

Docent Dates

Lectures 10 am
Coffee 9:15

April 3

Meeting rescheduled from March 6

April 17

Dane Goodman and Alison Saar on Sculpture

May 1

Mazie M. Harris, Asst Curator of Photography, Getty Museum., "Salt and Silver."
Gretel Rothrock paper

May 15

Julie Joyce with Chris Kallmyer on interactive installation, Contemporary rotation; Sarajum Quazi paper

May 17 Docent

Service Recognition Ceremony

Docent Council meetings will resume in Sept, with dates TBD, and announced in La Muse, Aug 31st.



LUO Ping, Chinese, 1733–1799, *Finger Painting of Crane*, From "Album of Miscellaneous Subjects" with WANG Feng. Ink and color on paper; album leaf from a set of 12. Anonymous loan. Bamboo, Rocks, and Old Trees: Chinese Calligraphy and Literati Painting INTERNAL USE ONLY

Dear fellow docents,

We're not done yet, so don't go anywhere, but our wonderful *La Muse* editor is going on a well-deserved vacation in May! So, no newsletter next month, but a lot of news!

First, remember that we have our rescheduled meeting April 3 in lieu of the one cancelled March 6. As it is a rescheduled meeting, it won't count as an absence if you can't make it. But it's a big one. In addition to Eik Khang's lecture on the fabulous Sculpture exhibit, Sara Bangser will present her research paper on Jenny Holzer's granite bench. The other major event on April 3rd will be Ralph's formal announcement of the incoming Board for 2019-2020! Check his report in this issue of *La Muse* to see who those lucky people are! You all know Mary Joyce will be President and if this year as VP was any example, she will be a strong and dedicated leader.

In addition to our April 3rd meeting, we will have three more: April 17, May 1 and May 15. But since this is my last chance to say it in writing, albeit a little early, I want to thank this year's board for all their support, hard work in their realms, creative ideas and friendship. Thank you 2018



Mary Ellen Hoffman,
President

-2019 Docent Council Board! And really a big thank you is due to the whole Council for working so hard through not always ideal circumstances giving tours to students and adults with good cheer and enthusiasm. Thank you SBMA Docent Council!

Moving on to May and beyond, we will have our Service Recognition Ceremony May 17. Although we don't have a graduating class to recognize, this occasion is our opportunity to honor docents who have earned service awards. And of course, I will announce the Docent of the Year. The ceremony will be followed by a reception in the galleries with wine and hors d'oeuvres. It's always an enjoyable evening and you are all encouraged to bring friends and family to help celebrate another great year for our Docent Council.

Finally, know that ALL of us need to make sure we have a Provisional class this fall. It is paramount that we bring new docents into our Council to keep our organization thriving and keep numbers up to account for those docents who leave active service to become Sustainers. We plan to have two receptions (dates TBA) over late spring and summer for those who might be interested, with follow-up communication so we don't lose people to other community programs. We will also do more advertising, but it is still word-of-mouth to your friends, families and neighbors that brings people to the receptions and hopefully into the class.

So, let's all get out there and do our part encouraging all those we encounter to come to one of the receptions and learn about our gem of an art museum and our exciting docent program. ■

With warmth and affection to you all,

Mary Ellen

From our Vice President



Mary Joyce Winder

Dear Docents,

What a wonderful time we have had together on our many adventures this year.

On our most recent journey that took place March 4, we traveled to the Pasadena Museum of History to view the exhibition, *Something Revealed; California Women Artists Emerge, 1860-1960*. There was a joyous group of 37 travelers visiting the exhibition, in addition to the Fenyes Mansion that sits on the grounds. Eight of the attendees were guests of docents.

After the museum visit we boarded the bus to travel to the Brookside Restaurant, where we all dined together.

The exhibition was quite enjoyable, and the feedback on the trip was overwhelmingly positive. I want to thank all the docents that helped me with the trip: Vikki Duncan, Teda Pilcher, Nicola Gherson, Gail Stichler, and our guest, Ron Grillo.

Mainly, I want to thank the entire Docent Council for allowing me to serve them as Vice-President this year. I have appreciated our time together on all our excursions and social events. These occasions—traveling from Santa Barbara to the Oxnard Plain; onward to the gates of Paramount Studios in Hollywood; celebrating the holidays at a local winery; and lastly our visiting a century of California Women Artists creations in the neighborhood of Millionaire's row in Pasadena—have fashioned a memorable year that I will always treasure.

I look forward to my term as President, and until then keep being the amazing people that you are. ■

Sincerely,
Mary Joyce Winder



From our Adult Teams Chair



Irene Stone

Paths of Gold closed on February 10, but *A Brilliant Spectrum* continued throughout the month. During February, 226 visitors attended 38 tours for an average of 5.9 visitors per tour. (Averages per tour for previous 3 months: Jan – 5.9, Dec – 5.6, and Nov – 6.5.) As noted last month, docents reported visitors from as far away as China, Nicaragua, and Ireland, but on one tour in February, Helene Strobel reports that she had visitors from the Netherlands, Los Angeles, China and Seattle.

We are still recruiting for the summer Contemporary Art team, which will focus on the architectural installation focusing on sound and space by Chris Kallmyer (scheduled to open on May 23 in Preston Morton), and also may include the Wiley equestrian painting and the array of contemporary art works in Ridley Tree. At this time members are Laura DePaoli (Team Leader) and Mike Ramey.

Some docents presenting the 2:00 Sunday tour report visitors declining tours because they are attending a 2:30 program in the auditorium. This has been a recurring problem for many years and is beyond the jurisdiction of docents or the Education Department. The 2:30 program time has been selected by museum departments because that allows programs to end by 4:00 so there is still time for visitors to follow up with viewing works in the galleries or for authors to conduct book signings. Patsy has pointed out that the Education Department speakers are often writers who may not have the same audience as focus tours. The best solution that has been suggested over the years is to offer a mini tour so that visitors can enjoy a short tour and still attend the lecture in a timely manner. Any other suggestions are welcome. ■

Irene

From our Student Teams Chair



Karen Brill

For some schools, spring break came at the end of March, so we had just four tours this month. There was a range of ages, from 4th through 11th grades, and 121 students toured the museum.

So far in April, nine tours are scheduled. We will tour at least 235 students, with the possibility that a few more tours might be scheduled.

Our goal when touring students is to use Visual Thinking Strategies, or VTS, as much as possible. Did you know that this method of inquiry not only develops visual literacy, but develops skills that become habitual and transfer from lesson to lesson, enhancing oral and written language, and collaborative interaction among peers?

In addition to asking “What do you see? What makes you say that? and “What else do you see?” we can look to some of the suggestions made by fellow docents at the recent student touring forum. Barbara Boyd kindly shared her notes. Here are a few take away ideas:

- Ask the students what work speaks to them. Don’t talk at all in the first ten minutes but walk around as each student chooses art that reflects them. Start by modeling, “There are certain works here that I like and I’ll tell you why. Let’s just look together and talk about it and share ideas. It is not about knowing anything or being right or wrong..”
- Get to know your students. Ask why they are here? Do they ever do art themselves? What kind of art? Have they ever been to a museum before? Where? What was their experience? What are their interests?
- Try the “30 second turn around. “ Have students look for 30 seconds, then turn their backs on the art and ask themselves what they see. Then turn around – do you see more now?
- Which object would you pay your own money for? Why?
- Take a work, go around the group and discuss. Then go back to see the work again and see if there is more they see now, a deeper look.
- When students are reluctant to talk, pair them in front of a piece that they select or that you select. Then come back to the whole group and have them tell what they saw in that work. You could use prompts: Is there a story there? Describe this work in emotion words, action words, etc.

Each of these ideas help us connect with students and get them to do the looking and talking, which is our primary goal with visual literacy— teaching young people to look in a way that enriches their experience with art. ■

Engage and enjoy!

Karen

From our Nominations Chair



Ralph Wilson

Dear Colleagues,

The members of the Nominations Committee—Mary Ellen Hoffman, Mary Joyce Winder, Rachael Kriebs, and I—are pleased to announce the Docent Council Board slate for the 2019-2020 service year. These nominees will be presented at the April 3rd docent meeting, at which time the election of officers and chairpersons will be made by a majority vote of the Active Docents present at the meeting. The docent council will be in good hands with the leadership of these members. ■

President:	Mary Joyce Winder
Vice President:	Patty Santiago
Secretary	David Reichert
Treasurer	Jeff Vitucci
Membership	Pattie Firestone
Adult Teams	Christine Holland, Vikki Duncan
Student Teams	Joanne Singer
Provisional Chairs	Ralph Wilson
Research	Sarajum Quazi
Evaluations	Joan Dewhirst
Webmaster	Gail Stichler
Past Pres/Nominations	Mary Ellen Hoffman

From our Membership Chair



Helene Strobel

Congratulations to our Docents who are being honored this year. It is our pleasure to present this achievement to nine recipients whose dedication represents 95 service years. I hope my records are correct; please contact me if there is a discrepancy.

As a reminder please calculate your public and research hours and record them at the docent meeting or you can email them to me at arttalks2u@gmail.com. Many thanks to all who have faithfully submitted your hours. ■

Thank you,
Helene Strobel, Membership Chair

5 Years:

Wendi Hunter
Kim Smith
Mary Joyce Winder



10 Years:

Doug McElwain, Kathryn Padgett, Ann Robinson, Queenie Scheurwater



20 Years:

Karen Howsam
Shirley Waxman



From our Community Speakers Program



Team Leaders Kathryn Padgett and Shirley Waxman

In March the CSP Team gave 11 presentations for 206 people .

CSP Public Talks for April:

Central Library, April 11 at 5:15 pm. Shirley Waxman:

Out of Storage into the Light: Sculptures that Tell Stories

Ojai Library, April 20 at 1 pm. Mary Eckhart:

Citizens of Earth & Air: Artists Create Portraits of the Animal Kingdom.

Vista del Monte, April 2 at 7 pm. Shirley Waxman:

Independent, Innovative, and Determined: Women Artists from the Italian Baroque to Modern America, Part 1. (You are invited).

If you would like to see a presentation and cannot make it to a public talk, contact Shirley Waxman for other dates and time that might be available.



Victor Arnautoff, *City Life*, 1934
Coit Tower, San Francisco

The CSP Team welcomes Lori Mohr! She has created a fascinating talk on public art. See preview below:

Walls That Talk: Murals of the 1930s

Art historians tell us murals have been around as long as there have been people on earth, some preserved in caves dating back 40,000 years. These wall paintings all have one thing in common—they tell the stories of our culture.

In this lecture Lori Windsor Mohr presents mural images borne in a time gripped by worldwide economic depression. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's public works programs brought relief to professional artists who earned weekly paychecks by decorating federal buildings with scenes reflecting the country's values—thriving farm communities, vibrant city life, the wonders of technology,

and most of all, hard work as the path to a brighter future.

From artist Grant Wood's images of idealized American scene painting to Ben Shahn's Social Realism, we will look at a sampling of the most famous murals in both public and private buildings across the country to understand what these walls tell us about one of the most challenging times in our country's history. And the power of art in lifting spirits and promoting cultural identity.

Ben Shahn, *Wellbeing of the Family*, 1938
U.S. Department of Justice



From our Research Chair



Barbara Boyd

Hi Docents;

This is my final *La Muse* article as your Research Chair. It has been my pleasure to serve in this position all these years and now it is time to turn the reins over and enjoy a whole new approach to docent research. Of course I remain available to help the new Chair in any way I can.

At the time I took the board position we were in the early stages of a big transition from one computer program to our current Word Press, with many of the docent research papers still needing to be typed into the computer. At that time, if a paper wasn't in the computer yet, docents had to search through files in the docent office. And not all docents were comfortable or fully competent yet on the computer.

With the new Word Press system in place and more docents skilled in its use, access to quality papers continued as it always had, only now instead of trekking upstairs docents could access available papers with a few clicks.

I am forever beholden to Mike Ramey and Loree Gold for constructing the new website, and to so many others for their behind-the-scenes efforts to build our research capabilities over time.

In my role as Chair, I was able to assist several classes in producing really fine and very useful research papers as part of Provisional Class curriculum. Editing these papers became a good way to get to know the members of each class and I will miss that! It was also my goal to open the research process to the entire docent council, not just the Provisionals, as a way to engage more docents and grow the archives for creating our tours. By listing art works in *La Muse* that did not have papers yet, several docents came forward to take on the task. The research paper seems like a hurdle during the provisional years, so I was pleasantly surprised by the number of people contributing papers, especially on pieces for upcoming exhibitions, time pressure and all! I hope docents continue to participate in this process.

I look forward to making future contributions myself, so I will still be very much involved in this aspect of our work. But now I'll be doing it as a regular docent! Once a researcher, always a researcher! ■

With warm regards,

Barbara



Left: Alison Saar, *Inheritance*, 2009. Bronze, cotton, wood. SBMA, . From *Out of Storage and into the Light: Sculptures That Tell Stories*, March 10-June 23, 2019

Right: Chris Kallmyer, *Ensemble* Opens May 19



Art Matters, Spring 2019

April 25

What Art Has to Say About the Law

Joan Kee

Associate Professor of Art History, University of Michigan

Beginning in the late 1960s, the contemporary art world was increasingly shaped by how its members engaged with the law. From contract-like conceptual artworks to confrontations with police and courts, artists like Suzanne Lacy, Ann Messner, David Hammons, Dennis Oppenheim, and Tehching Hsieh interacted with various facets of the law as an integral part of their creative process. Yet rather than focus on what art has done to law, contemporary artists produced works that raised pointed questions for lawyers, judges and for anyone interested in the legal institution.



Dennis Oppenheim, *Violations*, 1971-1972. Evidence of 153 misdemeanors in violation of Section 484 of the California Penal Code (Petty Theft). Location: Bordering San Quentin State Prison San Quentin, California Room"

May 2

Matisse's Hands

Todd Cronan

Associate Professor of Art History, Emory University

At the onset of World War II, Henri Matisse's art underwent a startling change of direction. Inventing a dramatic new technique of cut-outs, Matisse explored aspects of the world that were largely absent from his previous work. This talk will trace the development of Matisse's late cut-outs and the new forms of expression they provoked.

Henri Matisse, *Palmette*, 1947. Gouache.



May 9

What is Mid-Century Modern?: The Architecture of Richard Neutra and The Eameses

Todd Cronan

Associate Professor of Art History, Emory University

The words "Mid-Century Modern" are everywhere. From Crate & Barrel to Craigslist, Sotheby's to Walmart, Mid-Century Modern or MCM is the sought-after style for life today. What is it about kidney-shaped pools and steel beams, polished concrete and plate glass, womb chairs, and spider legs that continues to fascinate after all these years? Looking at the works of Richard Neutra and Charles and Ray Eames this talk will explore the competing visions of Mid-Century Modern in California.



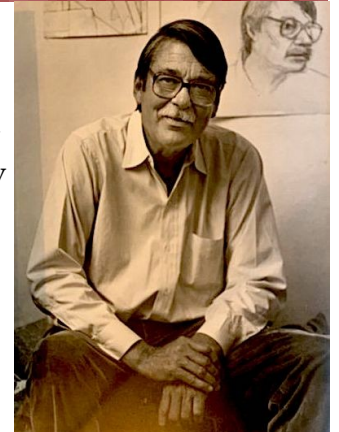
Charles and Ray Eames in their apartment designed by Richard Neutra, early 1940s

Early Diebenkorn: The Emergence of a Great American Artist

By Ricki Morse



The recent exhibition at the Frederick R. Weisman Museum of Art at Pepperdine University in Malibu is one of those rare events that Docents long to attend, a thoughtful, sparsely hung, insightfully labeled display assembled by the Richard Diebenkorn Foundation in Berkeley. From his early drawings to his first art school assignments into his search for his own voice, we view the works through the lens of his travels from one art school and university post to another and begin to experience the emerging clarity of his vision, the muscular black lines and massed boulders of color to the always present deft curve of pen or paint sketched line.

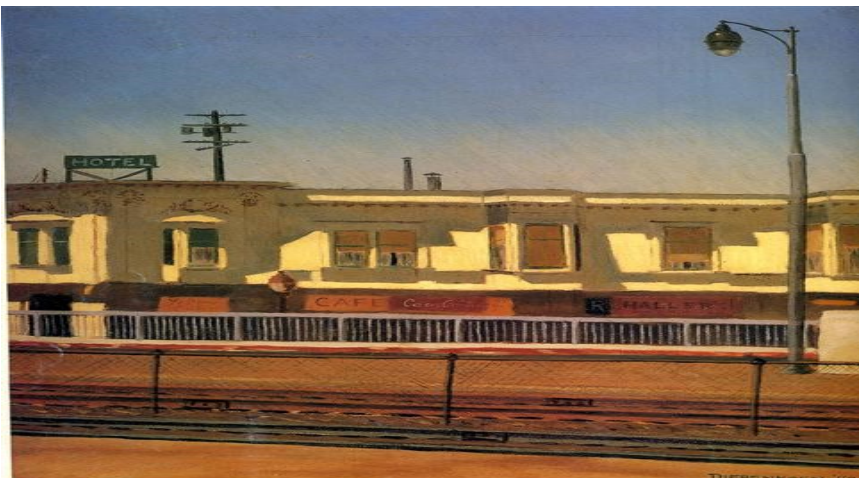


Richard Diebenkorn in his Venice studio, 1986.

Richard Diebenkorn was born into a Swedish family which had emigrated to Germany and generations later to the United States. Though born in 1922 in Portland, Oregon, his family moved to San Francisco when he was two. As a child he was always drawing: locomotives, cars, animals, houses, whatever captured his interest, and this practice continued into his adolescence, though he remembers that he never associated the drawing with art. It was just what he loved to do. He developed a strong rapport with his Irish maternal grandmother, who lived in rural Woodside on the San Francisco peninsula where he spent many summers. Visits with her were always times of discovery, museum visits and wonder.

At 40, Florence Stephens had gone to law school and entered practice defending the rights of German immigrants. She responded to the curiosity and intellect of her grandson, exposing him to the great author/illustrators of the time, the Arthurian legend, the Oz books, though her most lasting visual gift was a deck of 80 cards depicting the Bayeux Tapestries, those still-astonishing 11th c. embroidered panels on linen depicting the Norman Conquest. He reminisced years later, "The main events are central and in flanking panels above and below, there are dead men and coats of arms: therefore, these dialogues paralleling one another, horizontally." Not too surprisingly, a predominately linear structure permeates his paintings throughout his career.

It wasn't until he was enrolled in Stanford, at the behest of his father, who wished him to enter the medical profession, that he first glanced into an art studio and was amazed to see people seriously pursuing drawing. (While at Stanford he also met his wife, Phyllis Gilman, a history major who became his lifelong companion, model and champion and the mother of their two children). Though he found most of his studies boring, these years did provide him with a grounding in classical music, history and literature, espe-



Palo Alto Circle 1943, oil on canvas

cially the modern poets, T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound and W. H. Auden, a study in which he became something of an expert. In his sophomore year he enrolled in art classes and began to look more deeply at paintings, being drawn initially to Edward Hopper. "I embraced Hopper completely. . . . it was his use of light and shade and the atmosphere . . . kind of drenched, saturated with mood, and its kind of austerity. It was the kind of work that was just made for me. I looked at it and it was mine." Viewing his *Palo Alto Circle*, 1943, one of his first completed works, the Hopper mood is palpable and immediately felt.

Diebenkorn elected to join the Marine Reserves in order to continue his education. He and Phyllis married, and he was transferred to a Marine program at UC Berkeley. Allowed to develop his own curriculum, he was exposed to a much broader interest in contemporary European art including the abstraction



Diebenkorn's #2 Sausalito

of Hans Hoffman, who taught at Berkeley. Though Hoffman's push/pull theories of color dynamics did not persuade him, he was drawn to the complexities of Cezanne's landscapes and particularly to Matisse.

When he entered the Officer Training Program in Quantico, Virginia, he and Phyllis spent every weekend in the galleries and museums of Washington DC, particularly the old house, now museum, that displays the Phillips Collection, works acquired in European travels beginning in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and both the most comprehensive and selective collection in the United States at that time. The Matisse which spoke to him most strongly was an interior of the artist's room above the Pont Saint-Michel. I was thrilled to recognize the window in the painting as the same view I often present in tours, our 1901 Matisse *Pont Saint-Michel* in Ridley-Tree Gallery. Diebenkorn writes, "I noticed its spatial amplitude. One saw a marvelous hollow or room, yet the surface is right there . . . right up front." The signs of reworking are abundant in Matisse at this time and began to appear in Diebenkorn's work, areas of heavy overpainting leaving the traces of earlier images, giving the work an immediacy and presence—not unfinished but more fully experienced.

Diebenkorn's life as a working artist didn't begin until 1946, when he enrolled in The California School Fine Arts where he quickly became a star and a friend of David Park, followed by a fellowship at Woodstock. He and Phyllis, now with their baby daughter, bought a small house in Sausalito. This work, #2 Sausalito, 1949, reflects many of the influences we have been exploring. At first glance it seems abstract, but with some attention it feels more like a knowable space. We are drawn into the center of the canvas by the black sketched lines, shapes with an organic feel, plastic and malleable rather than flat geometric forms. As we continue to explore his work, his movement from abstraction to figuration and back to abstraction, is felt as a process of inquiry, as a process of finding his own unique place on



Henri Matisse, *Quai Saint Michel*, oil on canvas, 1916.



Woman and Checkboard, oil on canvas, 1956, SBMA collection.



Cityscape 1, 1963, oil on canvas, captures the peak of Diebenkorn's landscape re-imaginings of his figurative period, an aerial view, drawing us into the canal or road just off-center which dissects the canvas. It emanates a dramatic authority. We are again pulled into the center of the canvas, much as he was drawn into Matisse's room on the Seine. The abstraction is more prominent and heralds the coming of the *Ocean*

the canvas.

Our 1956 *Woman and Checkboard* combines both lines of thought, the placement of checkerboard and woman not telling a story but placed in the space to balance and define the images against the dark background. The brooding silence and stillness of the space gives equal meaning to each image: the woman, the checkerboard and the window/painting. It certainly honors David Park's return to figuration which initiated the San Francisco movement, breaking with the abstraction expressionism of the New York School. This painting also signals his coming move toward more abstracted work.

Diebenkorn left CSFA in 1949, resisting a more doctrinaire codification of "art" while he was still opening new paths, retaining certain features like his calligraphic line, resisting others like flat geometric forms. Using the GI bill, he enrolled as a graduate student at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque. We see an immediate shift in his palette, from bright California to sandy, light-bleached New Mexico. In



Albuquerque #10, 1951, oil on canvas, reflects the impact of the New Mexico landscape on Diebenkorn's vision, bleached of color and sound, executed almost like a sketch, eliciting that contemplative mood and thoughtful observation we recognize as his hallmarks. We are also aware, in spite of his organic forms, his continuing attraction to abstraction.

Albuquerque #10, his palette emanates the baking heat of the desert; we recognize the casually, almost carelessly drawn line, the warm, rounded shapes, the mood of quiet and solitude. The space is somehow recognizable as a place or a state of mind. It has a particular identity, though we do not quite recognize it. Now approaching 30, Diebenkorn is finding his vision, his clarity.

His explorations were significantly enhanced by his flights in small, low-flying aircraft from Albuquerque to San Francisco to attend exhibitions and gallery openings. The aerial view of the landscape give him a distinctive sense of spatial possibilities and in 1970 he accepted an invitation from the Department of the Interior to accompany crews mapping and designing a new water reclamation project.

His appointment to the UCLA faculty, representation by a major Los Angeles gallery (the Cantor) and his 1969 European trip with Phyllis, heralded the coming of the great *Ocean Park Series*, painted in his Venice studio, celebrating his refined understanding of space on canvas. Figuration is gone but his calligraphic, almost sketched line is still present, lending a subtle immediacy to a suggested memory of landscape, proposing an abstracted appreciation of space that we can feel as ours, as a knowable presentation of our world. It is silent, meaningful, profound, and fully present. ■



Left: From the *Ocean Park Series* which heralded Diebenkorn's ultimate resolution of the figurative/abstract exploration. *Ocean Park #32* is a gouache, acrylic and crayon on paper from 1984. Subtle, moody, suggestive rather than overt, a human space of quiet meaning.

The Last Page



Doug McElwain, *Desert Sunflower*, Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, California, March 2019,

From your Editor

In May I will be in Morocco, which means no *La Muse*. And for the second time in ten years I am taking the summer off. The September issue will be out August 31, 2019.

Thank you to all who have contributed to our newsletter this year. Our board members have been great to work with, and I know how quickly those submission requests come around each month. I am especially grateful to Ricki Morse for her continued scholarship writing insightful, analytical essays for *La Muse*. We are so fortunate to be beneficiaries of the wealth of art knowledge she has accumulated over half a century.

The Docent Council never ceases to amaze me with the good will and camaraderie of our group that comes from a shared love of art, the joy of sustained learning, and the enduring commitment to our museum visitors in bringing them the very best experience we can offer.

Until September,
Lori

Editor Loriwindsormohr@gmail.com

