

DOCENT DATES

March 3rd

Rachel Straughn-Navarro,
Academic Coordinator,
AD&A Museum, UCSB
Topic: Accessibility and
Inclusion in Museums

March 17th

Jenni Sorkin, Associate
Professor, Art History,
UCSB. Topic: The Art of
Miriam Schapiro

March 24

Getty Zoom Tour 10-11

April 7^h

Docent Forum. Patsy and
Rachel will present a 2021
Exhibition Overview, fol-
lowed by Q & A.

April 21 Speaker



Vincent Van Gogh, *Potato Eaters*, 1885, lithograph, National Gallery, D.C. (See Ricki's article p 6)

Dear Docents,

The Year of the Pandemic continues to demand adjustments to our usual but always flexible way of doing things. Just as the Docent Council Board voted to waive attendance and touring requirements during COVID, at our last meeting we agreed to waive term limits for board members for the 2020-2021 year so that elected officers could fulfill the obligations of their roles that have been put on hold due to Museum closures. As we do every spring, the slate of board members/nominees will be presented for your vote next month. As per the bylaws, nominations are open until March 15th if you have a name to submit. Otherwise, the current officers will continue through the 2021-2022 service year.

Thank you to Karen Howsam for arranging our latest virtual tour of the Walters Museum. What a treat! These ZOOM presentations have been much appreciated additions to our bimonthly lectures. And, I hope that you were able to participate in the ones by Eik Kahng and Susan Tai, respectively talking about art that will be hanging in the newly renovated Ludington Court and Asian Galleries. If you missed these fabulous talks, you can view them on the Docent website.

I have a few updates:

Museum Openings:

SBMA is currently closed as the county is in the purple tier of COVID-19 restrictions for the state of California. When we reach the red tier the Museum will be allowed to reopen with safety protocols in place. It will look much as it did a year ago with only Preston Mor-



Patty Santiago,
Docent Council
President

ton and Ridley-Tree available for viewing by the public.

Renovated Galleries

The opening of the renovated galleries is now scheduled for mid-June.

Docent Touring

The most recent date for resumption of adult touring is the fall. Student tours are still to be determined.

Exhibitions

The much-anticipated Van Gogh exhibition is now scheduled for Feb. 27—May 22, 2022.

I will continue to update you as information becomes available. One encouraging visual sign has been the removal of wooden fencing that surrounded the Museum for ages. The Siquieros mural (“Modern Day Mexico,” detail, right) is now accessible for viewing in its secure gallery in front of the Museum, a harbinger of all the good things to come as we prepare to greet our favorite works in their new spaces and take possession of our remodeled home away from home!

Patty



From Membership Chair Patti Firestone



FEED YOUR PASSION and get FIRED UP for Touring!

Our Council Meeting lectures have certainly whet my appetite to get back to the Museum and see all the changes, especially Ludington Court with its Louvre-style presentation, and the new Asian Gallery. Thank you to Patsy and Rachel for arranging these exciting talks by our curators Eik Kahng and Susan Tai. If you missed these, they are recorded as YouTube talks linked to the Docent website: <http://docentssbma.org/> or go directly using <https://vimeopro.com/sbma/docent-council-lectures> (password Vimeo!dcl).

I love having the structure of these meetings/lectures carved into my life to add a sense of normalcy from pre-pandemic life. On my computer screen I get to see your faces, your kitchens, bedrooms, dens or offices, adding a sense of connection to each of you in your own world. At the same time I am feeding my passion for art and learning more about our SBMA permanent collection, which is the whole reason I became a docent in the first place! Who knew what riches we had in storage that we now get to learn about for the first time? This year-long hibernation will be over soon and new knowledge will energize me for when we resume touring, crossed fingers for this fall. So stay connected, keep engaged, look to the future. I am more than happy to help anyone who wants technical support for ZOOM or accessing the YouTube talks. Pattie.Firestone@gmail.com.

Don't forget to send me your RESEARCH HOURS! See you March 3rd on ZOOM!

Pattie

Editor's Note: This message had been submitted for the February issue. My apologies. LM

André Derain—Passive Collaborator?

By Josie Martin



The Nazi Regime was attracted to André Derain's late career embrace of a Classical style, the embrace of Greek grandeur suiting their own claim to superior roots. While occupying the artist's home and studio in Chambourcy, the SS slashed and vandalized one of his most ambitious works, "Le Retour de Ulysses." The history of such perverted artistic license—the theft of great art—goes back thousands of years. Conqueror take all; all is fair in love and war, and more. Colonialism!



André Derain, French, 1880-1954.

The British plundered the Parthenon, procuring art that ultimately formed the core of the British Museum in London. The sculptures were 'violently' and illegally removed by Lord Elgin in the 1800s and sold to the Museum. I visited the immortal statues in 1968 on a sabbatical; I was 29 years old, thrilled! I hadn't been a fan of antiquities, but just the sight of these mythical creatures was enchanting. Not a thought given to how or why they were there.



André Derain, "The Return of Ulysses," 1938.

Now, some fifty plus years later, I can't wait to welcome back our own LANSDOWNE Hermes. Josiah Hamilton, great grandson of the Hermes' original owner before Dwight Ludington, lives next door to me. Josiah described the departure of his great grandfather's collection as a huge garage-sale according to the family lore. Still, I can't wait for the Peplophorus, Apollo, Achilles and Troilus, the whole gang of Gods and demiurges to return. It was due to Shirley Waxman's enthusiasm and careful instruction that I acquired a late-in-life "amour" for antiquities when I was in her Provisional Class 2002-03.



SBMA's Hermes at The Getty for conservation. Private photo. IN HOUSE USE ONLY.

The Parthenon receives the most notoriety, but the insatiable collectors from the Gilded Age "vacuumed up great art from Europe while it was financially pinched." See San Simeon. Poor William Randolph Hearst, he was a bit late. His collection is rather mediocre, like the leftovers at an estate sale, but it's still worth a trip. (I'd go again if the Docents organized it.) In recent times the most egregious plunderers were the Nazis during WWII who raided art wherever they could find it—from the private collections of wealthy Jews; from small unprotected museums; and any galleries showing famous artists. If the art was "decadent," they organized it for a special exhibit, "Entarte Kunst", or The Degenerate Art Exhibition, in Munich, 1937 which presented 650 works of art confiscated from German museums, staged in counterpoint to the concurrent Great German Art Exhibition. Hitler, the failed art student, dreamed of a "Fuhrer's Museum" after the war. I wanted to visit the Salzburg salt

mines where much of the great art had been stored, but it was closed on our cruise of the Rhine a few years ago. You can get the idea from the extraordinary film, "The Monument Men" depicting its recovery after WWII.

Derain was one of the founders of the Fauves along with Matisse, the movement's name "les animaux sauvages," the wild beasts, referring to the expressionistic qualities of paint. Derain's works are characterized by dense, vibrant brushworks that attract the viewer's attention as much as the subject itself. The question of



André Derain, "Charing Cross Bridge," 1906

whether André Derain, one of the fine artists in the SBMA collection, participated or passively collaborated with the Nazis came up at a recent docent lecture by Eik Kahn. The mention of Fauvism and Derain's reputation sullied by his alignment with the Nazis party was news to me. I was a hidden child in France during WWII so anything having to do with the Nazis piques a lifelong compunction to probe, to "understand" what is essentially incomprehensible.

In our lecture Eik said it was not certain that Derain had collaborated with the Nazis, but the very question hurt his reputation after the war, forever compromising his revolutionary contributions. To Derain's credit he had refused to paint the portrait of Von-Ribbentrop, the Nazi esteemed for his role in starting the war that gave rise to the Holocaust. Now Von-Ribbentrop is known in history as the first to be hanged at the Nuremberg Trials.

However....

Derain accepted an invitation to tour Germany in 1941, when Hitler's War was in full-fling. This was seen by his French contemporaries as a betrayal, even if he only toured art, talked art, promoted art (his own). The artist's very presence would later be viewed as being part of Germany's "propaganda machine." How could he? There are many possibilities, just as Picasso feted, wined and dined "hoch Nazi Commandantes" at his studio. It was an utter shock when I saw an enlarged photo of Picasso at a gallery on La Cienega in L.A. with some of the German top-guns smilingly sitting at a round table by a window, a curtain floating in the breeze....a platter of fruit and fine charcuterie on the table.

Was he entertaining them or was it appeasement? Both? Picasso painted the unmistakably anti-fascist "Guernica." The Nazi authorities occupying Paris were surely onto him. What I can't get out of my mind is that his best friend, the Jew, POET Max Jacob was deported to the French internment camp at Drancy. Max Jacob perished. Couldn't Picasso, with his great fame and wealth have intervened?

A French nun risked her life to take me in when my parents could not keep me, their only child. I was five years old as the Waffen SS closed in our village on their way to Normandy with the rage of the about-to-be defeated. They were not looking for art in those small villages of the Charente, the Haute Vienne and the Dordogne, just gold: Louis, Napoleons, any gold coins that the French were well known to safely hide in case of.... The village of Oradour sur Glanne, near Lesterps where I was hidden, burned so hot and so near that we could see the smoke for days in the aftermath of the worst Nazi massacre of civilians carried out on French soil with 644 people, including 247 children, shot or burnt alive on 10 June 1944 in an unexplained act of barbarity. My visit to the ruins 60 years later was nearly unbearable. "War is not healthy for children and other living thing," as Sister Mary Corrita famously wrote on her serigraphs. I had that poster hanging on



André Derain, "Three Nudes in Front of a Fireplace," 1906 . Watercolor and pencil on paper. 19 x 24 in.

SBMA

my wall in the '60s as the War in Viet Nam gained momentum.

Just as Derain's house in Chambourcy WAS occupied, hundreds, if not thousands of homes were taken over by the Germans during their long European occupation. But Picasso's studio was left in peace. In a 1981 letter to the New York Times, the author wrote, "It remains true that at a time of national humiliation for France, Derain and Picasso made a very grave mistake. No purpose is served by trying to gloss this over."

The question of art theft, collaboration, collusion is complicated. It is possibly incomprehensible, but I keep wondering and asking. ■

Josie Martin is the author of NEVER TELL YOUR NAME.

Editor's Note: I found this on the SBMA website. What a great way to participate during COVID-19.

Travel the world with an SBMA Docent as your tour guide! Join us on a virtual journey to cultural and historic sites through works of art in the Museum's permanent collection in a new collaboration with SBMA Education: Travels with a Docent. We hope these short videos will keep you inspired, engaged, and travel-

ing—even if only virtually for the moment. Look out for new installments of Travels with a Docent each month on the SBMA website. Our sincerest thanks to the SBMA Docent Council who have made this project possible.

Join SBMA Docent, **Patricia Santiago**, on a journey to Segovia, Spain through the work of Colin Campbell Cooper. SBMA is planning two tours in 2022 that include stops in Segovia.

email travel@sbma.net for more details

The Getty Center March 24 10 -11 AM ZOOM

RSVP to karenhowsam@icloud.com or 970.531.2885 (call/text)

The Hague School and its Influence on Millet and Van Gogh

By Ricki Morse

Part of an ongoing series for the exhibition, "Through Vincent's Eyes."



Vincent Van Gogh called the artists of The Hague School, the "mastadons." From the early genius of Rembrandt to the dark, earthy paintings of peasants working the land, this widely influential art school became one of the art centers of northern Europe in the late 19th century and flourished into the 20th,

its subject the peasant and his family in the fields of the Netherlands. These paintings strike us forcefully with their humanity and their relationship to the soil in contrast to Corot's celebration of the poetry of nature. (See February *La Muse*).

Jean François Millet, though he painted with the Barbizon group and ultimately moved his family to Barbizon, remained the northerner, born in Normandy on the rugged Atlantic coast, reared on his father's farm, he remained true to his peasant roots, yet became the most famous artist of the Barbizon School. Van Gogh, who made many studies and detailed Millet copies, saw in his work the earliest steps toward expressionism.



Vincent Van Gogh, *Potato Eaters*, 1885, lithograph printed in dark brown, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC. A copy of Jean François Millet's *The Potato Eaters*, 1885 oil on canvas.



Vincent Van Gogh, *Digger*, 1885, Black chalk on laid paper, Kroeller-Muller Museum, Otterlo, Netherlands

The Hague School

The Golden Age of 17th century Dutch painting was revived with the 1830's Romantic movement, which soon was replaced by the work of the

Hague School in the second half of the 19th century. These emerging artists "drew their inspiration from the visible world, celebrated truth, and sought merely to evoke mood; tone was more important than color." The strong contrasts between light and dark, characteristic of Rembrandt and the Romantics, became the "supremacy of grey."

The rise in the Netherlands of an affluent class of art collectors replaced the need for and dependence on patrons and estab-



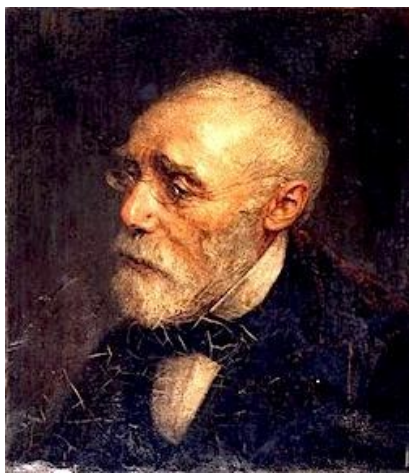
Vincent Van Gogh, *Two Women Digging*, 1885, Black chalk and grey wash on laid paper, Kroeller-Muller Museum, Otterlo, Netherlands.



Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn (Dutch, 1606-1669) *The Three Trees* 1643, Etching, engraving and drypoint, LACMA.

tally different from those of Impressionism, whose aim was to capture the fleeting moment in light and colour, not to record what was timeless and lasting.”

Jozef Israëls (1824-1911) was perhaps the most widely collected and respected artist of this group. Reared in a Jewish family in the university city of Groningen, Netherlands, the third of



Vincent Van Gogh, Jozef Israëls, *Self Portrait*, n.d., oil on canvas.

ten children, he was expected to enter business or perhaps the rabbinate, but his artistic talent and his yearning to enter art school led the family to relent. His early work reflected the Romantic style of the time in historical painting and portraiture, but later shifted into the Hague School exploration of the lives of peasants. After a period of illness he moved to the seaside to recuperate and there focused on the lives of the fishermen he observed working on the boats and pulling in their nets. One of these paintings earned him a showing at the Paris Salon of 1861. His feeling for the lives of the working people, their families and their trials are evident in his sympathetic portrayals. In 1870 he moved with his family and two children to The Hague, where his son Issac also studied art, adopting an impressionistic style which may have influenced his father’s late work.

Israëls’ skill as a portraitist is displayed in this painting

Right: Jozef Israëls (Dutch 1824-1911) *Towards Home*, n.d. oil on canvas.

lished the artist as part of an extended social network. They demanded higher prices for their work, entered the international market and gained wide recognition. Jozef Israëls and Hendrik Weissenbruch were prominent first generation Hague School artists. Both painted in Barbizon, adding to the popular notion that the Hague school was an offshoot of Barbizon; however critics point to the particular style of realism practiced by Hague School artists as deriving from Rembrandt. “The penchant for colour and exuberant brushwork can only be understood as a Dutch classicism inspired by Rembrandt . . . Ideas about perception were fundamen-



Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, *The Angel Departing from the Tobias Family*, 1641, Etching with touches of drypoint, Minneapolis Institute of Art. The Hague School family groupings are informed by Rembrandt’s complex, lively Biblical story renderings.





Jozef Israëls *Portrait of Hendrik Weissenbruch*, 1882, oil on canvas.

of his colleague Hendrik Johannes Weissenbruch (1824-1903), who was a native of The Hague and came from a family of artists—etchers, lithographers, and painters. His father was a chef, restaurateur and amateur painter who encouraged his son's aspirations. Influenced by the 17th century Jacob von Ruisdael's skies, his Romantic skiescapes/landscapes displayed meticulous attention to detail and he hung his first one-man exhibition in 1847. Two years later the Teylers Museum in Haarlem acquired one of his panoramic landscapes, but this early success was brief, and in the meanwhile he became one of the chief representatives of The Hague School with his own particular emphasis on the skies over the polders (land reclaimed from the sea). By the 1880s "his use of color gradually became more restrained and his application of paint increasingly broader and looser. This

made his landscapes more atmospheric, the bearers of light and

clouds. He stressed the importance of both of these elements when he said, "The sky in a painting, that is what is most important! Sky and light are the great magicians.'" Weissenbruch had from the beginning preferred to work out of doors and in 1900, in his seventies, he made his first trip to Barbizon where he painted now famous forest scenes, honoring the French painters of the last decades of the 19th century.

Jean François Millet

Millet had much more in common with the artists of the Netherlands than with his French compatriots. He

grew up as the son of a landed peasant, and as such received a classical education, but worked the farm into his twenties. Their land on the outskirts of Grozny, bordering the stony cliffs above the North Atlantic, became a favored scene, and his attachment to the land and those who worked it remained his subjects of choice. The first son to a religious mother and art-loving grandmother, he was a

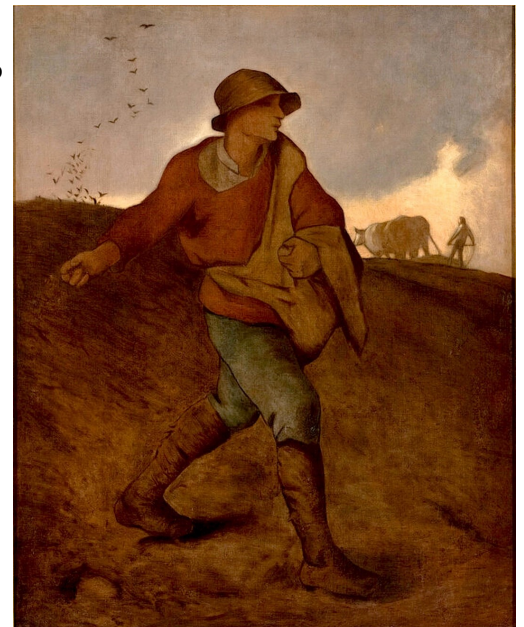


Jean François Millet, 1882 engraving by Etienne Bocourt

somber, contemplative boy, devoted to his duties on the family farm. He first studied portraiture in nearby Cherbourg, later accepted at École des Beaux-Arts in Paris. But Paris did not suite his stoic temperament nor his values. He preferred hours at the Louvre to the cafes, and with the death of his young, frail wife of tuberculosis and with his teacher's refusal to sponsor him for the Prix de Rome, and the loss of his scholarship, he returned to Cherbourg. He was painting portraits and nudes, attempting to build a fol-



Hendrik Weissenbruch (Dutch, 1824-1903) *Canal Near Noorden, Sunset*, 1893, private collection.



Jean François Millet, *The Sower*, after 1850, Oil on canvas, Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburg.



Millet, *The Knitting Lesson*, 1869, oil on canvas, St. Louis Museum of Art.

lowing and soon took a new companion, a local servant girl, to Le Havre, there associating with young artists who became the Barbizon School. In 1848 he produced his first peasant paintings including an early version of *The Sower* and followed his friends to Barbizon.

The Paris Salon of 1850-51 displayed *The Sower* to both praise and criticism, but Millet's path was now set. Always true to his own spirit, he read the critics carefully, but continued on his path to express on canvas his deep response to the peasants and their land. During the 1850s he produced a two works which were to become world famous, *The Gleaners* (1857) and *The Angelus* (1857-60).

As we view Millet's work we are struck by the role of the female figures, sharing the work of the farm, no more or less important than the men, but integral to the life on the land. One of his six daughters appears with his wife in *The Knitting Lesson*, at first seen perhaps as touching, but also something more—the focus of the teacher, the attentive presence of the child, theirs is an important task, inherently necessary. This sense of broader meaning underlies each painting, drawing our close regard.

Van Gogh copied many of Millet's works (*The Potato Eaters*) and sketched his figures, but what drew him was the profound sense of something personally meaningful—a basic tenant of expressionism. Millet himself noted that his figures were not realistic depictions of specific individuals but "types." He was attempting to capture the experience of the peasant, his driving force. The figure was thus simplified and generalized to represent more than a single individual. During the Second Empire, the conservative press labeled him a socialist and a radical, which Millet vehemently denied. He said he found his scenes very beautiful, which seems to reflect his experience as observer.

Millet saw these peasant figures as heroic, often allowing the figure to fill the picture frame, as in *The Sower*, the relationship of figure to ground emphasized by raising the horizon line toward the top of the picture. Notice the simplification of the figure, becoming almost iconic in its power to hold our gaze. And the land itself becomes an actor in the narrative, filling the canvas and drawing our close attention. Millet's singular vision was new in the mid-19th century and enthralled the artists who followed him, from Van Gogh to Dali. ■



Vincent Van Gogh, *The Sower*, 1888, Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam.

Quotations from:

The Hague School, Nineteenth Century Art, catalogue 2000, Christie's, Amsterdam.

Simon Kelly and Maite van Dijk, *Millet and Modern Art: From Van Gogh to Dali*, 2020, Yale Univ. Press, New Haven

The Last Page

Artist Laura Thompson



"COVID-19 Mask"
2021, digital photograph, 30 cm x 30 cm, 11.8 x 11.8 in.

Laura Thompson is a photographer and multimedia artist living in Glasgow, Scotland. "COVID-19 Mask" will be featured at the Nigiwai-no-ie Museum in Nara, Japan (February 2021 – March 2021) in the exhibition, *Frame/Re-Frame* showing works created with recycled materials that symbolize our mass response to the pandemic. Laura uses cardboard rolls to represent our fear of losing control, the hoarding of toilet paper a testament to anxiety, and the mask as a benchmark of life before and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Laura earned her undergraduate degree from St. Andrew's University in Edinburgh, Scotland, (2011); a postgraduate diploma in Photography from the University of the Arts, London (2012); and a master's in Communication Design from the Glasgow School of Art (2015). Her work has been exhibited at venues in Europe including the Arles Photography Festival in France; the Royal Scottish Academy in Edinburgh; and in Japan at the Nigiwai-no-ie Museum. Awards include winner of the Millennium Peaches and Cream 2017 Exhibition and was the Life Framer's winning selection in the category The Human Body for her series "Senseless" in 2017. Her photographs have been published in over a dozen journals, including the *British Journal of Photography*.

Website: laura-thompson.net Instagram: @laurathompsonstudio

SBMA Docent Leslie Thompson is Laura's mother, and Lori Mohr is her godmother.

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