

Docent Meetings

Via ZOOM

October 7

Alina Kozlovski, Dept. Curatorial Asst: Teaching art & archaeology w/ SBMA antiquities

October 21

Alina Kozlovski, Dept. Curatorial Asst: Race and ethnicity in the ancient Greco-Roman world

November 4

Rachel Skokowski, Curatorial Exhibition Research Assistant. "From Copper to Color: Printmaking in 19th c. France."

November 18

Holly Chen, Curatorial Assistant, Asian Art on Japanese Woodblock Prints

December 2

TBD

December 16

TBD

January 6

TBD

January 20

TBD



"Ozymandias", Charles Garabedian, 1981-1983
Acrylic on canvas, 32 in. x 24 in. *In the Meanwhile, Part 2.*

Ozymandias

By Percy Bysshe Shelley

I met a traveller from an antique land,
Who said – "Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. . . . Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed;
And on the pedestal, these words appear:
My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings;
Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal Wreck, boundless and bare

The lone and level sands stretch far away."

Dear Docents,

On a warm, sunny September afternoon under the shade of the trees in front of the Ridley-Tree Education Center; Rachel, Karen and I, masked and socially distant, handed out diplomas to the Provisional Docent Class of 2020. It was, of course, a bittersweet experience. The graduation ceremony is typically a high note ending our service year as we welcome the New Actives into our docent family. The ceremony did, however, bookmark the end of what has been a uniquely challenging provisional training year. And when we are together once again, I'm sure we will all have an opportunity to get to know you better. As docents we pride ourselves on being flexible, generous, and supportive. Now we can add 'patient' to that adjective list. We *will* be together again in some form, some time.

For now, it's ZOOM. We had a good turnout for our first council meeting last week to kick off the new service year. (If you were unable to participate, you can access the video under the Art tab on the docent website). Larry Feinberg's slide show on the renovation was inspiring. I don't know about you, but after seeing the changes and beautiful new gallery spaces, I can't wait to



Patty Santiago
Docent Council
President

see it in person!

Larry reminded us that our permanent collection will be exhibited in these new galleries. In preparation, that will be our focus for the next few Docent Council lectures. In October, we'll have two lectures on Antiquities. And, in November we'll be looking at French printmaking and Japanese woodblock prints. Before either of those, in this issue, Ricki focuses on another two artists from *In the Meanwhile* to get us started. For the meeting lectures on ZOOM, Rachel will send the link via email on the Mondays prior to the meetings. The link is also posted on the docent website. Be sure to join us live!

We may not be at the Museum, but docents have jumped at the chance to augment whatever activities we've all been doing on our own. Response to the Interest Sheets was excellent, with 63 docents answering the call. Rachel and Patsy are devising strategies for implementing various activities docents voiced an interest in.

The Travel Talks team will choose from a list of 29 art works that invite exploration of a specific place in the world. Community Pen Pals, led by Loree Gold, has over 100 senior home residents who want to participate. And, finally, the very popular Storytelling team will have a 4 -week virtual workshop with sessions beginning at the end of October.

There's a lot to be excited about while we await the reopening. And loose ends to tie up— Docent Council dues are past due. Once those of you who remain unpaid have sent your checks, I will no longer have to include a reminder in my message. Make your check payable to: **SBMA Docent Council**, \$35 for active docents and \$45 for sustaining docents, to: Jeff Vitucci, 321 E. Padre St., Santa Barbara, CA 93105

Patty



Evening Snow in Terajima Village (detail) . Kawase HASUI, Japanese, 1883-1957, from the series "Twelve Episodes of Tokyo", 1920, Color woodblock print,

Nomination for DOCENT of the YEAR

From Past President Mary Joyce Winder

Dear Fellow Docents,

It has been a most unusual service year with the pandemic, with life disrupted on so many levels. As Past President, it is my honor and my pleasure to continue a familiar annual ritual by announcing my selection for the Docent of the Year Award, 2019 – 2020.

This was an easy selection for several reasons. Last February, severely ill, I got news from doctors that I had contracted a life-threatening lung disease requiring a transplant to save my life. This dire news, along with my waning physical strength, compelled me to step down as acting Docent Council President. As interim president, I needed a docent who could step into the job seamlessly. Molora Vadnais was the obvious choice. As a past president of the Docent Council, Molora would know how to serve with the kindness and thoughtfulness required of our leader.

There is a great deal to say about this Renaissance woman, but I will limit it to a few. Before joining our council, Molora worked as a CIA analyst. She also had tenure as a Santa Barbara Police Officer. Today Molora is a practicing lawyer, and she still finds the time to contribute to our Council.

Graduating from the provisional class of 2008-2009, she eagerly served for years on both the Student touring and Adult touring teams, her student touring service going beyond the required four years. As a Docent Council Board member she came up with the idea for the evening Ten Talks Team. She went on to tour Ten Talks, garnering praise from visitors. Molora also expanded our touring repertoire to include new categories, one resulting in the Techniques Team. She went on to tour on that team as well.

In addition to touring, many of you may not know that Molora was responsible for bringing the model of the Lararium to us, having it built and personally financing the project, which generated numerous student activities with hands-on learning through this architectural model of an ancient Roman building. Outside the Museum, Molora took her talents on the road, participating in the very popular Community Speakers Program. She is a meticulous researcher and has contributed to our research papers on the Docent Website. As a member of the Docent Council Board for years, Molora contributed to methodologies and decisions that created a fair and equitable treatment for all Docents. She is known for thinking outside of the box and also for producing truly creative ideas that translate into innovative programs.

The Docent Council is a better organization for her efforts and contribution. It is with respect and admiration that I choose this fellow docent for the Docent of the Year Award 2019-2020.

I applaud Molora and all who serve on the council.

Sincerely,

Mary J. Winder

Immersion in Assemblage: In The Meanwhile II

by Ricki Morse



Julie Joyce has provided a marvelous opportunity for us to experience two gems of the art of assemblage, highlighted by our recent acquisition of an Edward Kienholz work, *The Little Eagle Rock Incident*. But first, some background.

A little over a hundred years ago Marcel Duchamp, a French-American conceptual artist and proponent of Dada, submitted a work named *Fountain* and signed it "R. Mutt" for display in a New York City exhibition. It was an ordinary wall-mounted urinal. The work was photographed by Alfred Stieglitz, published and heralded as an avant-

garde landmark of "readymade art."

The fact that a manufactured object was presented as a work of art was of great significance, heralding the primacy of the "idea" in conceptual art, proclaiming that the artist's idea IS the artistic act, not requiring the skill of making an object.

Artists had been appropriating everyday objects for some time. Picasso and Braque included newsprint and collected objects, which we think of as *collage*. Picasso began to incorporate found fragments into his cubist sculptures. Salvador Dali and other Surrealists incorporated mannequins and other found objects. European artists were free to incorporate whatever

came to hand, but it was an American, Edward Kienholz, who brought the appropriated detritus of modern society into its sharpest focus with his installations, from car interiors to whole buildings.

What Kienholz brought into being in the Los Angeles art world expressed his horror at man's inhumanity through people constructed from stuffed gunny sacks with clocks for faces, wrecked cars, whole deserted and tilted bars, sliding into oblivion. His work is hard to look at and even caused the County Board of Supervisors to threaten to defund LACMA when they exhibited Kienholz's *Back Seat Dodge '38* in 1964.

Edward Kienholz (1927-1994) grew up on a wheat farm in eastern Washington State and learned carpentry, mechanics and the value of labor from his Swiss father. With no art education but a desire to make art, he moved to Los Angeles where he initially did odd jobs and drove a truck with the sign "Expert" on the door. A self-taught artist who initially painted with a broom on rough wood, he quickly became a part of the L.A. experimental artists group and opened the Ferus Art Gallery with Walter Hopps in 1957. His early paintings on carved found wood



The two faces of Marcel Duchamp, father of conceptual art, 1953, photo by Victor Ohsatz.



Marcel Duchamp, *The Fountain*, 1964.



Edward Kienholz



Kienholz, *Back Seat Dodge '38*, 1964, assemblage, assorted found material.

are reflected in our *Little Eagle Rock Incident*, paint and resin on plywood with inverted mounted deer head, commemorating the 1957 attempt by the governor of Arkansas to block the entry of nine black students into an all white high school in Little Rock, which was prevented by President Eisenhower's dispatching of troops to escort them. I look forward to standing with you before the work at the end of this month, getting a sense of the upside-down deer head, surmounted by the rising swoop of a flying bird or is it the sweep of a river?

In reviewing his one man show at the Whitney Museum of American Art, Roberta Smith described his work in the *New York Times* as "assemblage with a vengeance." It's been nearly 35 years since 'Roxy's', a life-size environment depiction of a Nevada whorehouse, replete with gruesomely distorted girls and a madam with a boar's skull for a head, established Kienholz as one of Los Angeles's premier artists. Indicting male lust and female complicity with equal ire, 'Roxy's' introduced an artist who mixed strands of Expressionism, Surrealism, Pop, Happenings and Conceptualism with the often fetid detritus of everyday life, no holds barred."

The next artist I will focus on is Wim Delvoye, the bad boy of Belgian neo-conceptualism, is in some respects the opposite of Kienholz, yet ideologically they are brothers.



Edward Kienholz (1927-1994), *The Little Eagle Rock Incident*, 1958, paint and resin on plywood with mounted deer head.



Edward Kienholz, "Roxys" (1960-61). Mixed media, dimensions variable. Photo by Cathy Carver; courtesy of David Zwirner, NY

While Kienholz works roughly, using grungy materials, overwhelming us with the emotional impact of his installations, Delvoye is meticulous, devoting sometimes years or life cycles to a single work, designing by computer and more recently overseeing the production of his designs by assistant artisans. They share a love of notoriety and relish public display. The work of each artist is generated by an

idea, for Kienholz those beliefs were deeply held anti-establishment, social/humanitarian ideas. Delvoye's ideas are much more esoteric, the meaninglessness of art, the absurdity of decoration, the expression of ideas by extreme juxtaposition, as in his tattooed pigs, whose skins were harvested when they died and sold to art buyers, or in his Gothic collection of modern objects seemingly redesigned in the 15th century.



Delvoye, *Pig taxidermy* 2008.

Wim Delvoye grew up in Flanders, visited art exhibitions with his parents and, though not religious, was fascinated by the processions led by carved religious figures which imbued him with the significance of sculpture and images. He studied at the Royal academy of Art in Ghent and now lives and works in Brighton, Eng-



Wim Delvoye at The Louvre exhibition, 2015

land. Our elegant cabinet with beautifully painted disks, which we first take for Delft china, embodies Delvoye's central theme, the contrasting of disparate objects which jars our usual understanding and allows our perceptions to shift. The circular metal sawblades could hardly be more different from the Chinese inspired plates painted in Delft, Netherlands, in the 17th century. Yet their enameled beauty, enhanced by the elegantly carved cabinet, initially disguises the saws. The artist's pronouncement, "Art is useless" could hardly be more explicitly expressed than in conflating a saw blade and a china plate. We feel the questions arising: What is beauty? What is the value of art? Is it just pretty but useless? Delvoye's sharp humor and keen contrasts lead us to consider what art means.

In viewing these two artists, Kienholz's raw shock and horror and Delvoye's startling, unanticipated contrasts, we touch the core of neo-conceptualism—the intent to rock our boats, to lead us to question what had been assumed, to look more carefully and to relish questioning.



Wim Delvoye, *Dumptruck*, 2012, laser-cut corten steel.

Wim Delvoye, Belgian, b. 1965, *Installation of (23) Circular Sawblades*, 1989, enamel paint on sawblades and wooden cabinet.

A Little Mohr Conversation
SBMA Master Framer Nancy Rogers

By Lori Mohr



JUNE 2008 *Note: I am reprinting this 2008 piece inspired by the renovation and new gallery spaces. Unfortunately, I was unable to find images with their frames. Those included are for reference only, so you'll have to rely on your recall for the frames. Nancy gave my provisional class (2007) a talk in her workshop, complete with demo on using gold leaf. LM*

With a degree in studio art from UCSB and extensive experience in frame making and restoration, Nancy brings a rich background in art history, materials and media to her work preparing art for exhibition, travel or storage. She walked me through the galleries discussing frames and frame history.

Lori: Nancy, describe what you do in your workshop down here where no one sees you creating frames.

Nancy: It's all exhibition-driven. We haven't had a European Paintings Curator, so I haven't been handling antique frames much in the last five years. We've been doing lots and lots of photo shows – Karen Sinsheimer (former Photography Curator) is really busy with five shows ahead.

Lori: All works on paper then

Nancy: Yes. I handle all works of paper that go on view. For instance, for *Made in Hollywood* the photographs come in from the John Kobal Foundation. I measure, mat, and hinge them to the mat with mulberry paper and archival wheat paste. Then they're put into travel frames. They'll go on exhibit here in July.

Lori: With our 19th century paintings, what kind of provenance do we have on the frames?

Nancy: Not a lot. Often when an oil painting comes in – from whatever era – there's a lot of documentation about the work, the artist, but not a lot about the frame. That's very common.

Lori: Do you replace a frame with an era-appropriate style?

Nancy: Occasionally we make a change. But you have to keep in mind...let's say you have a painting that was done in 1810 and it's had a frame for the last, say...80 years. Do we call it an original frame? No. Do we call it an artist-made frame? No. An artist chosen frame? No. But is it, loosely speaking, an original frame to that painting? There's a gradation. We evaluate on a case by case basis being sensitive to all aspects of it's history.

Lori: Do we have any original frames on exhibit?

Nancy: There may be some...often from the 1960s and '70s. We actually have a few artist-made frames in our permanent collection. Frames chosen by artists are most often difficult to determine. In any museum collection, if you have as much as 10% of paintings with original frames, that would be a bonanza.

Lori: Did artists, say, the Impressionists, typically frame their works or did the buyer make that choice?

Nancy: Well, both. For the Impressionists, we do have examples of frames and notebooks with documentation. Like Prendergast paintings – he designed his own frames. Those are well documented in his letters and his notebooks and many of those frames still survive on his paintings.

Lori: What does a frame do for a painting?

Nancy: Well, it has a couple of functions: it protects the painting, and it does have aesthetic value – it's an accessory. But a really good painting is going to stand alone; a frame on a mediocre painting is going to make it look better. And the opposite can be true. We had a Ludington painting come in and the frame was wonderful! We sent it out for conservation. When it came back, I worked on it further. It was on our Braque [*Nude with Basket of Fruit*] and it may have been fantastic in his





home, but it was so bold, and such a big, screaming, colorful thing...it was really hard for it to work in the gallery. It sort of overtook the painting, like having the football player with the ballerina at the prom. [Laughing]. And you might look at what's on now and think it's a little understated, a little mundane – but it's painted wood in keeping with time...it's right. And it works with other things on the wall.

Lori: The frame has to work with the other paintings?

Nancy: Yes. We never had any documentation [on the Ludington]. Did the artist choose it? The dealer? A decorator? It's possible Wright himself chose it, but we didn't have any evidence. So once again, based on [previous SBMA Curator] Robert Henning's determination, we put something else on it.

Lori: Nancy, what is the biggest difference between European and American frames ?

Nancy: The European tradition is huge! America...we're such a young country. Typically, the American view of frame making is a little bit simplified. We dropped these detailed, highly ornate frames to create new, more elemental types of surfaces.

Lori: Is that because we don't have the craftsmanship of the European tradition?

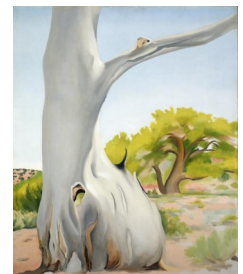
Nancy: You have to remember, with the Industrial Revolution, machine-made things meant progress. We were taking our cues from European frames...keeping some of it, rejecting some, putting a new twist on it. For example, Georgia O'Keeffe essentially began a brand new look for all her paintings, a simple real thin metal frame, this new style of welded aluminum, which was the beginning of the metal frame with four sections that we know today. That industrial reference is radically different from European style.

Lori: Is style a dead-giveaway between European and American?

Nancy: That and the back of the frame. Just like you can tell the quality of a carpet by the back, or a good garment by how the seams are constructed, you look at a frame by the back. In a European frame, you'll see heavy splines...a piece of wood across each corner to allow for tightening the frame when the wood shrinks, like on Vuillard's *Fuchsias and French Marigolds* which has those big beautiful corner joins in the back. Europeans made things to last, to be passed down through the generations, to endure.

Lori: Are heavy, gilded frames still the preference?

Nancy: Oh, yeah. That started during that whole system of kingships, the Louie's – Louie the 13th, Louie the 14th, the Regent...one of the kings was only nine, but he was assigned a Regent and the Regent made his own frames! So we had the Regency period. Louie the 15th, the 16th...they would install carver-gilders in their palaces. They would take off all the frames of the last guy and create all new frames with their own cartouches, their own logos, their own insignias and really make their mark on design. Our Berthe Morisot (below)...that's a Louie the 14th with all these



Vuillard, Fuchsias and French Marigolds



Morisot, View of Paris from the Tracadero

curlicues and rectilinear cuts, very representative of that tradition. But in America, because we don't have that type of tradition, we value individuality, we have individuals making their mark.

Lori: And with no royalty, the frames are not so...ornate.

Nancy: Right. And because of differences in architecture. Keep in mind frames were designed by architects. You have to also think about lighting. In northern Europe with its colder, cloudier, dark-

er climate and tiny windows, there's less light. So, generally speaking, you'll have a typical portrait in a really deep frame profile. But that frame has a distinct function...the light comes in that itty-bitty window, hits the gilded side of the frame, and reflects light directly onto the canvas surface, illuminating the painting.

Lori: So the viewing experience is darker?

Nancy: Not always. Spanish frames? Warmer climate, bigger windows, more light, more interior light. Unlike northern European frames, they're not reflecting anything, so they slope back or at the very least, they're flat. Many of those northern European frames and paintings were made when there was only candlelight. You can't have people walking around the museum holding candelabras.

Lori: Like our Asian sculptures in temples using candlelight. No wonder Impressionists were thrilled to have metal tubes of paint so they could get out and work in natural, brilliant light.

Nancy: By that time, though...the turn of the century...we have gas lighting. You have to look at the history of lighting – first whale oil lamps, then gas lamps come out and they're mostly just in opera houses and civic arenas and then *ever so slowly* make their way into suburbia.

Lori: Nancy, you mentioned once working with a gilder. Tell us what's under that gilding?

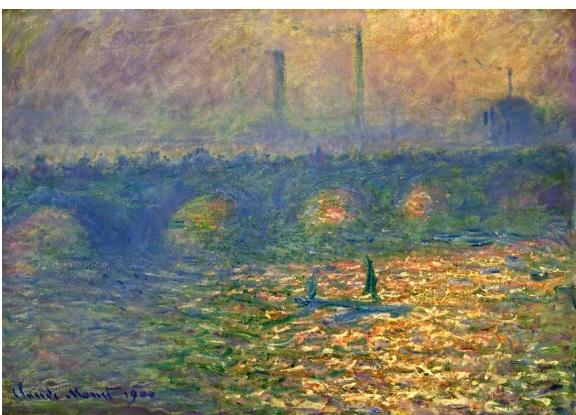
Nancy: Yes, that was really fun! Okay...so there's wood underneath as a substrate, it's often hand carved design, sometimes compo [composition]. Then it's got about seven/ten layers of gesso, which is this white stuff that acts as a cushion for the gold leaf. Next, traditionally you put about six layers of clay, yellow and red...a vibrant red and that red clay is going to come through the gilding, giving it a warm, golden glow. With many layers of gesso, it gets all mucked up and filled in so you have to go back with a recutting tool and crisp it up by re-carving. The gold leaf goes on last, and it can be burnished or distressed to show more of the clay underneath. Gilding is extremely labor-intensive! That's why you don't see it much anymore.

Lori: I've wondered about the Impressionists, capturing the effects of natural light on everyday subjects...which seems inconsistent with an elaborate frame.

Nancy: But that was the style then in Europe. There was a time here when we were seeing heavy, gilded French frames with those shells and cartouches on *everything*. We've come back a little from that. Now this *Lady in Pink*...[previous SBMA Curator] Robert Henning found a photograph, not of this but a similar one from the same era in Chase's studio. Based on that, we did make a change and we chose an original antique frame.

Lori: You were pretty sure of the artist's intent.

Nancy: Yes. And it's timely. It's 1886...not quite turn of the century, but it was the beginning of the heyday of the Victorian era. It's very fussy, very flowery, ornate.



[Moving on to *Fight over a Waterhole*] Now this is very American...simple, no adornment, just straightforward wood. You can actually see the saw grain from the table saw, the cuts. And this Monet frame [*Villas a Bordighera*] is a replica...we had it made in the late '80s and it works, a gilded frame works. *Waterloo Bridge* and *Charing Cross Bridge* have the same frame profile. I don't think they're hand carved. Notice the gilded tips on the *Waterloo Bridge* (left) frame, how these highlights stick



out? The light is dancing on the tips, which are burnished for reflectivity. The frame works nicely with the scene of sun-light flickering on the water.

Lori: That's a fun thing to point out to visitors!

Nancy: Now *The Forty-Niner* [walking to the Narjot]. This is typical American...very simple. The painting came with this frame. It's a little frilly. But you have to think...1880s...it's still sort of early Victorian. In our modern view, would a wood



frame have worked? [Shrugs] Yeah. I would've thought about some husky wood choices.

Lori: And *Buffalo Hunter*?

Nancy: I don't know a lot about the history of this frame...it's been in the Museum a long time. There's a 19th century kind of sheen that goes up and down along this piece of wood, along these beads, which are like teeth, like the jaws of an animal. It works. And the dark wood contains the painting.

Lori: Now on this Joseph Morviller [*Winter, Medford, Massachusetts*]... is this deep frame what you were describing earlier in talking about lighting?

Nancy: Yes, and this frame is representative of the style used in that dark, cold, northern European weather. The light comes in that little window, hits that cove and reflects, illuminating the painting. The natural light would've been hitting it lower than our Museum lighting. In this case, the frame has a function beyond decorative. It's really well thought out.



Lori: [Moving to the Christian Gullager, *Elizabeth Coats Greenleaf*, below]. What about this? A formal portrait of an elegant woman in this solid, black wood frame! Where's gilded and ornate when you need it?

Nancy: [Studying the frame] I don't know the history, but black frames...when Commodore Perry goes into Yokohama in 1848-49, we have this little crack...this opening into the Asian aesthetic, the Japanese



aesthetic, later the Chinese aesthetic. Westerners discover Japanese woodblock prints and these black lacquered, ebonized surfaces. During the late 1800s, you see a heyday of ebonized black furniture...the Asian aesthetic. This frame kind of speaks to me of that era.

Lori: You were so right saying frames are art history from outside the painting. Nancy, what do you think about contemporary art that has no frame and is meant to be hung without a frame?

Nancy: [Tossing head back, laughing] That's okay with me!

THE LAST PAGE

"Rough Translations" by Jan Richardson

Submitted by Karen Brill

Hope nonetheless.

Hope despite.

Hope regardless.

Hope still.

Hope where we had ceased to hope.

Hope amid what threatens hope.

Hope with those who feed our hope.

Hope beyond what we had hoped.

Hope that draws us past our limits.

Hope that defies expectations.

Hope that questions what we have known.

Hope that makes a way where there is none.

Hope that takes us past our fear.

Hope that calls us into life.

Hope that holds us beyond death.

Hope that blesses those who come



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