

Docent Dates

Council Meetings begin at 10 am, coffee at 9:15.

September 19

Eik Kahng, *Let it Snow! Paintings of Winter*; the American painting rotation in Ridley-Tree.

October 3

Susan Tai and Hollis Goodall, Curator, Japanese Art, LACMA. *Reflections of Gold: Japanese Art from the Collection*

October 17

Andrew Winer, Chair, MFA Writing Program, UC Riverside. *The Poetry and Painting of Marsden Hartley*

November 7

Charlie Wylie, *A Time of Gifts*, and photo rotation in the gallery

December 5

Idurre Alonso, Associate Curator of Latin Collections, Getty Research Institute, *Mexican Modernist Photography*

Future speakers will be announced as information becomes available.



Still Life with Pumpkin (Detail), André Derain, 1939. Oil on canvas. SBMA Bequest of Wright S. Ludington. INTERNAL USE ONLY

Dear fellow docents,

Welcome back everyone, as we begin the 2018-2019 service year September 19. Wow, that came fast! As you all know, it will be without a Provisional Class, but with seven New Active docents on board, we're going to be well-staffed for all of our tours. And, as I mentioned in my message a few days ago about there being no class, one of our challenges this year is to think of creative ways to recruit docents for the 2019-2020 class. It's not too early to get started!

A bit of recap of the summer: While we were all busy, many of you still found time to attend one or both docent trips planned by Vice President Mary Winder at the Carnegie Museum in Oxnard in July and at Sullivan Goss Gallery in August, both described in her report below. I know everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves. Summer trips are a great way to stay connected from June through September.

Speaking of September, we have many interesting speakers this fall. The first one on September 19 will be our own Eik Kahng who will be talking about the new exhibition, *Let It Snow! Paintings of Winter* and American painting rotation in the Ridley-Tree Gallery. Even though we start our docent lecture series with winter, as I reflected on the year so far, I thought this quote by Thoreau was quite fitting for our docent community:

Live each season as it passes; breathe the air, drink the drink, taste the fruit and resign yourself to the influences of each.



Mary Ellen Hoffman,
President

With those words in mind, let us come together, take life as it comes, but not for granted, and live our docent motto—flexibility—in friendship, support and camaraderie.

Mary Ellen

From our Vice President



Greetings fellow docents,

As summer days are coming to an end and the new docent year begins, I want to thank all of the docents that joined me on our summer outings, your energy and enthusiasm were the ingredients that made these exceptionally wonderful trips. We are so fortunate to have the large quantity of high caliber art available in our somewhat regionally isolated part of California. The Carnegie Museum in Oxnard displayed artwork that magnified the uniqueness of our State in its celebration of the automotive culture and the paintings of California's distinctive natural landscapes. Our July visit

Mary Joyce Winder to Oxnard gave us the opportunity to interact with their resident artist in a very personal way, just a lovely day all in all.

The exhibition we toured at Sullivan Goss Gallery in August was hosted by the curator. L.A. IN S.B. II: A POSTWAR & CONTEMPORARY EXHIBITION focused on Postwar and Contemporary works of California Artists with a special eye towards exposing affinities between L.A. artists of the postwar period and their contemporary peers. Several docents were commenting on the works in this exhibition and comparing them with many of artworks by the same artists in the permanent collection of SBMA. We also had the bonus of touring the exhibition on Bears. Pure enjoyment for all of us. Plans for our new adventures are in the works.

Mary Joyce

Take Note!

Find Barbara Carrington at bcarrington7@icloud and Sneh at sney727@gmail.com

From Christine Holland:

This is a fascinating short film showing the art and craft of restoring a fine art painting.

Check out this article: <http://www.openculture.com/2018/08/how-an-art-conservator-completely-restores-a-damaged-painting.html>

From our Student Teams Chair



Karen Brill

Student tours continued throughout the summer. This was the first time many of the younger children had been to an art museum, and it was a delight to be the one to introduce them to the experience. When exploring Summer Nocturne, one little fellow observed that it looked like a black hole. Wish I'd thought of that! Another group, after enjoying Bouguereau's Portrait of Mademoiselle, looked over at Woman in Grey on Board Ship, etc., and wondered if that was the same girl after she grew up! As always, it is a delight to see the world and the art through the eyes of a child. Thanks to everyone who volunteered to come in and tour students this summer!

We are excited to welcome the new active docents to student touring and looking forward to working together. Our four large student touring teams will allow for more flexibility, and it promises to be a wonderful year. See you in the galleries!

Karen

From our Adult Teams Chair



Irene Stone

Welcome to the 2018-2019 touring year! The museum has been full of energy and enthusiasm this summer as the New Actives have lead the touring schedule with the veteran Summer Nocturne team and Focus teams making a full summer of offerings to the public. We are fortunate to be able to welcome this committed docent group.

You have already received the list of team assignments from Rachael. Please check carefully to be sure that you have no conflicts with your assignment. I am happy to say that the Photography team is now complete with Molora's volunteering. But, we now need to call for more volunteers for the summer Docent's Choice (previously *Highlights*) team since we will not have a provisional class this year. It is also likely that there will be a special exhibition announced for June or later, which will offer more touring opportunities.

I hope you are all looking forward to this year of new Docent Choice tours with several interesting Special Exhibitions interspersed. Thank you for your generous support of each new touring change. It is gratifying to realize that our group will remain flexible and supportive of each other, always with good humor.

Irene

From our Membership Chair



Helene Strobel

Welcome back to an exciting year. Thanks to all who submitted your touring and research hours this summer. Here are the guidelines for what constitutes Docent Volunteer Hours

PUBLIC HOURS

Generally, any time you are in front of the public on behalf of SBMA speaking about art. NOTE: Travel time is not included). What is included:

Adult tours, (highlight, focus, special exhibits, ten talks, art a la carte, etc.);
student tours;
classroom Power Point talks;
outreach talks;
volunteering in the Children's gallery.

RESEARCH HOURS

Generally, time spent researching and preparing for public hours, as well as: Attendance at SBMA or other museum or institution as part of continuing art

education;

Research papers;

Docent council meetings;

Docent board meetings;

All other docent board or membership activities;

Docent field trips.

Post your hours when you sign in at docent meetings or email me at arttalks2u@gmail.com.

From our Secretary



David Reichert

I have been very busy this summer writing a history of Opera Santa Barbara – "Opera Santa Barbara: The First Quarter Century" – that was requested for the company's 25th Anniversary celebration in January.

I haven't been around the museum lately and miss my docent family. I am very much looking forward to student touring, Docent's Choice touring, and serving as your Secretary.

David

From our Community Speakers Program



Team Leaders Kathryn Padgett and Shirley Waxman

The dynamic Community Speakers (CSP) Team—Joan Dewhirst, Mary Eckhart, Kathryn Padgett, Gretchen Simpson, and Shirley Waxman—has had a very productive summer! During the past three months, the individual team members have created seven new presentations that will be added to our new Fall Brochure. This means that CSP now has 25 diverse and interesting art lectures to offer to our community.

The CSP team members gave a total of 15 presentations with 383 people in attendance. We had the pleasure of giving two presentations at each of the following: Ojai Library, Val Verde, Villa Santa Barbara, and Heritage House. We gave one presentation at each of the following: Casa Dorinda, Maravilla, The Californian, and Vista Del Monte. Alexander Gardens enjoyed a total of three presentations this summer.



Fall Art Matters Lecture Series Moves to Thursday Afternoons to Better Accommodate Students and Life-Long Learners with Free Admission for Students

PRESS RELEASE

The Santa Barbara Museum of Art's (SBMA) long-standing, adult education lecture series Art Matters is taking a new direction by moving from a morning timeslot to Thursdays at 4:30 pm—better serving the educational needs and schedules of students and working adults. The upcoming fall series runs November 1 through December 6. Ticketing for the series has been simplified to individual lecture ticket sales (\$10 for SBMA Members/\$15 Non-Members) with free admission to all students with valid ID.

Art Matters (formerly Art Talks) was established more than a dozen years ago (initially offered in collaboration with Santa Barbara City College as "A History of Art and Ideas") as a way to offer quality educational opportunities for adults in the history of art. SBMA Deputy Director and Chief Curator Eik Kahng has overseen the program since 2016. Dr. Kahng, who is an art historian as well as curator, with degrees in the history of art from Princeton (AB) and the University of California, Berkeley (MA/PhD), was well equipped through her broad network of colleagues, both in academia and the museum field, to lure well-qualified speakers to the series. Guest lecturers of the last two years have included award-winning academics such as Peter Parshall (Professor emeritus at Reed College and former Curator of Old Master Prints at the National Gallery of Art), prestigious curatorial scholars from area museums, such as perennial favorite, Ken Lapatin, Curator of Greek and Roman Art at the J. Paul Getty Museum, veterans of the museum field like Charlie Stuckey, and rising young scholars, such as Joyce Tsai (Moholy-Nagy scholar and now curator at the University of Iowa) and John

Blakinger (György Kepes scholar and now Terra Foundation Fellow at the University of Oxford).

This November, the series begins in Ancient Rome with distinguished UC Berkeley professor, Christopher Hallett, followed by a visit to Ancient China and Egypt with UCSB Professor of History, Anthony Barbieri-Low. Minneapolis Institute of Art curator, Jan- Lodewijk Grootaers continues the discussion of Egyptian art and also presents the concluding lecture on African Art, his original area of expertise. Since SBMA is one of the few regional museums to have a world-class collection of antiquities as well as strong holdings in African art, it seems only natural that it should offer the opportunity to enjoy a lecture series in areas of art-history that are all too often neglected in university-level and museum programming.

Kahng is assisted in her oversight of Art Matters by Departmental Curatorial Assistant Michelle West. West has an MA in art history from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and was previously the Director of the Acadia Summer Art Program, founded by Marion "Kippy" Stroud, which hosted hundreds of renowned artists, curators, directors, and scholars annually. Working together with their colleagues at UCSB, Ventura College, SBCC, and Westmont College, Kahng and West hope to attract area students to Art Matters, where they can take advantage of the rare opportunity to have direct, personal access to renowned senior scholars, curators, and conservators, thereby enriching the curricula for the study of the humanities in general for regional universities and community colleges.

Carole Paul, Director of the Museum Studies at UCSB commented: "The Art Matters lecture series is a great supplement to our program in Art History at UCSB. In her brief time managing the series, Eik Kahng has attracted top-notch academics and curators to speak at the SBMA, offering our students, both undergrad and graduate, an excellent opportunity to learn from and meet prominent professionals in the field. We are especially appreciative that the lectures are free to students."

Larry Feinberg, SBMA Robert and Mercedes Eichholz Director and CEO, notes, "The shift of interest away from the humanities in higher education is an unfortunate reality. SBMA is proud to continue its strong tradition of continuing adult education. We hope that Art Matters will provide area audiences with a good resource for the study of the history of art, from antiquity to the present."

View past lectures in the Museum's video library at <https://www.sbma.net/events/videolibrary/artmatters>.

To see the full program for fall Art Matters lectures upcoming, visit www.sbma.net/learn/adultprograms/artmatters. Purchase tickets at the Museum Visitor Services desk in person, by phone 805.884.6423, or online at sbma.net/tickets

Contact: Katrina Carl Public Relations Manager 805.884.6430 kcarl@sbma.net

Our New Actives on Summer Touring



“While I was pretty nervous going into the 'public' arena for the first time, I was totally energized by the enthusiastic visitors. My 'fun factor' increased exponentially with the frequency of Art Camp and general public touring. “

Sara Bangser



“I was surprised at how at ease I felt giving my first few tours. The visitors were so pleasant and appreciative of any information I gave them, as well as help with looking. And no one knew when I left something out!”

Leslie Thompson



I rejoiced in the Art Camp experience, celebrating the renewed joy of interacting with young people unfettered by expectations and rigors ~ merely encouraging young minds and hearts to see their world of art from all perspectives!

Deby Tygell

René Magritte: Master of Reality and Mystery

by Ricki Morse



Coming to understand Magritte opens up the whole spectrum of figurative modern and contemporary art, from Pop Art to Photorealism, and expands our appreciation of the many paths artists take to engage us in their imaginations. SF MoMA has mounted an extraordinary exhibition, 70 of the later paintings by the Belgian surrealist, open until October 28th. In preparation for my visit, I dug into research, including catalogues of Magritte's previous shows, and was richly rewarded.

The Man

René Magritte was born in 1898 in Lessines, Belgium, to a father who was a tailor and mother who was a milliner. His mother drowned herself in the River Sambre when he was 13. Her body was found along the shore with her nightgown washed up over her head. Many writers relate Magritte's ubiquitous bowler hats to his mother, as well as his portraits of faces covered by cloth and his many images of fish/human creatures.



The Fifth Season, 1943. This is SF MoMA's clever play on words, the fifth season being non-existent and also being an exhibition of his work — pure Magrittian trickery.



1930's photo *Barbarian*. Magritte was a skilled photographer.

Having attended drawing classes since grade school, Magritte enrolled in Académie Royale des Beaux Arts in Brussels when he was 18 and began associating with the artists and theorists exploring Symbolism, Futurism and Cubism. In 1922 Magritte married Georgette Berger and moved to Paris for three years from 1927 to 1930. It was there he became acquainted with André Breton, the Parisian father of surrealism. Upon his return to Brussels, where Magritte lived for the rest of his life, he affiliated with the Brussels surrealist group, though he developed a philosophical approach to his painting which was highly individualistic.

The Magritte who emerges from the volumes written about him is a man of optimistic disposition, who maintained lifelong friendships across differences of opinion, was capable of whimsy, humor and lighthearted-



Magritte in front of his painting, *The Pilgrim*, 1967

ness. The titles of many of his works, which Magritte cheerfully adopted, were chosen in meetings of the Brussels surrealist group in a game. Underlying his personality is an unremitting curiosity and playfulness, committed to letting events unfold on their own, just as the disparate objects in his paintings find their ultimate meaning in the mind of the viewer.



Collective invention, 1934.

The Realist

“Magritte and the concept of realism: for the first time in 20th century art, a painter tried not to evade reality, but rather to make reality proclaim its mystery.” This statement by Jacques Meuris captures the heart of Magritte’s relationship to painting real objects and helps us understand why he is not a symbolist, which was the prevailing art theory in Europe in the early 20th century. Because he wrote extensively in manifestos, letters and philosophical treatises, we know what he believed and why he painted as he did. The objects he painted, he tells us, are not symbols of anything, and are not the objects themselves (think, “This is not a pipe”). The objects, painted realistically, evoke our own thoughts, memories and intuitions, thus opening the possibility of mystery in us, the viewers.



The Castle in the Pyrénées, 1961.

The objects also celebrate the physical world and its capacity to engage us, whether it is a sky of clouds, an expanse of water, a boulder, a bowling ball, a pipe. This experience is enhanced by juxtaposing objects in ambiguous ways, placing a canvas painting of a sea between us and the sea, a triple enigma. Which is the real sea, depicted in the distance, on the canvas, or neither? Always aware of the human delight in accurate depiction, Magritte leads us to appreciate the object in and of itself and to delight in its accurate representation—something Modernism was turning its back on, preferring abstraction and reduction of reality. We are initially comforted by his paintings, taking pleasure in the accurate depiction of a castle or a hand. It is only as we continue to view the works that the sense of another reality arises. We are reminded that these are only depictions, not the real thing—the sea on the canvas is no more real than the sea depicted in the distance. What makes the object compelling is the human experiences, the memories and associations it elicits.



The Human Condition, 1935.

The Surrealist

It is important to recognize that René Magritte did not agree with many of the doctrines of Surrealism, which arose from the psychoanalytic work of Austrian, German and Swiss physicians. In Sigmund Freud's analysis of dreams he posited the existence of an unconscious mind which experienced primordial human drives like sex and survival. Dreams displayed these basic desires through images, disguising the drive itself in the service of repression, protecting the conscious mind from knowledge of the raw desire. Surrealist painters, like Salvador Dali, populated their canvases with dream images—a graphic view of the unconscious mind.



The Tomb of the Wrestler, 1950.

Magritte was not concerned about the unconscious, nor was he interested in any theory which purported to definitively answer questions about human existence. Rather, he intended to evoke the unexpected, the unplanned, the ephemeral, which he called mystery. Thus his manipulation of objects on a canvas was designed to dislodge linear thought, to evoke the unexpected, not in service to the painter's ideas, but in the mind of the viewer. He had his own version of surrealism.

In order to evoke mystery in his viewer, facilitate discovery of the unknown in life, Magritte used several simple devices. While retaining the reality of the image, he changed scale, enclosing a massive fresh rose blossom in a tiny room or a huge egg in a bird cage. A



The Return, 1940.



The Son of Man, 1964

nude woman's body is enclosed in a clear bottle. He also ignored density and weight, floating a massive boulder in a cloud-filled sky. A single huge leaf is a tree, and then is multiplied into a forest. He also replaced parts of a known image with an improbable, even impossible part. A formal man in a bowler hat has a large green apple for a face. Background and object are combined and become indistinguishable as the image of a ship at sea is painted as the surface of water while birds become sky and leaves become birds. It is the transparency of these devices that renders them so successful. They seem unaffected, humorous, playful, a joke between friends. We feel included in his sometimes even bizarre images, not being taught by a master but going with him onto the playground. This lack of an authoritarian stance is remarkable in a great artist and renders him approachable, encouraging our own individual responses to his paintings, which is his objective.

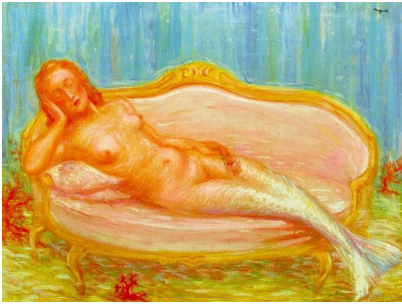
The War Years

During the First World War at 17 Magritte served in the Belgian army and at war's end entered art school. As World War II threatened he was a well-known artist who had established a rapport, philosophically and in the galleries, with his viewers. He began to approach his subject in a new way, wanting to bring light into the galleries and into lives. Paris was occupied. Magritte began to paint "sunlit surrealism," known as his



Favorable Omen, 1944.

"Renoir" period (1943-1946) with many pictures reminiscent of Renoir's style and subject matter, abandoning his hard-lit surfaces for softly lighted ladies on chaise lounges. His realistic objects now included bouquets of flowers juxtaposed with birds. His brush work took on impressionistic flourishes, rendering surfaces in a myriad of blended colors, edges softly defined. This work continued until the end of the war when Europe was grappling with remaking life in a devastated world. His painting took a jarring turn toward roughly drawn,



Forbidden Universe, 1945

coarsely painted, cartoon-like figures, brutish and rough, emitting a dark, cynical humor, possibly to Magritte the only reasonable response to a world blasted and hungry. He called this his “vache” period, French for *cow* but with the additional meaning of mean or dirty (1946-1948). And his cartoonish figures presage American Pop art of the 1960s. Though Magritte denied any connection between his work and Pop Art, the influence seems undeniable.



The Eclipse, 1948.

More Magritte Than Surrealist

Two later works drew my attention. I became aware of the techniques employed to engage our interest. The 1953 canvas, “Golconde,” is an oil on canvas, 31 by 40 inches. I am guessing that the title was chosen by the Brussels Surrealism Group in their habitual game of offering names for Magritte’s paintings, as I see no similarities between the ancient fort in Pondicherry, India, and the ones in the painting. However, medieval Golconde was a center of vast wealth from local diamond mines, and the well-dressed men dotting the sky before Brussel’s urban scene may draw a comparison.



Golconde, 1963.

This painting has all the drum rolls and trumpets of a great event. It is hard to look away from, alternately baffling and enticing. The properly dressed gentlemen descend like individual raindrops or rise out of the ground. Yet we see no individual movement on their parts and no overt recognition that they are airborne. Their foot placements are those of men standing on a street. The very solidity of the figures (dressed much as Magritte himself dressed each day) contrasts dramatically with the fact that they are floating in air. The normal urban street seems an unusual place for this strange display. You stand alone as the sole witness to this astonishing and unnerving event.

In the 1965 painting “The Blank Cheque,” a 31 by 24 inch oil on canvas, Magritte’s juxtapositions are less alarming in one way and more disturbing in another. The forest scene is tranquil. The rider and her horse appear—unobserved, calm—moving through well controlled and trained patterns, but as we look more closely the image is impossible. The lady and her horse are dissected by tree trunks and, even more confusingly, strips of foliage far in the background. We search for a way to reconstruct the image and are foiled at every turn. Again, Magritte has drawn us into his painting as we admire the realistic depiction of the scene. As we look more closely we are affronted. This is not real. This couldn’t happen. This doesn’t make sense.

So our quandary is not the surreal nature of the images—they are very real. It is not resolved by defining it as a dream, a product of the unconscious mind. It is our sense of logic that is challenged. In the waking world such illogical things cannot happen, unless of course our logical definition of the world is incomplete. Perhaps some things cannot be explained. Perhaps not all can be known. We join Magritte in contemplating the inexplicable.

I’m going to the SF MoMA show in early October and can’t wait to experience him face to face.



The Blank Cheque, 1965.

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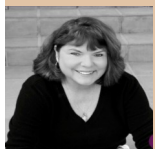


Tracey's Harry Potter Birthday



NO ORDINARY LIFE Awakenings in the Final Days of Apartheid By Mary Byron as told to Lori Windsor Mohr

"Beautifully written. Few memoirs capture the interplay of the historical with the personal as this one." Princeton Lyman, Former U.S. Ambassador to South Africa



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