three outings. In June, several docents visited Ojai to see Kim Smith's outstanding exhibition; Nicola Gershen planned a great day for us in L.A., first visiting the Geffen, followed by the Hauser, Wirth and Schimmel Gallery. In July, docents met at UCSB for "The Curator's Eye" exhibition, where Professor Bruce Robertson and Curatorial Fellow Lilit Sadoyan helped us understand how to learn more about the history, provenance, construction and restoration of artworks by inspecting the front and back of prints and paintings, as well as their frames. Also in July, Christine Holland and Denise Klassen hosted a mid-summer event at Christine's home, offering delicious food and drink, and, of course, great conversation. Many thanks go to Christine and Denise.

Our SBMA Summer Art Camps brought eager young artists to our galleries for tours. I had the pleasure of viewing the artwork one Friday afternoon at the weekly "Art Show" at Ridley-Tree. I not only saw the creative and beautiful projects, but also heard over and over from parents how much their children loved camp. I came away with a deeper appreciation of the value of these programs for the children in our community.

We will be reunited with our own student community when touring resumes next month and we have the opportunity to explore the wonders of art with our young visitors.



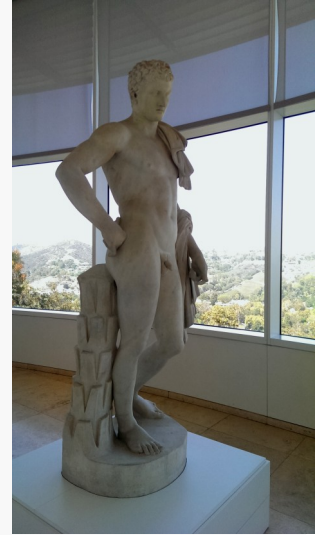
Gail Stichler, President
Docent of the Year



Above: Dionysos
Right: Our Hermes

Last week, on my way home from LAX, I decided to drop into the Getty Center and check in with old friends—our beloved antiquities on loan, posing in their new spaces in the South Pavilion. I broke into a huge smile when I found them. I’m happy to report they are doing well, each one positioned along curved windows that overlook the fabulous Getty landscape.

Visiting made me realize how deeply connected I am to these sculptures, works that have served as anchors for my tours. And they will once again when they return home to a beautifully renovated museum. How fortunate that we can visit them at the Getty, feeling the pride of ownership that comes with being a docent.



We have much to look forward to this coming year: new tours, new teams, lectures and day trips. When you arrive at our first docent council meeting on

September 21, take a moment and observe the incredible energy as docents greet each other. These high spirits reflect the commitment and caring of our entire docent council, and the joy of belonging to such an outstanding organization at the start of our new service year. 🍷

Gail

From our Vice President



Ralph Wilson

Docents have been active with art-related pursuits beyond the Museum. I was not among them, I’m sorry to say, paying the piper with a long-postponed surgery.

One of the greatest things about being part of this group is that we truly love art and learning. Thanks to docents who put things together, we had several opportunities to enjoy both this summer as Gail mentioned, with outings to see Kim Smith’s exhibition in Ojai; a trip to L.A. galleries organized by Nicola; and Gail’s arranging our visit to UCSB. I think we all enjoyed the party hosted by Christine Holland and Denise Klassen in July at Christine’s beautiful home. Including family and friends made it a special occasion for our wider Docent family.

I would say that as a group suspended between service years, we ended up doing a lot together these last three months. I especially want to thank Kim, Barbara, Gail, Nicola, Denise, and Christine for these wonderful moments, for making this a time of sharing. You have truly kept the spirit of our Council alive this summer, and we are all grateful. Let’s keep it going throughout the year.

We’ll start with a visit on September 12th to the exhibition, “Women Sculptors” at Westmont’s Ridley-Tree, with a tour by Judy Larson, Director of the museum. I hope you will attend. This show is sure to offer an interesting comparison with the earlier Hauser Wirth & Schimmel exhibition. Even if you didn’t see that show, this tour should bring a lot to talk about. See the announcement in this issue for details.

Please email if you will join us on the Westmont tour. mr.beagle@verizon.net

We can look forward to more interesting events this year. I am always interested in your ideas, so please don’t hesitate to offer suggestions. Let’s make this a meaningful and fun year for all. 🍷

Ralph

From our **Adult Teams Chair**



Christine Holland

We are looking forward to a new touring year in a few weeks! Over the summer, tour teams were set up at a marathon meeting to analyze your preferences and assign teams. We feel we've accommodated almost all first or second choices. You all received your assignments earlier.

Please note: If you cannot make a tour, alert your team leader. It reflects on the Council and the Museum to have a docent no-show. Let's check calendars!

Also remember Focus tours have been moved to 2:00 each day, beginning October 1 and continuing for six months. Because this is on a trial basis, we want feedback. Our goal is to find out if this change is an improvement. If it causes any scheduling problems for any of you, please advise me.

The summer Adult Tours proceeded smoothly for our New Actives, with moderate to good visitor attendance overall. Docents in the Community Speakers Program kept busy, reaching out all summer to organizations and groups with a wide array of presentations relating to our permanent collection, further spreading the word about the Museum and inviting people to come see the art for themselves.

It will be great seeing everyone at the first docent meeting in three weeks. Meanwhile, I hope you're all enjoying a good summer. 🍷

Christine

From our **Research Chair**



Barbara Boyd

Welcome back docents!! Hopefully you enjoyed, and are still enjoying, your summer. It will be really wonderful to see you all again.

After a much needed summer break on a tiny island in British Columbia, watching Orcas and seals and otters frolic, I am back to work on research for the coming *British Modernism* Exhibition.

You will find posted on a website a substantive article about Henry Moore, excerpted from the book, *Wartime Drawings 1940 -1944*. The article really gives you an idea of how much the bombings of London impacted these artists, and how it influenced Moore's work during those years, which will be in the exhibition.

In addition, research papers from our files on Walter Richard Sickert and Christopher Richard Wynne Nevinson have been edited and posted on our website. Information gleaned from catalogues, title cards from our earlier *Britain by the Pacific* Exhibition, and other sources have been compiled to create Comments for many other works we will be posting soon.

Much thanks goes to Loree Gold for her expertise and help in pulling this information together for you, showing us her former Research Chair chops. 🍷

See you soon!

Barbara

From our **Webmaster**



Loree Gold

Dear Docents,

Welcome back to work and play! Our website continues to grow and run smoothly. We have an updated Home Page with current dates and easy links to the new art work hung at the Park entrance. *Colefax Dejour* is now joined with *Entre Vous*.

We are in the process of researching, collecting and entering information for the *British Modernism* Exhibition. We had tidbits of knowledge in the old files, including several research papers. (All of the old files are by artist name, and are on top of the file cabinet in the docent office.) Thanks go to Barbara Boyd, who is busy reading, editing and typing so we can get this information posted on the website for you.

We could use help during the crunch to get everything up before the show. If anyone is interested in giving us an assist with the project, we could use help with typing. Let Barbara know if you have a lot or a little time to pitch in. We'll take whatever time you can give.

We are also working to post essays from the 75th Anniversary Catalog, starting with objects currently on display, and with new information. See you all in a few weeks! 🍷

Loree

From our **Nominations Chair**



Joan Dewhirst

Remember that first Back-to-School assignment: What I did on my summer vacation? I do.

While enjoying a relaxed and art-filled stay in the environs of San Diego, we were delighted to discover this piece by Niki de Saint Phalle in the sculpture garden of the La Jolla Contemporary Art Museum: "Big Ganesh" 1998. As I laid eyes on it, I felt the fondness and familiarity of reconnecting with an old friend, a fitting finale to our *Puja and Piety* exhibition.

The sculpture is over 10 feet tall & made of steel, polystyrene foam, polyurethane, automotive paint, electronic components, light bulbs, and iron base. "In Big Ganesh", Saint Phalle breathes new life into the ancient image of the Hindu god of wisdom and good fortune—a very popular creature known as the remover of all obstacles. Here he is seen jumping to avoid a brazen mouse. I'm terrified of mice but this is the cutest one I've ever seen!

Some obstacles are easier to remove than others. I'll take the mouse as a good omen for our having minimal hurdles to clear and an abundance of good fortune as we begin the new service year. 🍷

Joan



French Artist Niki de Saint Phalle Paid Homage to Lord Ganesh, the Elephant-headed God of Wisdom & Learning

From our **Treasurer**



Dear Docents,

In a few weeks will be back in full swing, doing what we love to do. What is less fun is dealing with the business side, like Council dues.

Thanks to all of you who have sent yours in for the new service year. For those of you who have not, I need to have them asap so you will be included in the 2016-2017 Docent Directory. Go ahead and send your check directly to my home.

Thanks, and see you soon! 🍷

Denise

Denise Klassen

From our **Community Speakers Program**



Team Leaders Kathryn Padgett and Shirley Waxman

September is full of exciting news from the CSP! We welcome **Joan Dewhirst** as the newest member of the team. She is busy working on a presentation for "Color: More Than Meets the Eye". It sounds interesting, insightful and with Joan you know it will be fun!

Mary Winder is busy working on a talk for the *British Art from Whistler to World War Two* exhibition that opens September 18th. It will be a popular show and her excellent informative talk will be a great primer to whet potential visitors' appetites!

Mary Eckhart has prepared a talk on "Artists of the Golden West: Higher than High, Wider than Wide, Deeper than Deep", which will be fascinating. It has everything from early Chumash art, to Georgia O'Keeffe and Maynard Dixon, to modern

day graffiti and even tattoo art!

Thank you for your venue referrals for CSP talks....we really appreciate it! 🍷

Kathryn and Shirley

We have a new email address for CSP: communityspeakerssbma@gmail.com

Public Talks for September:

SB Central Library: September 17, 3 pm.

*Kathryn Padgett: "75th Anniversary Celebration: Highlights of the Permanent Collection".

Montecito Library: September 21, 6 pm.

*Mary Eckhart, "Here's Looking at You Kid: Our Timeless Passion for Portraits".

Santa Ynez Valley Art Salon: September 22, 5 pm.

*Kathryn Padgett, "European Artistic Revolution: 70 Amazing Years – 1867-1937"

Back to the Future: Welcome to the Twentieth Century

By Ricki Morse



Modernism rose as a reaction to the formalist salons, as a response to photography—which replaced the painter as the sole representer of an image, and as a response to the rise of technology with its simplified, utilitarian designs (think Georg Jensen silver and Bauhaus furniture). Sigmund Freud’s revelations of valid human meaning in dreams and feelings (*Interpretation of Dreams*, 1899) gave rise to Surrealism and Expressionism. The artist’s inner experience of a scene or a figure became widely accepted subject matter.

Painters in the years before World War I were increasingly more individualistic, more experimental, less stewards of tradition than innovators. As students of European painting, from the Renaissance through the Victorians, these young artists were looking for something new, not yet perfected, a world in which there was still room for discovery. This is the world British painters were exploring that we see in our exhibition of early 20th c British art.

Paul Cezanne (1839-1906), French, “Mont Sainte Victoire” (the Moscow Cezanne), 1904-5, oil on canvas.

Cezanne reached beyond Monet’s “painting reflected light” into a more freely gestural, faceted breaking up of the landscape, hinting at the geometric within representation. He is truly the generative father of expressionism. Of his many paintings of Mont Sainte Victoire, this is the most expressive, the most exuberant, the color seeming to explode from the land into the sky and hanging there in fragments of paint, as if the scene had shattered into planes of color. This reclusive man discovered, through brush strokes, a new way of seeing the design within the landscape, the inherent nature of light.



Pablo Picasso (1881-1943), Spanish, “The Italian Woman,” 1917, oil on canvas.

Picasso, celebrating the flat canvas, embracing color and design, explored his own reinvented perspective in Cubism, superimposing varied points of view, one upon another, and thus creating a new kind of perspective on the flat surface. Here, using color for its affective properties rather than its representational reality, he spontaneously and playfully shows her full face and profile, becoming a part of the design and at the same time evocative of her foreign world, turning toward us and away from us. Picasso’s insistence on the two dimensional canvas forces us to look at other possibilities for perspective and dimension, and in discovering those avenues, we experience the complex and exciting world of Cubism.

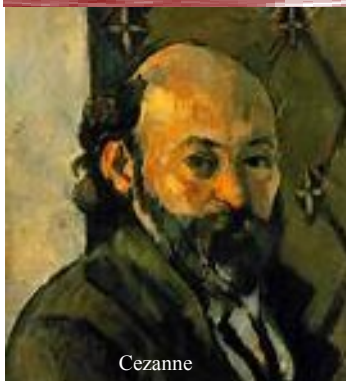


Kasimir Malevich (1879-1912), Russian, "Supremus #38," 1915-16, oil on canvas.

Kasimir Malevich's Suprematism moved toward depicting the essence of human existence in exquisitely balanced compositions. At the same time, he eschewed accepted truths by celebrating endless varieties of balance, infusing a sense of the diversity and universality in human experience. He is proposing a universal comprehension of balance and achieved order that we will all feel in the complexity of his paintings. My first experience of Malevich came at the opening of the Hammer Museum in Westwood in 1990. Armand Hammer, through business dealings in Russia, gained access to Malevich's work and began the long process of bringing his work to America. The show was an international event, one I reveled in. We see in him one of the early roots of Abstract Expressionism which reigned the art world of New York after World War II.

Constantin Brancusi (1869-1957), Romanian, "The Kiss," 1907-8, plaster.

Constantin Brancusi's *The Kiss*, which became an icon of early Modernist sculpture, was first produced in plaster, which is pictured here. Later he produced many carvings of the image in stone, emphasizing the importance of direct carving to his sculpture aesthetic. Thus the hand of the sculptor on the stone became a hallmark of Modernist work, as opposed to the wax model cast into bronze in a foundry. The simplified, almost geometric form aspired to totem-like gravity, suggesting a meaning deeper than the present moment, and heralding Modernism's fascination with primitive art forms. Picasso's admiration for African sculpture joined Brancusi's evocative primitivism in promoting the growth of the Arts and Crafts movement which flourished as Modernism found its voice. 🏹

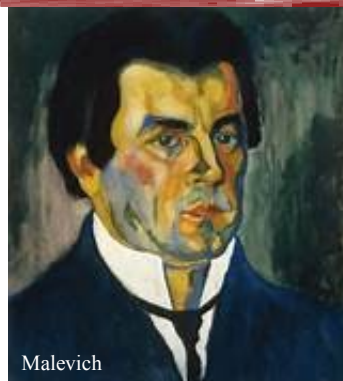


Cezanne

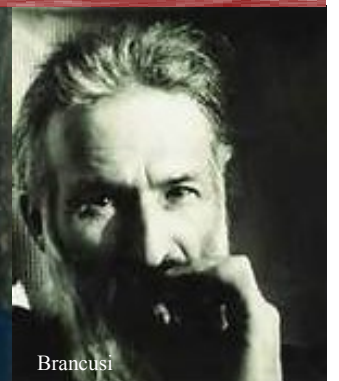


Picasso

Self Portraits, Bing images



Malevich



Brancusi

Women Sculptors at the Westmont Ridley-Tree Museum of Art

Monday, September 12th
2:30 pm



The Docent Council is pleased to visit an interesting and challenging exhibition of women sculptors at the Westmont Ridley-Tree Museum of Art.

We are fortunate to be guided through this exhibition of sculptures and prints by noted American and international artists by Dr. Judy Larson, Anthony Askew, Professor of Art History and Museum Director.

This exhibition was inspired by the recent "Revolution in the Making: Abstract Sculpture by Women, 1947-2016" at the new Hauser Wirth & Schimmel gallery in Los Angeles, for which Nicola Ghersen so ably organized our bus trip in June.



Lynn Aldrich (American, b. 1944)
Primary Virtues: Faith, Hope, & Love,
1989, Mixed Media
Gift of the artist and Edward Cella
Art + Architecture

Jessica Stockholder (Canadian/
American, b. 1959)
Made of Three Elements, 1990
Mixed Media
Gift of Arnold and Marie Forde

NOTE:

We will gather in the gallery no later than 2:30 for Judy's tour. Allow time to find a parking place and walk to the gallery on the top level of the Adams Center for the Visual Arts. There is an elevator at #2 on the map. Parking is available in lots P8 and P9.

For a map, go to westmontmuseum.org

Our Own Backyard

John Hillis Sanders



Docents attend a reception for the Solo Gallery Show for John Hillis Sanders at Michael Stearns Studio 347 in San Pedro, CA, May 21, 2016, Submitted by Pma Tregenza

Art for snobs: what's keeping great paintings from the public?

by Jonathan Jones, *The Guardian*
Reprinted with limited use permission



Allegory of Music by Caravaggio, 1595. Photograph: Geoffrey Clements/Corbis

The other night I stood in a young, boozy crowd that roared and laughed with delight at a work of art that's more than 400 years old. Yet now I see a depressing feature in the New York Times claims that "old master" art has lost all relevance, is no longer of much interest to collectors, and may even cease to be sold by major auction houses.

The work of art that rocked Shakespeare's Globe theatre on Friday was not a painting – it was *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Yet it was created in precisely the same era as the paintings

the market is apparently falling out of love with. Why is the visual art of the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries losing favour when drama from that age can still pack 'em in?

The New York Times asks if old master art can regain its "relevance." Watching Shakespeare at the Globe offers a couple of answers. Make it new: productions of the Bard are popular because theatre is so good at revealing his contemporary pertinence. In fact, the Globe's *Dream* goes as far as I'd ever want a theatre to do in that direction, including, ahem, changing some of Shakespeare's words. This brings me to the second suggestion: make it democratic.

The reported crisis in the old master market is the inevitable result of the snobbery and elitism that has suffocated paintings for far too long. The very term "old master" is a horrible, destructive piece of pretension – what does it even mean? The custodians of oil paintings often seem to revel in the obscurity of their taste, putting on exhibitions that flaunt erudite connoisseurship and have little to say to the general public.

Yet the reality is very different: great paintings from the past are just as accessible and universal as Shakespeare. All you need to do is signal that. There's no need to paint modern details into Renaissance art or give artworks snazzy new titles. You just need to point to the universal significance of this art. Put on an exhibition at the National Gallery called *Sex and Death in Art*. Why not?

Shakespeare is actually less accessible than some painters from his age – after all he has all those strange old words. Caravaggio and Rembrandt don't present any such barrier. Looking at a Rembrandt portrait is a totally unmediated encounter with another soul. Time vanishes. You enter a world of existential shadow, caught by his gaze. When art museums put on exhibitions of truly great art they are huge



El Greco's Lady in a Fur Wrap.
Photograph: Alamy Stock Photo

hits. Rembrandt or Bosch can draw people from all over the world.

This autumn's exhibition *Beyond Caravaggio* at the National Gallery in London is exactly the kind of show museums need to put on. It starts with Caravaggio, a late Renaissance artist of huge modern appeal, and shows how his art influenced his time – in other words it uses him as a key to unlock art by painters many visitors won't have heard of. Too much of the time, curators repress the universal appeal of great art by focusing on side issues and snobby footnotes.

If the National Gallery explored the most attractive artists in its collection with more big shows on Bruegel, Bosch, Caravaggio and their like, it could sell out as fast as the Globe. And yet, I am not even sure if a decline in the popularity of the old masters worries me. Is it bad for El Greco if his prices go down or fewer people have heard of him? Actually, no. The artists who matter from the past will always matter. Fashion does not stale them.

This applies to all culture. We celebrate Shakespeare's popu-

larity but he would still be a great writer if no one read him. Fewer people read Virgil, or Pope – yet they are still great authors: a classic is a classic. The most revered artist 200 years ago was the Renaissance painter Raphael. Today Raphael is far from popular – but it doesn't do him any harm.

His paintings are monuments of western culture that will always be preserved in museums. If you want to discover him you can. Perhaps it is a better fate to be obscured, ready to be rediscovered by curious art lovers.

And there's another reason to shrug off the art market's philistinism. If great paintings are going cheap that's good for museums. They could actually buy a few. Meanwhile owners of great

works from earlier centuries will be less likely to cash them in on the art market, which will help to keep them in places like Britain that still have a lot of old art stashed away in stately homes.

The peculiarity of art is its status as a commodity. Shakespeare's plays are everyone's possession; oil paintings are objects with an owner. Ideally all the art that matters would be in museums so that we all had access to it. In other words, the interests of auction houses are precisely opposite to the interests of the public.

I don't want great art to be expensive. I want it to be cheap – so it can be owned by the people. The best thing that can happen to the art of the Renaissance and Baroque ages is for it to become financially worthless. Then we can start to see it for the universal human creation it really is. 🍷

**The great art cover-up:
Renaissance nudity still
has power to shock.**

Jonathan Jones

THE LAST PAGE



Bhutan, Shirley Waxman

Lori Mohr, Editor
Mohrojai@aol.com

