

La Muse

Docent Dates

Lectures 10 am
Coffee 9:15

2020 DOCENT MEETING DATES

January 15

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

February 5

February 19

March 4

March 18

April 1

April 15

May 6

May 20

Guest Speaker info will be published as available and may be subject to change.



Jim Drain, (American, b. 1975) *Peaceable Kingdom*, 2017, acrylic and colored pencil on Bristol paper, 20 x 24 in. SBMA Museum purchase with funds provided by The Basil Alkazzi Acquisition Fund

Dear Docents,

Welcome to the dawn of the new decade. The year 2020 is upon us, thus bringing with it plans for the long-awaited opening of our newly remodeled galleries. The Docent New Year is always a time to look forward to bright new beginnings.

Our remodeled galleries, new exhibitions and great touring teams will be working together to bring the best experiences the SBMA docents have to offer to our museum guests. Soon, all the remodeling inconveniences will only seem a thing of the past. All the joys of being a docent are before us. Happy New Year to you all.

Mary Joyce Winder ■



Mary Joyce Winder
Docent Council
President

From our Membership Chair



REMEMBER...you can email your service hours to me anytime, day or not. Pattie ■

pattie.firestone@gmail.com

From our Vice President



Patty Santiago

I hope everyone is enjoying the holiday season. It was wonderful to see so many docents, including provisionals, at the annual Holiday Party. Once again, a big thank you to Andrea Gallo and her husband for sharing their beautiful home with us. It was a lovely evening. The beginning of December also brought, finally, our bus trip to the Getty Center. Not only was the “Manet and Modern Beauty” exhibition fabulous, but the two curator-led tours were truly outstanding. It was well worth the wait and the extra work involved in re-

scheduling. I will, hopefully, have an update on an upcoming spring bus trip at the January 15th Docent Council meeting.

As Gail Stichler so graciously reported in my absence at the last meeting, plans are tentatively being made for another trip to New York City this spring—Monday, April 27th through Friday, May 1st. At this point, we are trying to determine if there is enough interest to pursue planning the trip. If you think you might be interested, please sign up at the next meeting. Friends and family are always welcome.

Patty ■

Our day at The Getty Center



From our Student Teams Co-chairs



Irene Stone

December saw a curtailed request for tours, though those scheduled included students from Kindergarten to grade 8, with up to 90 students expected. We anticipate that more tours will be scheduled as classes begin the new year. We also appreciate that touring docents are able to be flexible with the kinds of tours requested, whether traditional Museum Tours or the new Artful Making tours.

Again, our wish for peace, good health and joy in the new year to you and yours,



Teda Pilcher

Irene and Teda ■

From our Adult Teams Co-chairs



Vikki Duncan

It is official – 2020 will be a fabulous year for Docents and our Museum. Looking ahead—we will have American and Contemporary exhibitions from late winter through summer; our wonderful new class will graduate this spring; the Museum will RE OPEN in glory mid-summer; and we will be showcasing one of SBMA’s greatest exhibits ever, paying homage to Vincent Van Gogh, his influences and legacy.



Christine Holland

And now, even with reduced gallery space, Docents have been doing a great job for our public. In November, we gave a total of 36 tours to 213 visitors, for an average of six/tour. In addition, there were two Special Request tours for 26 visitors, and nine Community Speaker presentations for a total of 139 attendees. On to news of the upcoming exhibitions!

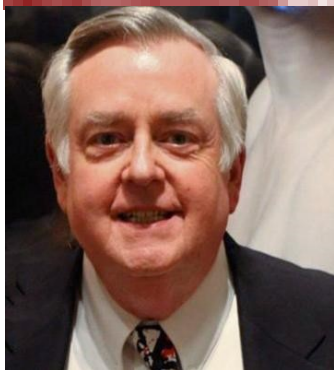
1) *New Acquisitions* (March 22 - August 30, 2020) will be colorful and surprising with more than 30 works—some familiar (Wim Delvoye’s “Installation with 23 Saw Blades” will return), and some new artists introduced from our Permanent Collection. This exhibition will be installed in two galleries on a staggered schedule to accommodate fire sprinkler upgrades. Preston Morton is slated to open on March 22 with the featured works-on paper through July 5th, 2020. Davidson Gallery, featuring acrylic and oil paintings and free-standing works, is scheduled to open May 3rd and close August 30th, 2020. Look for an email checklist this first week of January.

2) *Small-Format American Paintings from the Permanent Collection* (March 22 – October 25, 2020) will hang in the works-on-paper room in Ridley-Tree Gallery. The still lifes—life-size bust portraiture, and landscapes in oil (no more than 15” across) illustrate the strength of American Modernism from the 18th to the mid-20th century. Featured works include Frederic Edwin Church’s *Landscape at Sunset*, 1871; William Merritt Chase’s, *Children on the Beach*, 1894; Thomas Eakins’ *Portrait of ‘Master Douty’* (a.k.a. *Alfred Douty*, 1891–1971), 1906; Walter Gay’s, *Interior of the House of the Artist’s Brother in Boston*, 1902; and Levi Wells Prentice’s *Still Life with Berries and Baskets* (1887). Images and brief histories of these featured works will appear in color in SBMA’s Newsletter for January, February, and March 2020, with a check list to follow for Docents.

In forming new teams, Docents who lost assignments due to exhibition changes this year will have priority for finishing service hour requirements. Docents interested in adding a new team to their current tours, as well as those who might consider switching from Summer Highlights to one of the new teams will be in the second round of placement consideration. Look for an email this week to sign up on a team for touring one of these new exhibitions!

Vikki and Christine ■

From our Provisional Co-Chairs



Ralph Wilson

Dear Colleagues,

The provisional class gave the best of holiday gifts to the Docent Council—all 20 passed the crucial 3-minute presentation! The evaluators commented on the excellence of many of the talks, and needless to say, the provisionals are very relieved to have this initial challenge completed.

Our thanks go to the evaluators—Laura DePaoli, Mary Ellen Hoffman, Christine Holland, Kathryn Padgett, Gretchen Simpson, and Irene Stone. Their expert analysis and coaching

are always much appreciated. Now it's on to the 8-minute exercise....

Our best wishes for the New Year to everyone,

Ralph and Patty ■



Patty Santiago

From our Community Speakers Program Team Leaders



Kathryn Padgett

Did you Know?

- That CSP is a program within the Docent Council? Each team member creates her own art talks and gives them throughout Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties at venues including libraries, public and private organizations, private clubs, and senior communities.
- That the Docent Council always has had a community outreach program? Art Talks used to be given with slides, which became irrelevant and the program was discontinued. By 2015 new technology gave us PowerPoint presentations. The program was revived with wider community outreach.



Shirley Waxman

- That CSP offers a variety of art talks? You can get an electronic brochure describing each one and which team member presents it by contacting Shirley Waxman or Kathryn Padgett.
- That all CSP public talks are listed on the museum's web site under "Community Outreach" and in *La Muse* each month? Public talks include libraries, for example. You can contact any one of the CSP team members to arrange attending a private CSP talk.
- That from January 1, 2019 to December 31 the CSP team gave 118 talks to 2,626 attendees?
- That you can be part of the team? For more information contact Shirley Waxman or Kathryn Padgett.
- Do you know who is on this amazing docent team? Our roster consists of Joan Dewhirst, Lori Mohr, Kathryn Padgett, Gretchen Simpson, Shirley Waxman, Molora Vadnais.

Experiencing Tatsuo Miyajima: a Quantum Challenge

by Ricki Morse



Tatsuo Miyajima's energetic light displays are simultaneously disarming in their simplicity and challenging in their experiential power. They offer no images to engage our thoughts, just the numerals 1 through 9, anonymous and universal. He describes his art as arising from Eastern philosophies, particularly Buddhism, and offers three concepts which his work embodies: keep changing, continue forever, and connect with everything.

As we enter his LED light displays, the first steps of being present come to mind: slow down, let go. Free the mind of all it is carrying and allow the flow of light, color and numerals to fill consciousness. Release all intent to understand, effect or manage. Be present to the movement through time and space within your consciousness.

"Without viewers, art wouldn't exist. People create meaning from art when they interact with it. I like to give viewers lots of empty space and clear images so that they have enough mental space to relax in." Tatsuo Miyajima, 1995, interview in *ART Asia Pacific* 1997.



Tatsuo Miyajima (b. 1957), photo 1990s. His enigmatic smile carries the Buddhist sense of whimsy and humor inherent in his art.



Time Waterfall-panel #12, 2018, computer graphics, LED display

Keep Changing. In a production-oriented society, this seems wasteful, wiser to develop a strategy, then repeat and codify it. Rather, in Buddhist thinking the model already exists in nature and the possibility of grasping the meaning of it all comes with experiencing the vast shifting nature of our universe, by embracing change. It is a philosophy rooted in the unique experience of the individual—just as Miyajima is offering each visitor an internal experience of change/movement through time.

Continue Forever. The possibility of eternal life arises out of "keep changing and connect with everything." But this is not an individual eternal life. Rather it is an aspect of the universe. As we release forms to change and to connect with other forms, they continue to evolve endlessly. In Buddhist thought, fear of death is meaningless, the product of "holding on." Miyajima's forms embody this constant emerging and allow us to experience the dynamic nature of our universe. So there is no zero, which he calls a Western concept, among his numerals, just as there is no beginning and no ending. There is only the movement of time.

Connect With Everything.

Many years ago when I was studying Buddhism, I found this idea daunting. My husband, who read quantum physics as a hobby, said he was familiar with it. Quantum theory posits that at the moment of the Big Bang, a certain number of photons, elemental particles, were created. Those photons still exist. And they are still the **same** ones.



Arrow of Time, 2018, LED, IC, electric wire, iron.



Hoto, 2019, LED, steel frame, glass mirror and electronic components

Again, taking his model from natural phenomena, Miyajima re-envisions a connection throughout the universe of all matter. His numerals tumbling through space provide an experience of this random connectedness.

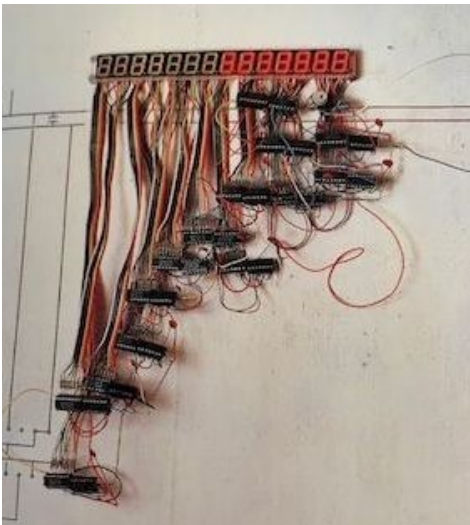
Michael Auping, curator of Miyajima's 1996 exhibition at the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, traces the artist's development as a search for materials and movement which embody the on-goingness of time. Following the exhibitions from his earliest as a performance artist, I began to understand the nature of his search—to provide viewers with an experience of time, not a landscape or a portrait but a felt sense of being in "Big Time," the title of the Fort Worth exhibition.

In 1981, as a 24 year old undergraduate at Tokyo University of Fine Arts and Music, Miyajima photographed, videoed and recorded the reactions of people on the street as he stood on the sidewalk and screamed. Influenced by the performance art of Joseph Bueys, Allan Krapow and Christo, "happenings" popular in Europe and the related Gutai paintings in Japan, Miyajima sought a means to engage his audience in an experience of time. He had entered graduate school studying painting when he wrote, "After 1984, I stopped the performances because it was not always accessible for the audience. I only performed a work once, I never repeated a performance. If you missed it, you would never see it again. That was important, but a weakness, not accessible enough."



Voice, 1981, Performance, Tokyo. Miyajima stands in the tan coat in the center of the picture.

After experimenting for a few years with electronic devices, what he thought of as performing objects, which he brought together in "family" groups for exhibition, he turned in 1987 directly to his philosophical trilogy—keep changing, continue forever, connect with everything. *It Goes On Changing* contrasts his electronic TV signals with Piet Mondrian's 1944 *Victory Boogie Woogie*, a work he much admired. *Clock for 300 Thousand Years* is a clock that counts seconds for 300,000 years, yet is still finite, underlining the relentless nature of infinite time. The third, *Nachi Falls*, displays images of a famous scenic spot, from early 13th century paintings through videos of the waterflow itself, ending in 16th century flower painting viewed submerged in a pool of water at the base of the "falls." The centuries-long waterfall connects everything.



Clock for 300 Thousand Years, 1987, LED, electric wire, line tape.

Pleased with the philosophical exhibition, the artist still sought some device by which to express all three ideas in one installation and in 1988 began to experiment with light emitting diodes (LED), "gadgets," as he called them, which counted from 1 to 9 repeatedly. In *Sea of Time*, 1988, 300 LED counters are strung over a black surface, interconnected randomly, shifting their numerals at the speed of the heart beat. He had



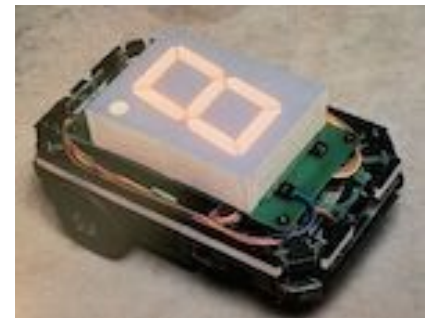
Sea of Time, 1988, LED, electrical wiring.

found his gadget; now the search for a “style” and “canvas” on which to project his vision began in earnest.

Between 1989 and 1991 Miyajima engaged in his most elaborate mathematical exploration, entitled *133651*, which, if constructed, would require vast space covered by counting diodes, modeling unending universal connections and reconfigurations. A chunk of the *133651* mathematical field of a universe culminated in *Counter 3000*, 1991, which “consists of 300 groups of 10 counters each—the largest number of units the artist has used to date—spread floor to ceiling over four surrounding walls. The

viewer is virtually immersed in a galaxy of changing numbers.” — Michael Auping, *Big Time*. Imagine being engulfed in a multi-dimensional *Sea of Time* of changing numbers.

Recognizing the difficulty of communicating the mathematical concepts of *133651* to visitors and desiring a more chaotic mobility in his installations, he began to develop the U-car in 1991. He secured diodes on the tops of tiny cars which ran around randomly, bouncing off walls and other cars, changing direction, never stopping. Always changing, never stopping, connecting, the U-cars (U for uncertainty) reenact quantum physics principles, even Heisenberg’s Uncertainty principle, as well as his own Buddhist view of an always evolving world. Miyajima says, “I chose the car for two reasons. First because it moves. Second because of its relationship to our concept of time, to the idea of time history.”



Running Time, 1994, LED, IC,

Enticing and entertaining, the tiny cars with always changing numerals are hard to resist and remind us of the playfulness in Buddhist thought, sort of an “anything could happen and probably will” sort of world which delights and surprises.

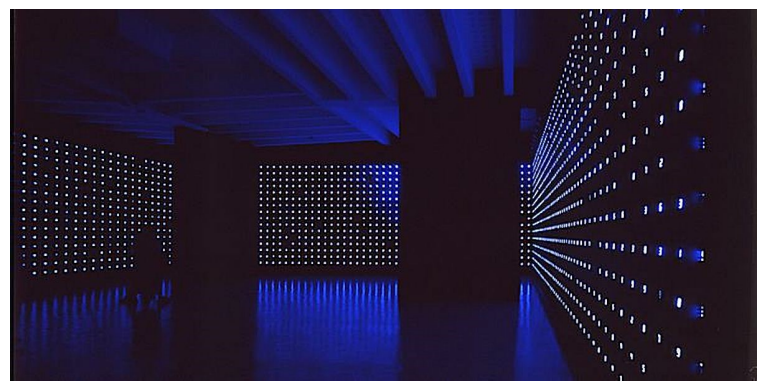


T. L. Sakura, 2005, LED, steel frame, glass mirror, electronic components. This work sold for \$350,000 to a private buyer.

These two final works capture the global feel of his recent installation from the *Mega Death* walls at MCA Australia, Sydney, each LED representing one living human at this moment, blinking off as one dies, and the newly commissioned work in Helsinki, *Sky of Time*. Miyajima continues to invent new ways of experiencing the movement of time and our part in it. He is now a universally recognized sculptor and installation artist. ■



Mega Death, 1999/2016, Exhibition Connect With Everything at Museum of Contemporary Art Australia.



Sky of Time, 2019, commissioned by the ESPOO Museum of Modern Art, Helsinki. Currently on view.

Miyajima Biographical Notes

Tatsuo Miyajima says, "My family had lived in the same area for generations, which makes me one of those rare 'Edokko,' a native of Tokyo." His father was a carpenter and his mother a hairdresser, and as a child Tatsuo thought he would also be a carpenter. They were a close family, and still are.

Born in 1957, when asked how he found art, Tatsuo says, *By chance, I guess. I had to repeat my third year of middle school because I was sick for most of the year. I was a year older than most of the other kids, which made it difficult for me to make close friends in high school. I spent a lot of time reading and was fascinated by the lives of famous artists. I joined the school's art club, and found that I liked art a lot."*

He wanted to attend Tokyo University of Fine Art and Music, the most prestigious art school in Japan, and failed in his first attempt at the rigorous entrance exam, but after several years of study, he was accepted and ultimately awarded a B.A. in oil painting (1984) and an M.A. degree (1986).

Miyajima received grants to study in New York City in 1990, in Berlin in 1991 and in Paris in 1993. In 1998 he was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of the Arts in London. In 2006 he was appointed Vice President of Tohoku University of Art and Design, a position he held until 2016. In 2012 he became Vice President at Kyoto University of Art and Design. Today he lives near his studio in Ibaraki Prefecture, 20 miles north of Tokyo.

He is one of Japan's most famous contemporary sculptors and installation artists and has exhibited in one-man shows through the world.

Art of the Way

By Molora Vadnais



By definition, the Camino Frances is a 790 km pilgrimage route across northern Spain from the Pyrenees to the cathedral in Santiago de Compostela, where legend says St. John's body was interred. But to pilgrims, the route is as much an inner journey as an actual journey offering peace, redemption, and a revival of faith; or for some, simply an escape from modern life. When I decided to walk "The Way" as the Camino Frances is lovingly nick-

named, I expected to be inspired by the remote scenery of the miles of wheat fields of the hot *meseta*, the majesty of the Lyon cathedral, and the festiveness of Pamplona. What I did not expect, however, was to be inspired by art. After all,





with the exception of the Guggenheim in Bilbao, northern Spain is not, and has never been, a mecca for fine art. Besides, most of the route travels through tiny, remote villages that were built during the late middle ages as way stops for pilgrims. And, except for the addition of running water and electricity, these villages have changed little since their founding.

But there actually is much art to be appreciated on the Way. Local communities painted murals and commissioned sculptures to celebrate the pilgrimage route. Meanwhile pilgrims produced impromptu "land art" out of the plethora of rocks that plague Spanish agriculture, and memorialized friends, relatives, other pilgrims, and their own journeys by leaving mementos at high places or other significant milestones. Finally, as one might expect with so many people now walking the Way, graffiti is rampant. Surprisingly, however, unlike much

of the graffiti present in our cities, the graffiti on the Way is usually uplifting and often humorous. Below is a sampling for your enjoyment. Please pardon the quality of the images, the lack of specificity of location, and the lack of attribution to the artists. Carrying a good camera while walking was not possible and neither was waiting for better light or for the rain to stop. ■





The Last Page

Photos by Molora



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