

Docent Dates

Lectures 10 am
Coffee 9:15

December 3

Bus Trip to Getty
Manet Exhibit

December 4

Charlie Wiley or cu-
ratorial assistant on
Miyajima exhibit

December 9

Holiday Party 4-6
Andrea Gallo's Home

January 5, 2020

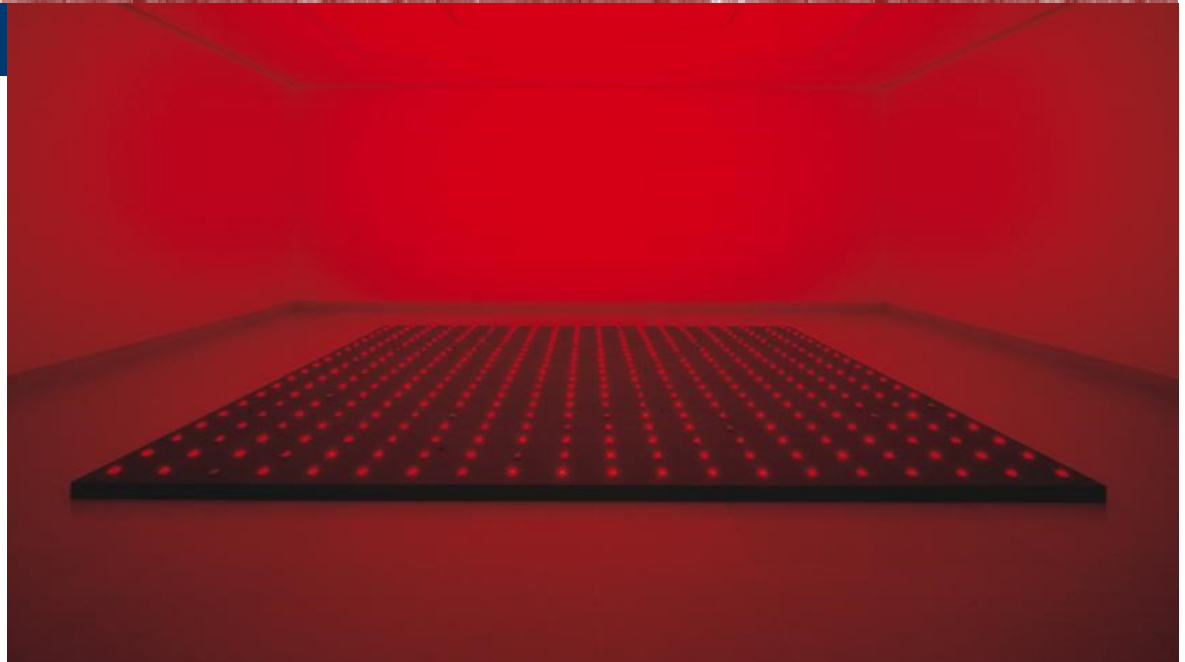
Rachel Heidenry on
Latin American rota-
tion; see spring issue
of SBM newsletter for
recent acquisitions.

SAVE the DATE

April 28th – May 1st
New York City

*Docent meeting dates
and speaker info will
published as they be-
come available. LM*

**Holiday Party
December 9th
4–6 pm, Andrea
Gallo's: 300 Islay
St. (corner of Gar-
den & East Islay)**



Tatsuo Miyajima, *Counter Ground*, 1998–2000. LED, electric wiring, and wooden panels. Dallas Museum of Contemporary Art, from *Tatsuo Miyajima*, SBMA December 22, 2019 - April 5, 2020

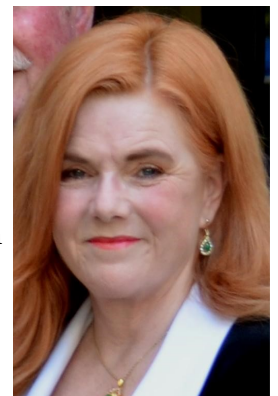
Happy Holidays!

December arrives with promises of the holidays filled with joyous celebrations with family and friends. I especially look forward to celebrating with all of you at the upcoming annual Holiday Party. It is at these celebratory occasions that we have more time to catch up and share with each other the tidings of friendship and conversation that keep us close as a group. Our twenty new provisionals will be joining the holiday celebration this year with new stories and new experiences to share. This promises to be a vibrant and enjoyable soiree. I foresee smiles beaming light-filled joy, mine included.

The Education Department has presented the Docent Council with a gift of thoughtfulness and caring this December—they have worked to find a new home for our social hour before meetings. We will be meeting in the newly renovated Family Resource Center (the old café location). This space will provide us with a more intimate area than that of the current hallway. The room also has the added bonus of that beautiful natural light pouring in through the glass fenestration of the museum store. Thank you to Patsy and Michelle for working on our behalf to find us such a lovely space.

Eat, Drink, and Be Merry.

The best is yet to come,
Mary Joyce



Mary Joyce Winder
Docent Council President

From our Vice President



Patty Santiago

The long awaited, rescheduled bus trip to the Getty for “Manet and Modern Beauty” is finally here. We will be venturing down to LA on Tuesday, December 3rd for curator led tours of our two docent groups. It should be a wonderful day enjoying incredible art and of course the fun of being together.

The other major event for December is also fast approaching. Our annual Holiday Party is on Monday, December 9th at Andrea Gallo’s home from 4-6 p.m. (The Monday scheduling guarantee s all docents can attend with the museum closed). Though many of you have seen members from the provisional class at meetings and chatted with them during social time, Ralph and I will have the pleasure of introducing them individually at our Holiday Party. As you get to know these amazing people, you will get a better sense of the many talents they bring to our docent family.

Finally, we are in the planning stages for another trip to New York City! Mark your calendars for April 28th – May 1st. A sign up sheet will be available at our December 4th council meeting for anyone interested , and an informational meeting will be scheduled sometime in January. I look forward to seeing you December 9th!

Happy Holidays to one and all!

Patty ■

From our Student Teams Co-chairs



Irene Stone

November brought many more tour requests— nine dates for 233 students from K-12. Docents provided a full range of tours, described below. Initials indicate type of tour:

MT – Museum Tour: These are usually on Tuesdays at 11am & 12pm, last 45 minutes, and can accommodate groups of up to 35 students .

AM – Artful Making: These docent-led tours last 30 minutes either following or preceding a student art -making activity with teaching artists in the Family Resource Center (regular Wednesday & Friday

tours.). **SR – Special Request:** Tours are considered special request: 1) if the group exceeds 35 students; 2) if the tour or program occurs at an unusual time/day; 3) if the tour is modified from its original 45 minutes; 4) if another element has been added to the tour (i.e. art making/science experiment).

As of now, we have five scheduled tours in December, but we know school holidays and festive activities do curtail our requests. As we all look forward to the weeks ahead, may we wish you and yours a joyful holiday season with peace, health, and good fortune in the new year.



Teda Pilcher

Happy Holidays! Irene and Teda ■

From our Adult Teams Co-chairs



Vikki Duncan

Dear Docents,

It occurs to us there may be some confusion in our report. To clarify, touring numbers are tallied at the end of each month, so we are reporting numbers from two months back. In October, we gave 41 tours to 228 visitors, for an average 5.6 visitors per tour.

Salt & Silver tours continued, with curious photographers and Angelenos in our visitor groups.

Observable Universe also had good visitor numbers.



Christine Holland

The *Ramos Martinez* exhibit opened on the Museum's Día de Los Muertos community day, interest boosted by a talk from our Community Speakers Program as well as other publicity. As with docents touring *Salt & Silver*, and *The Observable Universe*, the *Ramos Martinez* team benefited from a curatorial walk-through, building on knowledge we got from Melinda Gandara's great lecture, as well as from Ricki's useful article on Ramos Martinez in last month's issue of *La Muse*.

We have been working closely with our Ed Dept and can now report two new exhibits for 2020— 1) small format American paintings in the Works on Paper Room in Ridley Tree, March—October; 2) contemporary works in Preston Morton and Davidson galleries, tours starting in Spring. A version of our usual end-of-year "Preference Sheet" will be sent out soon to everyone so we can form touring teams. These two exhibitions offer opportunities for those who currently have no Adult Teams assignment this service year.

At the November Docent Council Board meeting it was agreed that we would change the title "Docent's Choice Tours" back to "Highlights Tours" to better reflect inclusion of our Permanent Collection. The wording for "Docent's Choice" was created to accommodate touring flexibility in the ever-changing galleries during construction. But the Board consensus has gone with the decades-long wording "Highlights" to reinforce the basic structure of our tours as an overview of SBMA's holdings. Docents will continue to have freedom in creating tours that incorporate individual interest, but that also build around our Permanent Collection.

We wish you all a wonderful holiday season.

Vikki and Christine ■

In the January 2020 issue, see Molora Vadnais's fabulous photos and read about her experience on El Camino de Santiago in Spain.



From our Provisional Co-Chairs



Ralph Wilson

The Thanksgiving holiday meant only two class meetings in November for our provisional class, but they are now well along the path to becoming docents. The class members, now totaling 20, have selected objects for their 3-minute presentations, which will take place in our last meeting of 2019.

Special thanks go to Kim Smith who brought her expertise as both docent and working artist to present an encompassing and most enjoyable presentation of materials and techniques. Her show-rather-than-tell approach enabled all of us to un-



Patty Santiago

derstand the more complex techniques (such as the lost wax method) far better than any textbook.

Special thanks also to Joan Dewhirst for defusing the mystery and fear of evaluations. By taking the class through the details of the peer evaluation process, she described how to ensure a positive response as an evaluator checked off each item on the form.

The provisionals also offer heartfelt thanks to Leslie Hay-Currie and the Class of 2018 for hosting a party as the previous welcoming the new one

Ralph and Patty ■

Bits & Pieces

Mass reproduction began a craze for photographic portraits of celebrities, family groups and the individual self. *'From that moment on, our loathsome society rushed, like Narcissus, to contemplate its trivial image on a metallic plate. A form of lunacy, an extraordinary fanaticism took hold of these new sun worshipers.'*

~ Baudelaire, 1859, on the impact of the new technology, lamenting its encouragement of vanity. From *The Europeans*, by Orlando Figes

From Christine Holland: This link is a treasure trove of Van Gogh images, provided by "Open Culture" ...it's never too early to get excited about the upcoming Van Gogh exhibit!

<http://www.openculture.com/2019/10/explore-1400-paintings-drawings-by-vincent-van-gogh.html>

From our Research Chair



Sarajum Quazi

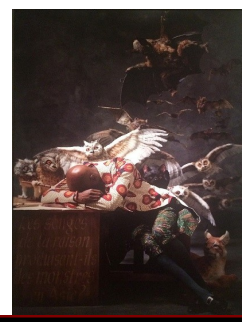
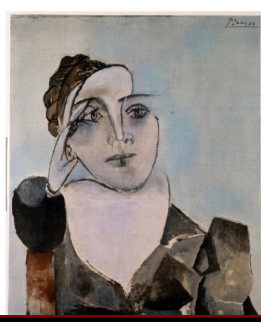
Dear Docents,

The provisional class has been very busy, and has reached that moment when each person chooses a work of art for his or her research paper. Once vetted, these papers, become part of the docent archive and are posted on our website for everyone to use as a starting point in creating tours.

This year we are fortunate to have a class of twenty who will contribute a further resource for all of us. As Research Chair, I am pleased to be working with them.

Sarajum

	ARTIST	OBJECT
Alden, Mary Ellen	Kelley	Apple Tree
Anderson, Cindy	Allinson	Spring in the Abruzzi
Baker, Andrew	Agar	Swanage, Dorset
Balents, Gisela	Picasso	Portrait of Dora Maar
Barnett, Tommie Rae	Katei	Ten Friends (Flowers)
Carleton, Amelia	Chen	Red Boys
Carr-Howard, Kim	Hunt	The Singers
Castañeda, Martha	Bayer	Triangulation with Hidden Square
Christodoulou, Marcos	Unknown Roman	Hermes
Coronado, Robert	Van Gogh	The Outskirts of Paris
Dunaway, Anne-Marie	Balog	Chimpanzee with Curtain
Glover, April	Shonibare	The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters
Guadagnini, Merle	Chase	Children at the Beach
Hines, Kathe Jan	Alvarez Bravo	Manos en Casa de Diaz
Jones, Pat		
Linz, Daniel	Brockhurst	Adolescence
Lowe, Susan	Delacroix	Winter: Juno and Aeolus
Niehusen, Kajsa Philippa	Rattner	Homage to Dante, No. 1
Nocker, Sabine	Uninown Roman	Head of Aphrodite
Ross, Barbara	Delacroix	The Queen Tries to Console Hamlet



The Best Museum You Never Heard of

By Josie Martin



It was all because Joan Dewhurst said, "You're going to Portugal?" And so, a beautiful book, [The Calouste Gulbenkian Museum in Lisbon](#) whets my curiosity. A brief thumbing through and I am hooked. Eleven hours later, jet-lagged and bleary, the weariness

disappears as our terrific guide, Isabel Lage, takes over.

"Today, the Calouste Gulbenkian Museum is one of the finest in the world, and at a European level is unrivaled in quality."

As a reflection of its founder, the collection represents a unique range of objects—oriental and occidental, from Ancient Egypt to Islamic art; Chinese and Japanese works to Renaissance masters; to the Barbizon School, and on to Impressionism, plus an excursion into Art Nouveau objects represented by the works of Rene Lalique.

Indeed, the quality of each work, even within my limited range of connoisseurship, is striking. I would have gone straight for the Laliques, then the Renaissance, but Isabel insists on a leisurely "encyclopedic tour." She is passionate. "This beautiful museum, this oasis away from the noise of a lively city, was built FOR the art. In 1969 it was one of the first museums in Europe to be designed specifically to show off this stunning collection rather than a collection made to fit an existing museum."

Calouste Gulbenkian, the richest man in the world at the turn of the 20th century, (Middle East oil) began

collecting as a child roaming the bazaars of Istanbul. Using only his allowance he acquired antique coins both remarkable and valuable, a harbinger of "his rare instinct for beauty and quality." I'm not one to linger among Egyptian funerary objects, but the "Stele of the Scribe Ary," painted on compact limestone, originally in brilliant colors, shows a Pharaoh and his loving consort, the queen, seated behind him with her elongated hand gently posed around his waist. All turn their attention toward the inscribed hieroglyphs that dominate the composition. Egyptians believed in the extraordinary power of written names and words. It's enough to bring joy to anyone who loves words. The hieroglyphs' incisions are so clear, I feel as if I could read them. "It's a prayer praising the smiling royals," Isabel informs us. I look more closely at their perfectly incised profiled faces. They ARE smiling.

But "St. Joseph" by Roger Van Der Weyden is not, as we move along two thousand years. The exquisite painting from the 15th C. Netherlands portrays him with acute observation of



Calouste Gulbenkian Museum



"Stele of the Scribe Ary,"

facial details, wrinkles, a stubble of beard, a teary moisture of the saddened eyes, the slight parting of the lips. Joseph is bent and old now, his asceticism, his great suffering, his deep faith — a superb and poignant psychological portrait. If there had been chiaroscuro, it would rival Rembrandt. Perhaps Joseph is reflecting on the difficulties of the holy family's "Flight into Egypt" as painted by Peter Paul Rubens. This is not one of those lush Rubenesque tableaux with cavorting nudes. This is an almost sepia-toned night scene, the Madonna wearing a red gown, lovingly and determinedly holding the tiny Infant Christ to her breast. There are angel protectors and Joseph tenderly gesturing toward his wife and child. I know it's a famous scene exquisitely Christian, but I cannot help but think of the mothers fleeing dangerous Central American countries, reaching our own borders only



"St. Joseph," Rogier van der Weyden



Peter Paul Rubens, "Flight into Egypt"

to be separated from their children, where there are few angels offering protection. Rubens may not have intended to resonate so far into the future with this gorgeous nocturnal scene, but sadly it does.

And of course, we stop before Rembrandt's portrait of "The Old Man." I could rave on and on about the light on the aging forehead, the bright white cuff and the hand extending from it as it grasps a cane, all done in that matchless umber and gloom of aging. We know Rembrandt. But I had never seen the "Portrait of Alexander the Great," youthful, almost androgynous, wearing a fantastic plumed helmet decorated with an owl, holding a shield with the head of

the Medusa! No wonder some experts consider it a portrait of Pallas Athena. (I can hardly wait for our own magnificent Athena to return from the Getty.)

How did Gulbenkian manage to acquire such a spectacular collection, and why was it such a secret? Russia. During the famine years of 1928-30, critically short of currency, the Soviets were discreetly selling off



some of their masterpieces. Gulbenkian entered into negotiations, hoping to acquire pieces from the Hermitage Museum — repository for treasures of Imperial Russia. Gulbenkian signed four contracts, defying powerful international competitors. A letter in a Gulbenkian biography warns the Soviets, "You shouldn't be selling to me or to anyone else...these pieces from your museum... (but if you do) I insist that you

Right: Rembrandt's "The Old Man" 1645

Left: Alexander the Great





John Constable Turner, "The Wreck of a Transport Ship"

grant me priority." (Calouste Sarkis Gulbenkian, the Man and His Works - Lisbon Foundation 2018.) Our encyclopedic tour takes nearly three hours. I could write about the Laliques, the Van Dykes, Boucher's luscious "Cupid and the Three Graces," the Gainsboroughs, the Romneys, Houdon's marble "Diana" sculpted with such physiological precision—and she is running! I can't help but remember Princess Diana, ever running from the paparazzi. Turner's "Wreck of a Transport Ship," so tumultuously painted, it almost scares away the viewer. Jean Baptiste Camille Corot: a show at the SBMA turned him into my fa-

vorite, especially works he did at Ville d'Avray. The "Road at Ville-d'Avray" is out of my own childhood, when we lived in a tiny village in the Charente, trying to stay out of the Nazi's clutches. Corot's "Road" looks like one in the village of Montbron, complete with peasant villagers dressed in the same dark work clothes as those in this painting. I am struck by the long wall running diagonally up the painting. A narrow green wooden door sparks a memory—how I wanted to go into the secret gardens behind those doors. The whole gorgeous scene is infused with Corot's silvery tonality. I stand before it a long time.

Isabel takes us to the "Portuguese Carpet," unique for Portuguese caravels woven into each corner, harkening to Portugal's Golden Age. "Remember, we were the first Europeans to fearlessly explore the seas in



Jean Baptiste Camille Corot, "The Road at Ville-d'Avray", oil on canvas, 1874



those caravels, sailing the Atlantic down the Coast of Africa, our Vasco de Gama the first to reach India by sea from the West. It changed the world!" I ask, "And Prince Henry the Navigator?" She comments about Americans and English all thinking he was a great man, then launches in-

to a brief history of how he did little but send his most capable navigators on those dangerous missions. I'm no longer listening as the jet-lag waves over me. Instead, I imagine being on one of those splendid caravels, lulled to sleep with dreams of the Lalique diadems and the spectacular, "Dragonfly Corsage Ornament," that we saw two galleries back.

I can't thank Joan Dewhirst enough. ■



Lalique, "Dragonfly Corsage Ornament"

The last page



Thanksgiving Day, Santa Barbara. Photo by Miki Klocke, FOE (friend of editor).
And the day after, in Ojai. Photo by LM



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