

Docent Meetings

**ALL MEETINGS
CANCELLED**

September 25

Graduation and
Service Recognition
Ceremony



Levi Wells Prentice, *Still Life with Berries and Baskets* (detail), 1887. Oil on canvas. SBMA, Gift of Charles and Elma Ralphs Shoemaker. SBMA Small Format American Painting INTERNAL USE ONLY

Dearest Friends,

In lieu of non-existent news this week, I would like to introduce you to the newest queens of our coop— Empress Wu, Cleopatra, and Katherine the Great, or E-Wu, Cleo, and Katie for short. My hope is that these three and their older sisters will be producing so many eggs by next fall, that I will need to hand out the overage at docent council meetings. As it is becoming increasingly evident, it may take a while for everything, including the docent council, to get back to normal. Please be patient with the board and the museum staff over the next couple of months as we work through plans for restarting touring, meetings, and requirements when the time is appropriate. If you are considering taking a leave of absence or moving to Sustainer status next year due to the coronavirus threat, there is no need to make a decision right now. My advise is to wait for preference sheets to come out before deciding to change your status. I hope you all are finding joy in the songs of the wild birds, the warmth of the sun, and the skittering of the lizards, who seem to be everywhere one steps this spring.

Sincerely, Molora



Molora Vadnais, Docent Council President, Pre and Post the arrival of COVID-19 Photo on left by Teda Pilcher

Bruce Robertson on Small Format American Paintings

With a brief note from Patsy

[SMALL-FORMAT]
American Paintings
from the Permanent Collection



Bruce Robertson was to be our Docent Council speaker in early May but, as with so much these days, the ongoing shelter-in-place order has made that impossible. At my request, he sent along a few thoughts on the Small Format Painting show as well as his best wishes to all of you. He asked that this brief commentary be accompanied by the Chase painting, his favorite.

“What I wanted to focus on in my talk was all the reasons why paintings can be small. Are they sketches done outside (much easier to bring small panels or canvases with you than a full-size canvas on a stretcher—the Chase painting)? Or is it a preliminary sketch for a bigger work? Or is it sized just right for the job it needs to do—an intimate look at the corner of a room as in the Walter Gay painting? (next page) Or because there was a market for small paintings to fill in the corner of a decorative scheme: Victorians filled their walls with paintings and needed different sizes—they didn’t “hang on the line” the way museums do. Both the Inness and the McEntee are good examples of small paintings that were ideal for the customer who couldn’t afford a bigger work and could fit in the right corner of the room.



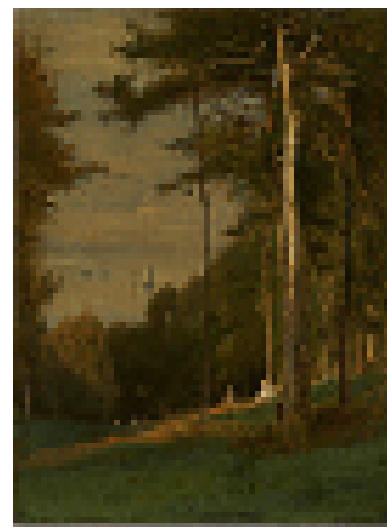
William Merritt Chase (American, 1849-1916). *Children on the Beach*, 1894. Oil on board. 12 ¼ x 15 ½ in.



Jervis McEntee, American, 1828-1891. *Landscape*, 1873, oil on composition board overall: 12 x 10 in

Portraits came in different sizes, depending on how much you wanted to pay (head, head and shoulders, head and shoulders and hands, etc.)

Sometimes the medium tells you why it’s small: a painting on paper attached to canvas (like the Church, next page) must have started outdoors as a plein-air sketch. And then there are artists who use the size of the canvas to experiment with scale and composition. Georgia O’Keeffe is the prime example of an artist who uses the size of a canvas experimentally to determine elements of the composition. When



George Inness (American, 1825-1894) *Early Days on the Hudson*, 1875. Oil on panel 16 x 12 ½ in.



Frederic Edwin Church (American, 1826-1900), *Landscape at Sunset*, 1871. Oil on heavy paper mounted on canvas 8 3/8 x 13 1/4 in.

she would look at a motif—an apple, a leaf or flower—she would work through a series of stretcher sizes—sometimes as many as half-a-dozen before landing on the final, big painting. These smaller works are not preliminary paintings, but just different ways of seeing the same subject.

So *small* has multiple uses.



Walter GAY, American, 1856-1937 ca. *Interior of His Brother's House in Boston*, 1902 oil on canvas overall: 24 7/8 x 20 in

WALL LABEL

The Preston Morton Collection, which forms the core of American art at SBMA, was gifted in 1961 upon the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Museum's founding. In so doing, Preston Morton ensured that SBMA could boast one of the most comprehensive overviews of American art from the 18th to the mid-20th century among mid-sized institutions. The timing of the gift was significant, representing a corrective to the European bias of midcentury canonical modernism and a proud reassertion of home-grown American art.

This selection of small format paintings is a reminder of the breadth of the Museum's holdings in this area. Oil and brush conjure the illusion of near and far persuasively, from the close perspective of still life, to the life-size proportions of bust portraiture, to sublime expanses of land and sky. Whether within hand's reach or at an immeasurable distance, both types of visual experience are captured within the confines of a canvas no more than 15 inches in diameter. Artists represented include William Merritt Chase, Frederic Edwin Church, Jasper Francis Cropsey, Thomas Eakins, Walter Gay, George Inness, George Luks, Jervis McEntee, John Frederick Peto, Levi Wells Prentice, Edward Henry Potthast.

Membership Note



I hope everyone is safe and well. During this time at home, the value of being a Docent becomes even more clear. I miss the interaction and community of other docents. Like many of you, I can stay stimulated—researching, writing, continuing to learn and engage as a docent at home.

Membership hours might not be all that relevant right now, but at least they are something concrete that we can actually complete this year! You can contact me

Pattie Firestone at Pattie.Firestone@gmail.com

Take a Mini Antiquities Tour with Ricki



Unknown, Greek *Head of a Youth Wearing a Phrygian Cap*, 5th c. BCE late 4th c. BCE marble 8 1/2"



Head of Aphrodite. Roman, 2nd century CE. Marble. 11 1/2 in.



Portrait Head of a Bearded Man, Roman, mid-3rd century BCE. Bronze. 11 1/2 x 8 1/2



These three sculptured heads, all gifts of Wright Ludington, will be installed in Thayer Gallery celebrating the opening of our renovated museum. They provide a mini-tour of the development of Greek and Roman sculpture from about 500 BCE to the third century CE. The common practice of saving the head from a damaged or abandoned sculpture saved these remarkable heads for our contemporary world.

We begin with the marble *Phrygian* bearing Greek features though depicting a young colonial from Asia Minor (now northern Turkey), conquered by Alexander the Great in the 4th century BCE. The cap itself signifies liberty. It was worn by emancipated Greek slaves and continued to be worn in Europe into the 19th century as a symbol of freedom.

Our Roman marble *Head of Aphrodite*, 2nd century CE, testifies to the sophisticated style and artistry of Greek marble working. The conquering Romans, became ardent lovers of Greek art, bringing Greek sculptors to Rome as slaves, establishing them in studios, the Roman mountains of marble providing material. In comparing the relatively simple Youth with Phrygian Cap to our powerful goddess of love, with her idealized features, adroitly worked hair and identifying bowknot, we experience first hand the Greek achievement.

The growth of individuality found expression in Roman sculpture in our bronze Bearded Head, 3rd c CE, a portrait of one particular man, possibly a judge, as they were popular subjects for public sculpture. The expertise of the lost wax casting produces a finely articulated surface on the face, revealing the aging skin of the cheeks, the sense of stress and weighty experience around the eyes. We can relate to this face as another person in our world.

Overcoming Covid-19.....one step at a time.

By Joan Dewhirst



For us, the “shelter in place” policy began March 9th. The defining moment was that morning when I viewed a cruise ship anchored in the S.B. harbor. Considering my husband’s chronic lung disease, the decision was immediate. All of our family members applauded the choice and quickly picked up the responsibilities to help us survive without losing necessary creature comforts. Soon the ingredients for dinners from “Hello Fresh” arrived as well as needs from Costco and favorites from Trader Joe’s. Sunday evening ZOOM meetings became our life-line for staying connected amid laughs galore.

Early on Bob and I dove into cleaning projects we never seemed to find time before--- cupboards, closets, messy drawers, disheveled shelves. The efforts were extremely useful. But inspirational? Not so much. Several weeks into home confinement, while shredding a pile of old files, I had a *Carpe diem* moment. Realizing this life-style was not about to change anytime soon, I began thinking of something new to do, that would be not just challenging—but a little bit crazy and fun. And something that wouldn’t interfere with my intellectual pursuits to complete several PowerPoint art talks as a member as a member of the CSP team.

Secretly, I had wanted to tap dance ever since 2011 as a Provisional Docent, when I chose the Dancing Krishna for my three-minute presentation. Such a cute little guy—smiling and dancing with joy. And he is posture-perfect even while balancing on just one leg! He wears no clothes...just a smile and lots of accessories.



It was easy finding tap dancing classes online—I chose “Learn-to-Dance” with instructor Rod Howell. Leather tap shoes were recommended by most professionals, as was a dance floor made of oak. It doesn’t splinter.

I am currently on my 6th of a series of 12 classes, learning a new step each class. I love both the “Dig Toe-Step Heel” and the “Flap” but the **king** of all steps is “The Shuffle.” (Just watch an old Fred Astaire movie...his shuffles are heart-stopping!) You basically do a “brush” toe-step to the side and a strong “spank” toe-step as you come back. The strokes have to be clean...tap is all about the perfect sound.

Unlike Krishna, I wear clothes when I dance. I like to practice with background music from the BeeGee’s “Stayin’ Alive” with new lyrics to parody Covid-19...“Stayin’ Inside”.

Oh, excuse me-- that’s my cue to start brushing and spanking. “It’s the Corona.....I’m going nowhere.....just stayin’ inside.”

My Tap shoes



Part 1 of shuffle step (The Brush)



Part 2 of shuffle step (The Spank)



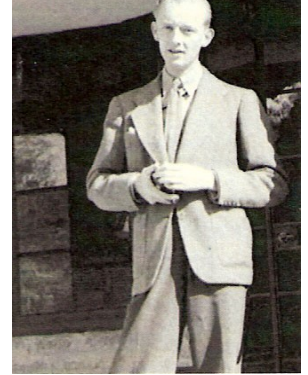
Tibet, Another World: Revisiting F. Bailey Vanderhoef, Jr. and his Gifts to SBMA

Lori Mohr Interviews Lifelong friend, Pam Melone, 2008

As a new docent in 2007, I was eager to write for *La Muse*. For an upcoming show, *A Tibet Expedition in 1938: Gifts from Two Explorers*, curated by Susan Tai, she gave me the opportunity to interview F. Bailey Vanderhoef, Jr. about his long relationship with SBMA. Mr. Vanderhoef agreed to the interview at his home in Ojai, but that was not to be—he died before that meeting. But his companion and lifelong friend, Pam Melone, was gracious enough to invite me over to talk about Mr. Vanderhoef. The photographs here were taken by him and are in his memoir published in 2011 by SBMA and The Dept. of Religious Studies at UCSB.

While packing this week, I came across the unpublished manuscript Pam had given me in 2008. I couldn't put it down. So I dug through my archives for the *La Muse* interview twelve years ago. This is Part 1.

F. Bailey Vanderhoef, Jr.
Nov 1913-April 2008



Mural details portraying aspects of Buddha from the Pelkbor Chode monastery in Kumbum. The photos are among the earliest color images from Tibet, and the only ones that survived the trip.

Buddhas [6th century] that were destroyed in 2001 by the Taliban. He and his friend had brand new cameras from Kodak, which was developing this new technique—color photography.

Lori: So he was already an accomplished scholar and explorer at age twenty-four before going to Tibet!

Pam: Yes. I think that first trip to Afghanistan just spurred him on...he had traveled and collected his whole life, but his Tibetan collection was really developed in that trip in '38.

Lori: Was his degree in art history?

In June 1938 at the ages of 24 and 25, F. Bailey Vanderhoef, Jr., affectionately referred to as Billy, and his Harvard buddy Wilbur L. Cummings, Jr., set off to explore a part of the world shrouded in mystique and largely inaccessible to Westerners to photograph the famous *Lama* dances in Gyantse, Western Tibet. They traveled 200 miles in 10 days along an ancient trade route from Kalimpong, India to Gyantse. Pam Melone recalls the experience.

Lori: Pam, tell me how this 1938 trip came about for two college guys.

Pam: Billy and Bill Cummings—"the two Billys"—had taken a class at Harvard on Tibet and were just dazzled. In some way or other, they managed to arrange an expedition under the Fogg [Harvard Art Museum] umbrella.

Lori: The Fogg sent these two guys to Tibet?

Pam: [Leaning forward] No, somehow Billy put the right people together—all friends of his family's. But the university allowed this little expedition...I mean, you think of it in terms of today and it never would've happened.

But he was well-to-do, had the time, the interest, the education, and the experience. Billy had already been to Afghanistan two years earlier to photograph the great Bamyán Bud-



Monks adoring Buddha.



“Our caravan consisted of one guide, two grooms, three muleteers, and eight pack animals, mules, horses and yaks.”

Pam: [Shakes her head]. He never graduated. The guys went to Tibet between junior and senior year. When they got back, the war had broken out. Billy went back to Greenwich [CT], where he grew up. He wasn't sure he would be drafted or not. But Bill Cummings *was* drafted—and killed in the war. After that, Billy just kind of poked around. He studied, he traveled. But he'd lost his best friend.

Lori: What an extraordinary experience they shared. [Pause] Tibet was pretty isolated, inaccessible to Westerners in 1938. How did they get in?

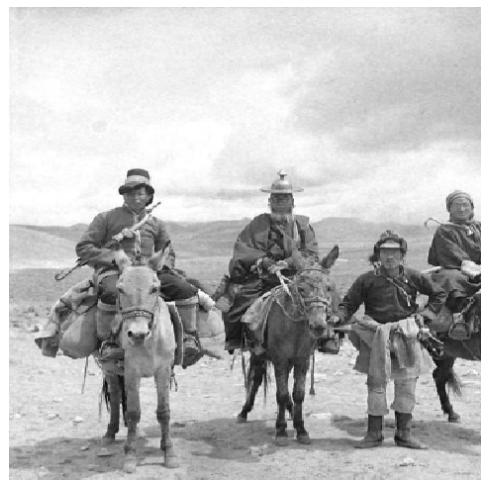
Pam: It's hard to remember that that they were college kids who basically just went off on a toot and everybody let them because they were from

Harvard and could afford to sponsor themselves. He and Bill were issued the fourth and fifth Western permits

into Tibet—that's how few people from the West had been there. And of course, there was no embassy back then, so they were under the care of the British consul who took care of any Westerners, you know, making sure they behaved themselves and that everyone was all right.

Lori: Where did they stay until they got their permits?

Pam: With the Ogling family in India, in Kalimpong, known to the embassy, while they waited. The permits were not a done deal. And once they were in Tibet, they weren't exactly sure how they would do it, but the goal was to buy things for the [Fogg] museum. They got sherpas to help them find a place to live and they made it known that they were looking for ... 'goodies' ... as Billy would say. And of course the museum made out like gangbusters because these boys bought for the museum but were smart enough to buy for themselves, too.



“The dignified gentleman in the middle was a *Rimpoche*, a reincarnated *Lama*. Our paths crossed when his group stopped for lunch. His attendants served him soup and curry in a beautiful white and green jade bowls. He was fascinated by the zipper on my mess kit.” (See bowl image)

Lori: In her lecture, Susan [Tai] shared the wonderful story of Mr. Vanderhoef and a Tibetan man making a trade—a United States military mess kit with a zippered canvas bag in trade for jade bowls.

Pam: Yes, that's a good story. Once it was known they were looking, people would just arrive with things. But the guys had to be indirect about it, respectful. The country, as it is now, was very poor. A lot of Tibetans had art in their homes and some of that was being sold. So, hoping to find interesting pieces, they bought from the people and they also had things made to bring back. They had their sterling Indian rupees melted



down into objects – the butter lamps [in the show] and teapots and things. Billy found a lovely teapot – it's downstairs on a table – which was just sitting on the coals of the fire of this yak butter tea, which was really the only hot drink, and of course it



This is our silversmith's home. The fellow on the right made a pair of small butter lamps from the Indian rupees we provided.



“We found this little old lady making small rugs...we learned that she was 33 years old. You would’ve thought she was 75. A hard life...but you had to admire her jolly spirit.”

just *burned* the bottom of the silver pot out. He bought it, brought it back, took it to Tiffany’s and had the bottom re-made. They also brought back the first two Lhasa Apsos that ever came into this country.

Lori: [Big grin] Is that right? I love those little dogs!

Pam: [Smiling] I asked Billy one night how in the world...? And you know, he said that in those days, nobody said anything, you just carried them under your arm, got on a boat and that was it! It was a different world then. But he’s had Lhasa Apsos ever since.

Lori: [Giggling]. Given the history of his expedition at a time when Tibet was still an unknown, mystical world makes these pieces particularly precious. They must have had such meaning for him.

Pam: They really did...til the end.

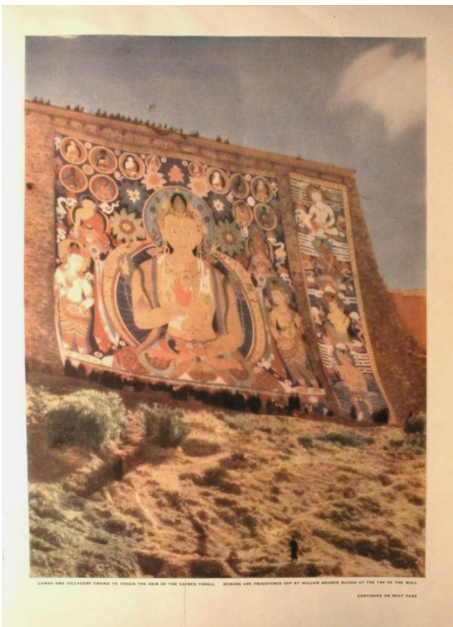
Lori: What impact did this expedition have on his life do you think?

Pam: [Thoughtfully] I think this trip...really... framed his life in many ways. He’s not a Buddhist – he had no interest in the religious part of it—and he had no political interest in Tibet, he wasn’t political. It was just about the art.

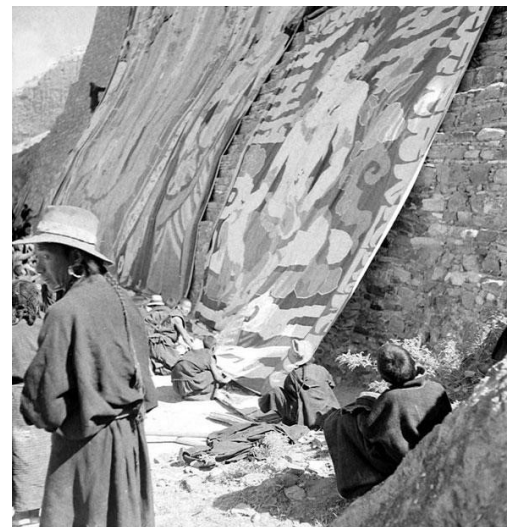
Lori: Yet he was pursuing these religious objects?

Pam: Well, in Tibet, everything is religious. But I’ll tell you something *very* interesting. He had been downstairs in a hospice situation and one day he called me down and said, ‘I want you to look in that cupboard for something – it’s a rock. It looks like a green baked potato.’ So I went and got the rock. He said it was a piece of jade from Tibet and he wanted me to go build a fire and get the rock as hot as I could, then wrap it in a towel and bring it to him. So, I went – I

did it on the stove – and brought it to him. He put it under the covers. I asked if he was cold and he said yes – even though he had an electric blanket – but he said he found the rock in Tibet and had used it in his sleeping bag to keep warm. I’ve known Billy since I was 15 and I’d never heard him mention this rock, and to remember it now, near the end, to know exactly where it was, and ask for it... that’s something that obviously had some spiritual, emotional remembrance that comforted him. ■



The Saga Dawa Festival celebrating the Day Buddha Obtained Enlightenment, 15th day of the 4th lunar month. Below: “The great *Thangka* is enormous, in three sections, the center one featuring The Buddha of Wisdom (Manjusri) measuring about 100’ square. Made entirely from pieces of brocade which have been sewn together. Our pictures from that day were published in Life Magazine the next year (1939).”



“The great thangka was only hung on the pylon for two hours (6-8 am) and was taken down before sunrise. Here the folding had already begun. “

Look for Part II in next weeks *La Muse*

The Last Page



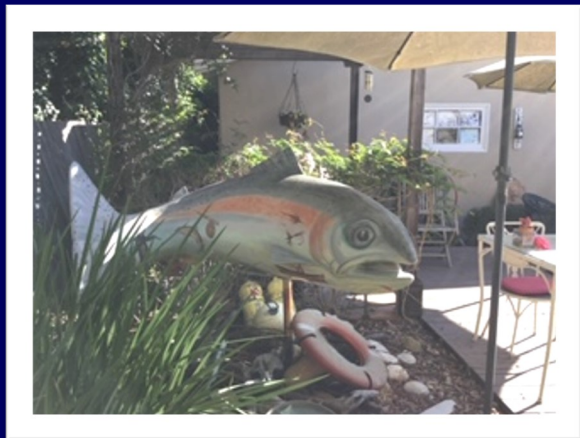
Carpinteria Community Garden

Submitted by Teda

Residents are allowed to rent one plot per household. We have a waiting list! I've had my garden for 16 months. SB Master Gardeners give classes on organic gardening, and SBCC nutritionists send out recipes for current harvests. We have several plots designated for our schools. The Community Garden has been a life saver for me, an enchanting place to be, especially now.



Ann Hammond's
Garden Art
*Left: The barrel hoop
now has lights!*



Below: The Big Fish
was acquired ca
2007, artist Chrissie
Venables. There
were approx. 10
sculptures exhibited
on State Street.



Happy Cinco de Mayo! *Submitted by Ricki*

Editor Loriwindsormohr@gmail.com

