

La Muse

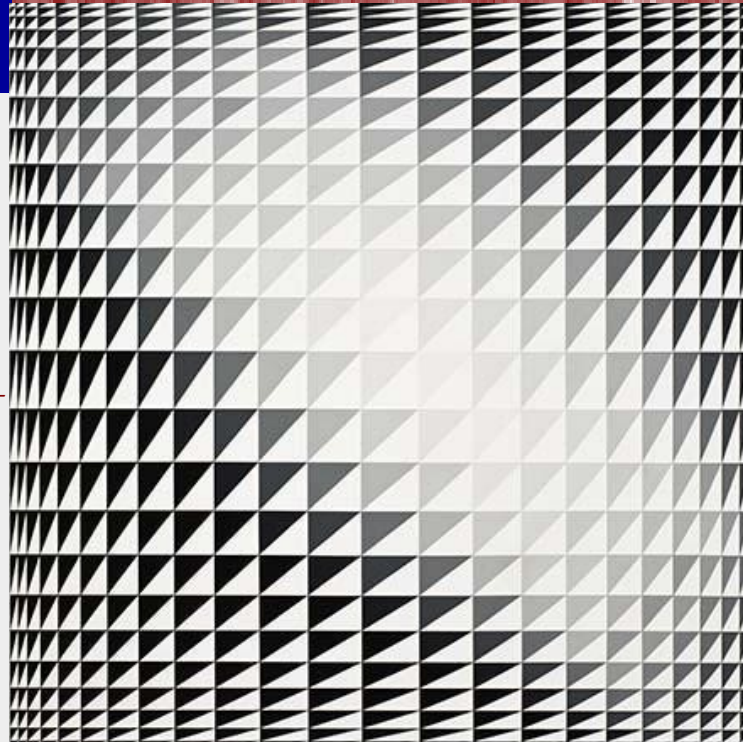
DOCENT DATES

May 4 SBMA Curator of Photography Charlie Wiley, on his current show on architecture, and info about his upcoming show on Greco Roman antiquities.

May 18 James Glisson, Curator of Contemporary Art, on "Going Global: Midcentury Abstraction."

May 19 Reception for prospective docents (at Museum).

June 3 Service Recognition



Bridget Riley, *Annul*, 1965. Emulsion on board. SBMA. From *Going Global (June 19-Sept 22)*. "Like the US dollar, air travel, and space satellites, abstract art encircled the globe or at least the capitalist West during the middle of the 20th century. This exhibition shows just how far abstraction reached and some of the forms it took during the Cold War, when glossy color magazines and proliferating fairs brought a globalized art world into being." Museum website.

Dear Docents,

What a great job docents have been doing as they tour students and adult visitors through the *Van Gogh* exhibition! This has been a very different experience, the sheer number of visitors in the galleries, and the big groups wanting docent tours. And a special thank you to Lori Mohr who has been giving outstanding Van Gogh presentations in public venues through our Community Speakers Program. The response from the public to the exhibition, the tours and the community talks has been overwhelmingly positive.

We have been planning ahead for next year, starting with an informational meeting for all prospective docents on Thursday, May 19th from 3:00-5:00 p.m. In the past, word of mouth has been an effective tool bringing in new hopefuls, so if you know anyone who might be interested in our training program, they can sign up for the meeting through the Museum website or by emailing Rachel.

We will end this exciting year on a high note with our annual Service Recognition Ceremony on Friday, June 3rd from 4:00-6:00 p.m. outdoors at the Ridley-Tree Education Center. It would be wonderful to see all of you there to celebrate your fellow docents.

The following docents have been voted into office for next year:

Summer Break



Patty Santiago,
Docent Council
President

President	Karen Howsam
Vice President	Teda Pilcher
Secretary	Cindy Anderson
Treasurer	Jeff Vitucci
Membership	Pattie Firestone
Student Teams	Irene Stone/Nicola Gherson
Adult Teams	Denise Klassen/Susan Lowe

Evaluations	Shirley Waxman
Research	Sarajum Quazi
Provisional Class	Patty Santiago
Nominations	Patty Santiago
Webmaster	Gretel Rothrock

Thank you all for your willingness to serve on the Docent Council Board. *Patty* ■

From our **Membership Chair**
Pattie Firestone



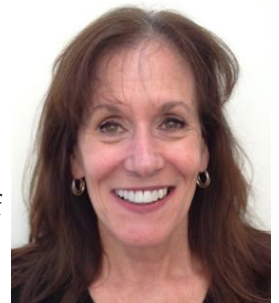
The service year is winding down. Remember to email me your hours for Public Tours and Research, which includes reading about art, visiting other museums, preparing for your tours, making your own art, watching movies about art, streaming other museum events, taking friends to the *Van Gogh* exhibition, etc. It all counts. The Museum Board of Trustees will be impressed seeing the amount of time we devote to our role as docents, the immersion in art inside and outside the galleries. THANKS!

Pattie.Firestone@gmail.com or text me at 301-520-5775. *Pattie* ■

From our **Student Teams Co-chairs**



The recent docent activities in the Museum have been extraordinary with the *Van Gogh* Student Touring team navigating moving masses of students from both public and private schools through the exhibit. In March we toured **313 students** and in April that number jumped to **576!** In addition, we are receiving an increased number of requests for regular student tours, from a start of 35 students in March to an additional **331** students in April. Thank you to *all* docents for your magnanimous show of support and camaraderie.



Teda and Irene ■

Community Speakers Program (CSP)



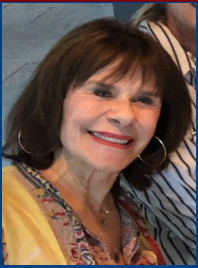
April Presentations:

- Casa Dorinda—60
- Private group Presentation - 18
- Maravilla Independent - 35

Total *Van Gogh* attendees for April was **113**. All three groups requested private tours of the exhibition. Every venue is so happy with the presentations, and asking for more talks. Excitement about the exhibition is palpable.

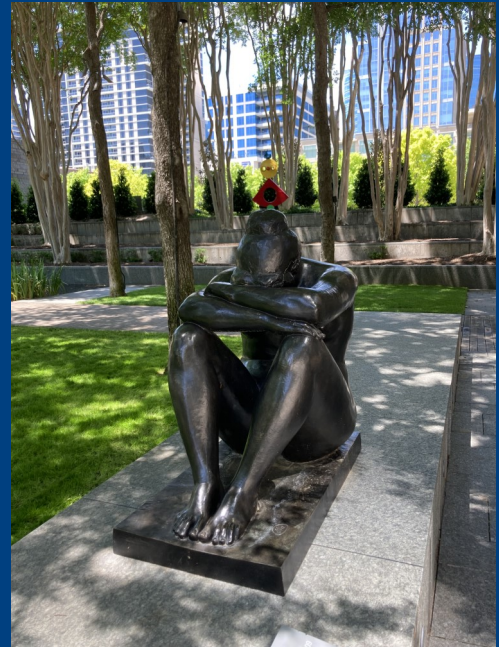
Shirley Waxman *Shirley* ■
CSP Team Leader

From our **Vice President**
Karen Howsam



Dear Docents,

The annual Docent Spring Trip is alive and well after two years of waiting. We are enjoying several museums, including the Nasher Sculpture Center in Dallas, Texas. How fun it is exploring new art with fellow docents! *Karen*



*Group photo submitted by Karen Howsam.
Sculpture photos by Patty Santiago.*

Spring Trip Photos by Loree Gold



The Nasher Sculpture Garden



The Crow Museum



The Meadows Museum

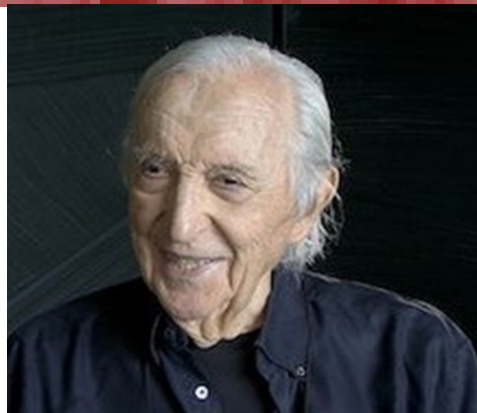
The Enduring Energy of Pierre Soulages

By Ricki Morse



This article is reprinted from the April 2020 issue of La Muse in anticipation of our upcoming exhibition curated by James Glisson, Going Global, on the emergence of abstract art in the 20th century.

It seems appropriate to highlight Soulages, since Paris celebrated his 100th birthday last December with a rare exhibition for a living artist at the Louvre, an honor previously only granted to Marc Chagall and Pablo Picasso.



Pierre Soulages in December 2019 at his opening at the Louvre

Born in the small southern French city of Rodez, Soulages was fascinated with the ancient cave paintings, the menhirs (Neolithic standing stones), and medieval churches throughout the area, particularly with the artifacts and Romanesque architecture of the Sainte Foy de Conques, the 10th century abbey/church in a nearby village. As a boy he collected arrowheads and pottery fragments and felt drawn to the pre-historic images created in the dark caves. He remembers being questioned by a friend about what he was drawing as he made black lines on white paper. "Snow." The black revealed the white of the paper.

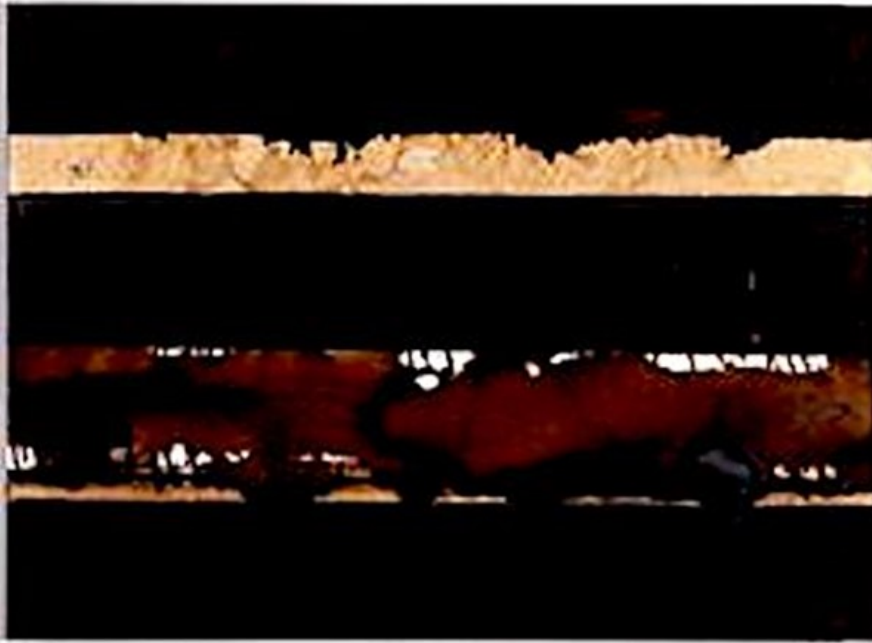
Before World War II, Soulages visited museums in Paris, viewing works by Picasso and Cezanne, and in 1938 enrolled in the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. He was disappointed by the school's traditional methods and rigid ideas and soon returned to Rodez, painting black leafless trees against a bright sky. After military service he enrolled in the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Montpellier, studied Russian abstract painting, and in 1946



Pierre Soulages, *Painting 193* (1948-49), oil on canvas, MOMA, NY.

moved back to Paris, opening a studio and beginning his exploration of bold black gestural painted swaths on a white background. Exhibitions quickly followed; his first one-man show opened in 1949. During these years he also designed sets and costumes for plays and ballets. In 1954 prominent New York dealer, Samuel Kootz began representing him. By then museums, including the Museum of Modern Art in New York City, had begun to acquire his work. Today his career is the stuff of legends, touted as France's greatest living painter, his canvases selling internationally in the millions of dollars.

In 1979 Soulages had a revelation that transformed his work. Up to this time he had used black "for its power of expression in contrast with other colors." Waking one morning to view yesterday's canvas, which he had not felt good about, he saw it differently. What he saw now was the reflection of light on dark surfaces. "Where it was layered, the light danced, and where it was flat it lay still. A new space had come into being." He named this black "outré-noir," ultra-black, beyond black or the other black. The sculptural qualities of outré-noir produce a unique visceral experience, as if the black gains facets. In



Pierre Soulages, *Walnut Stain* (2004) oil on canvas.

exploring the reflective power of black, Soulages used brushes, spoons, small rakes, sometimes gouging and chipping away the paint to achieve unique reflective experiences—truly abstract *expressionism*.

In 1987, Soulages was commissioned to return to his beloved Sainte Foy de Conques to design 100 abstract stained glass windows for the 10th century church. He developed a new kind of glass with variable translucency. The installation was completed in 1994, providing an overwhelming experience within the Romanesque vaulted dome. In 2014 the city of Rodez honored its most famous son, opening a Soulages Museum, housing over 500 of his paintings. You may want to add this ancient city to your next European itinerary and experience *outré-noir* for yourselves!



Sainte Foy de Conques, France



Soulages Museum, Rodez, France



Pierre Soulages, (b. 1919), French, *10 Mai 1961*, oil on canvas. SBMA Gift of Robert B. and Mercedes H. Eichholz. Soulages named each painting by the date on which it was executed. On May 10, 1961 Air France Flight 406 from Algiers to Marseille crashed in the Sahara, killing all aboard. Perhaps this painting records Soulages' emotional response to the crash, serving as a memorial to all who lost their lives in that disaster.

Iconoclastic Fervor: Sally Hazelet Drummond's Road to Abstraction

By Ricki Morse

Sally Hazelet Drummond's search for an artistic vocabulary to express her vision is one she shares with many modern artists. Characterized by an individualistic temperament, rigorous training in the arts and boundless creative energy, Drummond began her studies at Rollins College in Florida and as a junior transferred to Columbia University in New York City where she received her B.A. in 1948, beginning her lifelong love of the city. She often attended openings in the East Village, at the 10th Street galleries. Abstract expressionism was flourishing, relieving the artist of representation, and requiring a personal interior vision to give life and meaning to the painted surface.



Sally Hazelet Drummond
in NYC, 1959

After a year at the Institute of Design in Chicago, she joined her family in Louisville and received her master's degree in art at the Hite Art Institute of the University of Louisville in 1952, where she was the first woman graduate. The following year she accepted a Fulbright grant to study in Venice. It was in Louisville that she met her future husband, Wick Drummond. Upon returning to New York, she found an apartment on East 10th Street and was invited to join the Tanager Gallery, an artist-run cooperative. Though her work was becoming less representational, often cubistic, sometimes linear, she was seeing ground-breaking work all around her, particularly that of Willem de Kooning, whom she knew and admired. She told an interviewer that she always wanted to be good. To others, queried the interviewer?



Drummond, *Girl Sitting*, 1940, oil
on Masonite

No, for myself, she answered. Drummond was clear that she had not yet found a way to reflect on the canvas the experiential moment she wanted to embody. She found herself painting out the image of a vase of flowers she had begun, leaving finally a heavily overpainted white surface. Something about the imageless surface felt right. She began to explore French pointillism, the neo-impressionist application of paint in small dabs, most famously employed by Paul Seurat, who was given a retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art in 1958. Drummond spent days soaking up the sketches, prints and paintings.

In 1962 Wick and Sally's son Craig was born and the family left New York City, settling in Germantown, NY, about 100 miles up the Hudson

River from the city. Drummond received a Guggenheim to study in France in 1967-68 where she spent time with many pointillist artists, particularly Seurat and his colleague and fellow pointillist, Paul Signac. Though usually referred to as dots, the application of paint seems to me much more complexly varied, while dots describe what Roy Lichtenstein painted in his pop/comic image canvases



Drummond, *Magician*, 1951, Lacquer on gessoed Masonite.

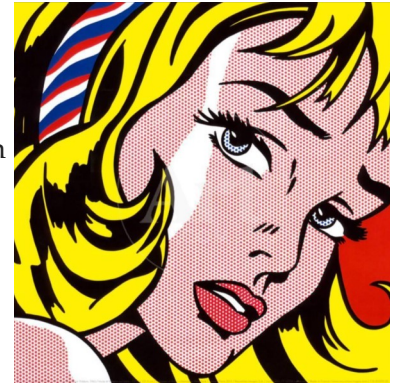


.Paul Signac (1863-1935), *Harbor of Marseilles*, 1906, oil on canvas. Hermitage Museum

Girl with Hair Ribbon. Drummond describes the process of choosing the colors of the dabs as dictated by the painting process itself, as each dab dictates the color and placement of the next, the spacing and brightness or darkness determined by her internal image of the whole.

In 1972 the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington D.C. mounted a retrospective of Drummond’s work, which had previously been shown in galleries in the East Village, particularly at the now-defunct Tanager.

The New York Times reviewer, Hilton Kramer, wrote, “The direc-



Roy Lichtenstein, *Girl with Hair Ribbon*

tion chosen by Mrs. Drummond seemed particularly radical, not only in its rejection of all expressionist facture in painting, but also in its revival of a delicate pointillist technique for the purpose of a very abstract imagery. This imagery consisted of a finely worked painted surface composed of myriad dots or touches of color, in which an abstract field of light— very subtly conceived but very rigorously controlled—formed a single, over-all pictorial structure. The application of the paint was remarkably even, remarkably cerebral—or so, at the time, it seemed—



Drummond, *Unified Field*, 1980 (detail), oil on canvas.

yet the effect was lyrical, even joyous.” At about this time Drummond shifted the overall visual center of her work to light, emanating subtly from the center of the canvas, as opposed to the dark center of the above painting. This shift seems to express a glowing presence which many associate with Drummond’s interest in Buddhism, but I have been unable to find any statements from Drummond on Buddhism. Certainly these later canvases, which she has continued to paint, feel contemplative, meditative, quieting—not a little awesome!

Drummond’s work was included in a group show at P.S. 1, the Museum of Modern Art’s Long Island City gallery, entitled “Underknown:

Twelve Artists Re-Seen in 1984.” New York Times re-

viewer Michael Brensen remarked, “In each of Drummond’s dotted fields of color, a light at the center has just begun to glimmer.” Sally Drummond is also a skilled writer, and I find her descriptions of her philosophy and her artistic vision compelling. Her most recent exhibition was hung at the Hite Art Institute in Louisville in 2015. She and her son Craig participated in the planning of the show, and she gave interviews and wrote essays for the catalogue, the title of which I used as the title of this article. Sally Hazelet Drummond’s



Drummond, *Heart of Iron*, 1960, oil on canvas

statements for the Iconoclastic Fervor catalogue:

On philosophy

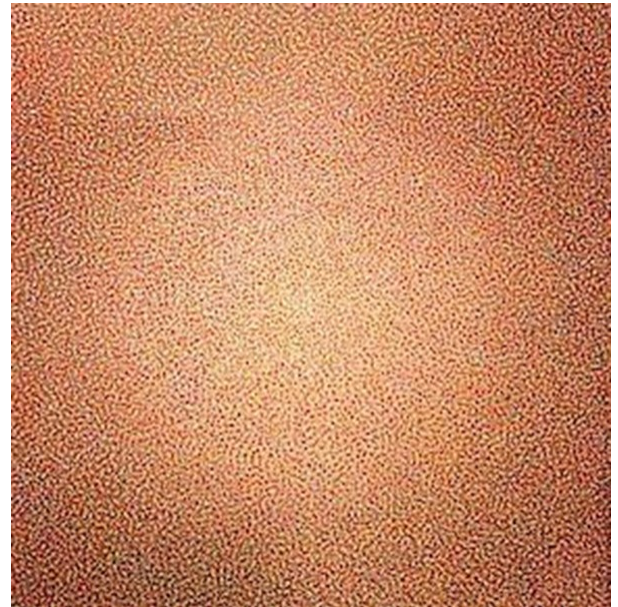
I believe that all great art is an attempt on the part of the artist to express his faith in the unseen, but intuitively felt, structured but infinite beauty lying inherent in the visible world. This faith and concern, I believe, is what binds together all the highest forms of artistic expression of man down through the ages.

On the challenge of modern art

For me, the challenge and significance of 20th Century art, from the time of Cezanne has been the attempt to simplify and to reduce the complexities of the visual world to essential and meaningful forms. This search for essences has been a thread which to me distinguishes art of this century from most Western art since the Italian Renaissance.

On her own painting

For me, color is the basic ingredient of painting, and it is with color that I try to express my feelings. The outer form of my painting is the shape of the canvas. The inner form is striven for through the depth and richness of the color. Cezanne said, "When the color is at its richest, the form is at its plenitude." My ultimate goal is to create a single radiant field of contemplation where form and content have become one.



Drummond, *Untitled (gold leaf)*, 2010, oil on canvas.



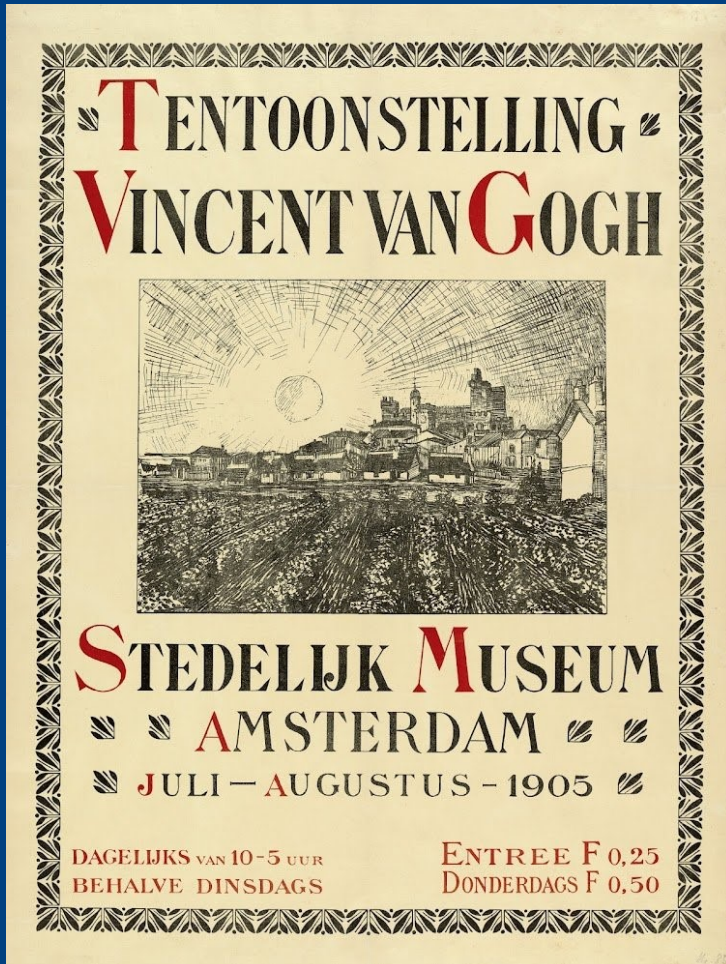
The Hite Institute of Art exhibition *Iconoclastic Fervor: Sally Hazelet Drummond's Road to Abstraction*, 2015

Nature as Sculptor:
Karen Brill Meets The Cookie Monster



THE LAST PAGE

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Au revoir, Vincent.
What a joy it's been
having you in our home!

Poster of the *Vincent van Gogh*
Exhibition, 1905, Stedelijk Museum
Amsterdam. [Van Gogh Museum.](http://www.dailyartmagazine.com/jo-van-gogh-bonger/)
www.dailyartmagazine.com/jo-van-gogh-bonger/



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