

La Muse

Docent Meetings

**ALL Docent Meetings
and Activities
CANCELLED until
at least June 1st.**

September 25, 2020

Tentative date for
Graduation and Ser-
vice Recognition.



Fernando de Szyszlo (1925-2017) Peruvian, *Mar de Lurin*, 1989, acrylic on canvas, 39 1/2 x 39 1/2 in..

As a boy De Szyszlo summured on the site of a now vanished sea, The Sea of Lurin. The painting, with its ancient stellae rising out of the mist, commemorates not only the long lost sea but also his own childhood memories, as the child celebrates his own heritage.

Submitted by Ricki to herald the re-emergence of our Latin American collection.

Dear Friends,

I hope you all remain healthy and content at home. As *La Muse* announced last week, the museum is closed until at least May 15 and all docent activities have been cancelled until at least June 1. Because the future remains uncertain for the resumption of normal activities, we have adjusted our annual schedule to the following:

Preference Sheets: The preference sheets for service year 2020-21 will be sent out sometime between May 15 and the end of summer.

Provisional Class: The current provisional class students will be evaluated on their final 45-minute tour in the late summer or early fall. Because the museum is scheduled to reopen galleries and rotate pieces in the fall, it seems prudent to have the provisional class wait to prepare their 45-minute talk on pieces that will be on view in the fall and that they can see and study in the galleries. Therefore, the criteria for scheduling the evaluations are that the museum is open; it is safe enough to conduct evaluations in the galleries; and that the students have time to prepare their tours in the galleries. Priority for Highlights touring for the fall will therefore be given to the provisional class students so that they are able to quickly gain necessary touring experience. Meanwhile, Ralph and Patty are taking the class online to continue instruction. Big hugs to Ralph, Patty, and all the provisional docents for remaining flexible, creative, and committed during this time.



Provisional Class Graduation and Awards Ceremony: The tentatively scheduled date for the ceremony is September 25, 2020. This date

Molora Vadnais,
Acting Docent
Council President

is subject to continuing health and construction constraints. Please mark your calendars—in pencil.

Summer and Service Year 2020-21 Activities: The docent council is working under the assumption that docent activities will resume as usual in the fall. If necessary, we will work out summer touring when the museum is open, stay at home orders are lifted, and the museum deems touring is safe. As you probably realize, it is unlikely that we will actually be back to normal in the fall and that the docent council, like everything else, will likely change—at least temporarily. The council is a 52-year old organization. It will survive this era and may end up stronger for the adversity. As your current acting president, it is my goal to make sure that both the service and social aspects of our organization remain strong and resilient so that when the world rights itself, we will be ready to inspire the public, as well as each other, with the beauty of art once again.

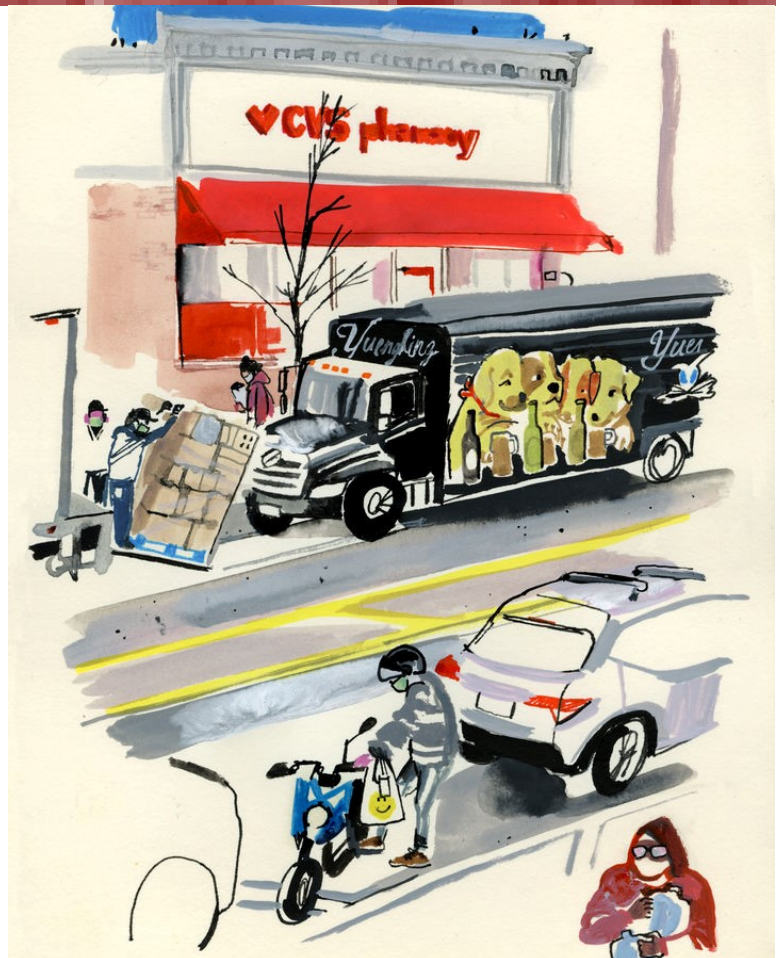
Sincerely,
Molora Vadnais

Image from “17 Artists Capture a Surreal New York From Their Windows”

By Antonio di Luca, Sasha Portis and Adriana Ramić, April 16, 2020 New Yorker

Park Slope, Brooklyn

This drawing is my little ode to delivery people. They’re putting themselves at great risk to keep this city running while medical staff are on the front lines. If you’re able, tip *very generously*.



From our Nominations Chair



The members of the Nominating Committee comprised of myself, VP Patty Santiago and Acting President, Molora Vadnais, in consultation with the Education Dept., are pleased to announce that the slate of officers and chairpersons that I presented to you in the March *La Muse* to be voted on thereafter up to April 15, 2020, was passed electronically by a majority of current Active Docents (30 and one abstention). There were no "nays". The slate you selected is:

Mary Ellen Hoffman

President— Patty Santiago

Vice President—Karen Howsam

Secretary—Christine Holland

Treasurer— Jeff Vitucci

Membership—Pattie Firestone

Adult teams—Vikki Duncan

Sara Bangser

Student Teams—Teda Pilcher

Irene Stone

Provisional chairs:

Kathryn Padgett

Paul Guido

Gretchen Simpson

Molora Vadnais

Erika Budig

Research—Sarajum Quazi

Evaluations—Shirley

Waxman

Webmaster—Gail Stichler

Past President/Nominations—
Intentionally left open

Undoubtedly, these officers will do a terrific job! Please support them and lend a hand where you can as they will be challenged not only by just the normal tasks required of their positions, but also by whatever circumstances are left in the wake of this unprecedented pandemic.

Thanks to all of you who voted even during these days of distraction and uncertainty.

With best wishes and hope that we'll all be together again soon,

Mary Ellen

Julie Joyce Responds to Lori's 2008 Interview

Submitted by Patsy



Dearest Docents:

I was so deeply touched by the reprinting of Lori's 2008 interview with me in *La Muse*. And this couldn't have arrived at a better moment – like many of you, I trust, I am struggling for some semblance of meaning and hope, in not just daily life but also the realm of art with which we are so unequivocally intertwined and invested. Re-reading this interview has reminded and also reinforced for me the fact that there would be no art world without artists. Now more than ever is a time to consider the role artists continue to play in our lives, our society, our cultural values. As we navigate the coming weeks and months, I for one will be looking to artists—via online gallery exhibitions, social media, anywhere I can find them—for their thoughts, ideas, alternatives, and inspiration for how to continue to live and work with purpose.

What also struck me is the occasion and focus of the interview, the exhibition with Yinka Shonibare. He is certainly relevant to at least one of the artists in Part I of *In the Meanwhile*: Hew Locke. Like Shonibare (the two artists are also friends), Locke makes work based on issues surrounding the historic colonization of Africa. I first worked with him on an exhibition at the Luckman Gallery in 2004, when he came from London to Cal State LA for a three-week residency. There, he assembled an enormous cardboard barge borrowed from the Norton Foundation and presented in conjunction with large cardboard cut-out portraits of the British royal family (I've included an image of the installation.)

A large part of Hew's work comes out of his upbringing in Guyana—the warm, tropical country in the Caribbean where he grew up—and the disconnect of being spoon-fed as a young student a series of histories and images that were not his, but



of a white Anglo Saxon country located 4,500 miles across the North Atlantic. Hew has worked in various types of media throughout his career, and his ingenuity with materials as well as his particular way of mining the mechanizations of power continue to captivate me. What I particularly appreciate about Locke's *Share Certificates*

Hew Locke, *Hemmed in Two*, 2004. Cardboard, acrylic, marker pen, found objects, wood, rope, and papier maché. Luckman Gallery, LA (installation view). <https://www.halesgallery.com/artists/15-hew-locke/works/6771/>

series is the juxtapositions they embody. The ornately printed, carefully edited and regulated documents are fascinating as objects by themselves; but contrasted with Hew's lush and colorful, hand-rendered imagery in a comparatively intricate but untamed style, they become remarkable. Just a couple notes here... Hew has created several public commissions in London, and you can see how some of the share certificates (including SBMA's) have been used in a public context. <http://www.hewlocke.net/goldstandard.html>

Another artist in the exhibition that I've been thinking about is the highly imaginative and talented Jacci den Hartog, a Los Angeles-based artist also new to SBMA's collection. Den Hartog's work has long been driven by her concern for the environment, and for the past two decades informed by her investigations of landscape painting and garden design—particularly those of Chinese origin (as an aside, she was one of many SBMA artists who traveled from elsewhere to Santa Barbara specifically to see Susan Tai's landmark exhibition). Her more recent explorations of landscape have included stylized portraits of some of Southern California's waterfalls, including the local *Nojuqui Falls*, 2017 (pictured here). This large sculpture was one of many on view at her recent solo exhibition at Pasadena City College (sadly interrupted by COVID-19 closures) and can also be viewed on her website, which is a great place to obtain more information about the trajectory of her work: <http://jaccidenhartog.com/>. Also, be sure to check out the catalogue for that exhibition (available soon)!



Jacsi Den Hartog, *Nojuqui Falls*, 2017. Steel, aluminum mesh, aqua resin, fiber glass cloth, and paint: 86 x 40 x 38 in.; stainless steel base: 22 x 32-1/2 x 1-1/2 <http://jaccidenhartog.com/ongoing/current-work-2019/>



Basil Akazzi, *Flight* (2018). Gouache on Arches paper, 57 x 76 cm

While there are unfortunately too many personal favorites to discuss in one sitting, I did want to focus on the impetus of *In the Meanwhile* Part I, which is the amazing opportunity Basil Alkazzi provided through giving SBMA the funds to acquire painted works on paper by contemporary artists. His gift provided (and will continue to provide, I'm certain) not only works of art, but also a vital source of encouragement. Alkazzi is an artist, acquired by SBMA at the behest of Ronald Kuchta, a former curator of SBMA (1968-74). An avid painter, Alkazzi's paintings on paper capture rare, exquisitely fleeting visions of nature—landscape, flora, fauna, and occasionally a soaring bird among other living phenomena. Saturated with color, sparkling with a sublime sense of poetry, his works are in many ways uplifting. I wanted to share an image of a gouache drawing (left) he sent me in November that continues to provide me a sense of inspiration and calm—two things that I need especially now.

Otherwise his work can be seen locally at George Billis Gallery <http://www.georgebillis.com/basil-alkazzi.html>

I am also encouraged by your continued enthusiasm for art and for SBMA, and wanted to leave you with a few words by Jerry Saltz, the New York critic who remains as active in my Facebook and Instagram feeds as he does in the few critical venues that still exist for art. As he states in his most recent column in Vulture, “whatever happens, we’re all conscripted into the service of art; we’re all volunteers of America. We need to play loose, loving, generous, being as creative and as unafraid as possible, adapting to change as it comes and not falling back on old, outmoded, mean, or inapplicable dogmas. We all want to go the distance for what we love. That distance has begun.” (link below).

Until I see you again, be safe, be calm, be creative, and be unafraid.

Julie

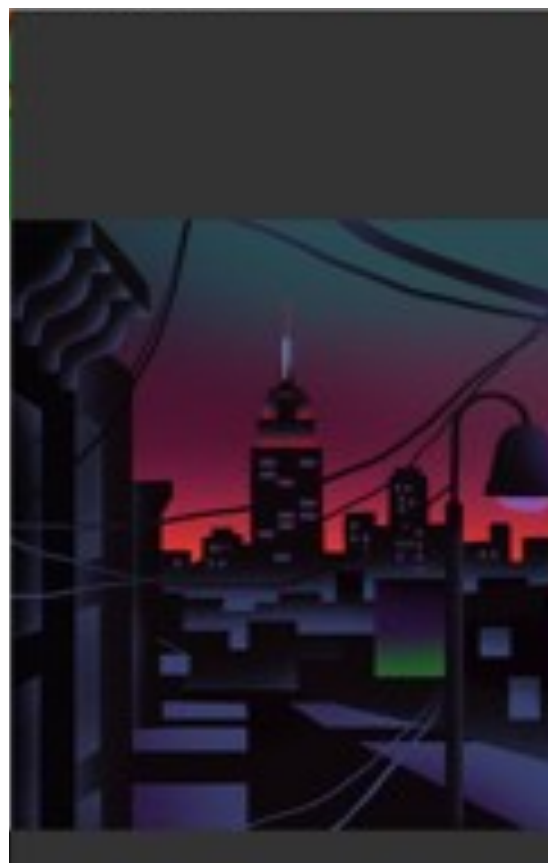
Jerry Saltz link: [https://urldefense.com/v3/_https://www.vulture.com/2020/04/how-the-coronavirus-will-transform-the-art-world.html?utm_source=fb&fbclid=IwAR1j211PFsZyZG4gmiaGB2epmiJZBv1NMgkM9x41kpzd5bqgq2JBcdHxcwQ_!!Fh--17vRJmFW!i_a4yIUz6P4owcuYOy4S1nr6oACgOznILYSiLvqBUXIOzqYwFLMcZT_T1iKRuW6AqVz1pR4\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/_https://www.vulture.com/2020/04/how-the-coronavirus-will-transform-the-art-world.html?utm_source=fb&fbclid=IwAR1j211PFsZyZG4gmiaGB2epmiJZBv1NMgkM9x41kpzd5bqgq2JBcdHxcwQ_!!Fh--17vRJmFW!i_a4yIUz6P4owcuYOy4S1nr6oACgOznILYSiLvqBUXIOzqYwFLMcZT_T1iKRuW6AqVz1pR4$)

“The duality of support and positivity, with an undercurrent of anxiety, I think, speaks to how everyone is feeling right now.

— Ariel Davis

From “17 Artists Capture NY from their Windows”

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/04/16/nyregion/coronavirus-nyc-illustrators-window.html>



R2D2, Museum Docent? Some Art Spaces Are Now Using Robots to Give Locked-Down Visitors Virtual Tours of Their Exhibitions

Sarah Cascone, April 17, 2020, artnet news *Submitted By Rosemarie Gebhart*



As the art world adjusts to the new normal of virtual exhibitions and online viewing rooms, a number of galleries have adopted another tool to help audiences enjoy art from the safety of their homes: robots. Telepresence robots, to be precise, allow viewers to remotely guide the machine through an exhibition while appearing on video chat.

When the English gallery [Hastings Contemporary](#) began offering [robot tours](#) on Monday, they became an instant sensation. Self-isolating art lovers inundated staff with hundreds of booking requests and Hastings has since posted a notice on its website that says it is “overwhelmed and delighted at the interest.” It is now offering priority for “those who are most vulnerable and at risk due to isolation.”

Copy link into search engine: https://news.artnet.com/app/news-upload/2020/04/2015DEY_Beam_V30_print-684x1024.jpg

Gallery view of a Beam ambulatory device tour. Photo courtesy of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco

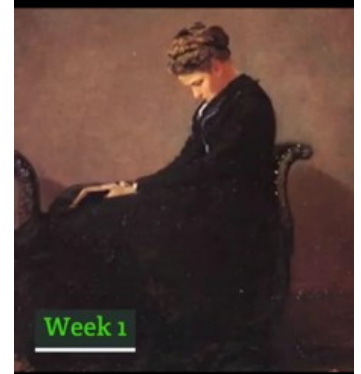
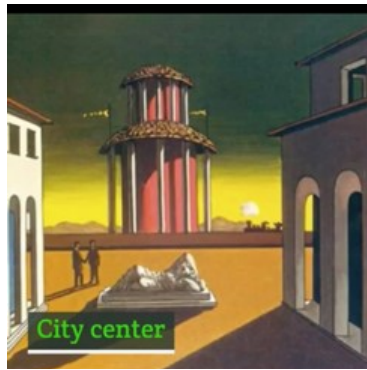


Museums Ask People
To Recreate Famous
Paintings With Any-
thing They Can Find
At Home.

From the Daily Mail

Submitted By Josie Martin

Quarantine through art



Don't count the days.
Make the days count.

A Fun One from Josie
Still life images from Video Clips

Who Would Move during a Pandemic?

By Lori Mohr



Yours truly, that's who. Larry and I were already in escrow on a house in Santa Barbara—15 Rubio Road—before the shelter-in-place order was issued. Larry says we got the last train out of Dodge before everything shut down, including the real estate market. That train is running in slo-mo, but not stalled altogether. So far.

Contracts on both homes — the sale of ours in Ojai and the purchase of Rubio—include language addressing coronavirus with agreements signed by both parties that extend the timeframe for dropping contingencies. Shelter-in-place meant no home inspections, a key element progressing through escrow. Governor Gavin Newsome finally released home inspectors as essential workers to proceed with escrows already in the pipeline. After all, shelter-in-place implies one has a shelter.

That hurdle was not the only one. Moving companies are not scheduling. Donations cannot be picked up. Our decision to move had been fermenting since the Thomas Fire in 2017-18. Ojai and Santa Barbara are both high-risk, of course. But now when fire erupts, we will be in town instead of the country with closer neighbors and speedier access to save our dogs should we be out. Living with dread in Ojai each time I pull out of the driveway is no way to live. It's time to go.

Global pandemic or not, the upside of any move is that deconstructing a home offers time to process the memories as each item is assessed for designation as keep, donate, or trash. As you all know, it's an overwhelming chore. However, the slo-mo pace during COVID-19 offers a more gradual pace of disengagement. Too much change too fast throws me off-kilter, like most of us. But change did come fast, not physically to a new address, but psychologically—the moment our first books left the shelf, it was no longer our Dream Home. Walls of built-in bookshelves. One level. Room for caretakers in our dotage. No, Plan A was to stay here until we couldn't. The frequency of fierce wildfires that come with climate change compelled Plan B.

Our daughter suggests I focus on excitement about the new house. That's easier when you're moving into your Dream Home than out of it. Downsizing is excruciating. Yes, it feels good to shed years of stuff. Yes, I feel



Phase 2 of Consumer Life

lighter. All the clichés apply. I see it as Phase 3 of our consumer lives—Phase 1, the early decades of acquiring stuff, then Phase 2 with a few decades enjoying it, followed by Phase 3... the inevitable resentment when possessions weigh on your shoulders as a burden instead of an asset. Never a member of the minimizing-brings-peace school, I enjoy being surrounded with visual beauty of our books, paintings, pottery, and just cool junk collected from our travels. Now the memories inherent in each object run through my mind like a movie reel as the pragmatic deci-

sion unfolds to keep or toss, depending on a designated spot in the new house. Of course the memories will still be there, but what is the point of iconography if not to jar those memories to life for one more visit? Souvenirs as symbolic representation. They bring me joy.

As time rushes by — I fail to keep track of what day it actually is...a Post It on the bathroom mirror reminds me when *La Muse* changes from “in progress” to “publish today” — the busywork of packing helps me get lost in something other than reality. I can’t focus anyway—it’s a wonder I haven’t sent you the same *La Muse* twice in my distraction. Stacks of boxes with color-coded dots corresponding to a room in the new house are evidence that I have in fact accomplished something. Shopping online for furniture that can’t be delivered and pouring over the floor plan with math paper to scale and tiny cutout furniture requires creativity but doesn’t accomplish a tangible product, like labeled boxes. Still, the activity absorbs anxiety.

Excitement about the new digs does boost my motivation—Larry and I opted for a view and stairs over fire, flood or fog. We love the place, in spite of the stairs. Yet a pall of free-floating anxiety hangs over me as we go through this transition. What will it feel like to wake up in someone else’s house? How long will it take to feel like ours? How will it be living in the city with background noise instead of silence, an ocean instead of mountains, close neighbors instead of distant ones? So many unknowns.

The transition from one house to another feels uncomfortable, but it has an end date. Then the adjustment period begins. Life will be different. Disorienting at first. That won’t last forever either. This move feels like a fitting metaphor—when the stay-at-home orders are lifted, we will face a different world. What will it feel like? How long will it take to get used to not hugging friends? Can the warmest smile really convey the affection in your heart? How will we adjust to no touching at all, no gathering for docent meetings much less touring, at least for a while. When we go to lunch with friends it will be to restaurants with fewer tables and masked servers reaching as far as possible with gloved hands to put food on the table.

In a painting, negative space—the area left blank—says something by virtue of that emptiness. It seems to me that our COVID –19 world is defined by negative space, what is absent rather than what is present—seeing friends, being in the community, doing errands, dining out. Other than FedEx, the streets are still, shrouded in the uncertainty of waiting. Eerie. Surreal.

The challenge is for us to stay healthy, and not live in fear. I am grateful for *La Muse*, the demand of it, the feel of providing some service to the docent council in our group communication. It has saved me from feeling cut off, isolated, out of touch. And doing *La Muse* reminds me that sequestered or not, I am a *part* of something, a connection that has been nurtured over years of shared experience — preparing tours, being on a team, welcoming provisionals, mentoring, refreshment assignments, bus trips, holiday parties, electing officers, celebrating service milestones.

I do not go to church, or belong to a book club or hobby group. The docent council is my community. You are my community. Though I don’t see you at a meeting, I know you are out there. Sustainers, too, the familiarity of their names on the SEND list feels somehow comforting in a time when “familiarity” is at a high premium. Even if we don’t see each other until fall, even if I take a break from *La Muse*, when we do meet again in person, with masks and gloves and spatial separation, that docent bond will be there.

That is how we will emerge into this strange new land—together.

THE LAST PAGE



PPE as Haute Couture

My mask! I thank the Docents so very much for doing this. What is normally an awkward and anxious trip to the museum can at least be a little stylish. Not only was it fun to pick from the different colors and patterns, it made me feel closer to this museum community (**cared for!!**). My sage green tiger mask definitely beats the scary white ones.

I swear, just making the switch to this homemade mask turns a negative to a positive. Something scary into something that helps...and is GOOD.

Love to all,
Elena



Guarding the Guards

"Masked Mike." Wearing one of the masks made by Loree Gold and Molora for the staff. (This happens to be one of Molora's).

Submitted by Patsy

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