

La Muse

DOCENT DATES

November 1

Catherine Barth, *Copper Plate to Collotype*

November 9 Documentary on Siqueiros's SoCal murals

November 15

Andrew Winer and James Glisson; *Contemporary Conversations*

December 6

Melinda Gandara, *Portrait of Mexico Today*

December 11

Holiday Party 4–7 see page 2

January 17

Kieth Mayerson, *Someday we'll find it, the Rainbow Connection, the lovers, the dreamers and me*

January 31

The Broad and MOCA

February 7

February 21

March 6

March 20

April 14-18

Docent D.C Trip

(see docent website for additional meeting dates)



We are celebrating our acquisition of an Ilana Savdie oil painting (page 8 and here) with her *Baths of Synovia*, 2023, oil, acrylic, beeswax on canvas stretched on canvas, Whitney Museum of American Art, currently on exhibition through this month in the Whitney Lobby exhibition *Radical Contractions*. Ilana Savdie, born in 1986 in Barranquilla, Colombia, now living in Brooklyn, celebrates the flamboyant energy of the local

carnivals through the visceral experience of people, animals and insects, pulsing with color and ambiguity. *Submitted by Ricki*

Dear Docents, Sustainers and Provisionals,

It continues to be an exciting time at the Museum. From the delight of newly installed exhibits—*Flowers on a River* and *The Photographs of Ellsworth Kelly*—to the arrival of our new Museum Director, Amada Cruz, our docent world is abuzz with the feel of a new service year. If you haven't read about Amada's background, click on this SBMA website link. <https://www.sbma.net/sites/default/files/attachment/Cruz%20release%20FINAL2.pdf>. Also, if you missed Curators' Susan Tai's or Charlie Wylie's inspiring docent lectures you can access them on our website.

The amendment to change our docent touring year to align with the Museum's fiscal calendar—July 1st through June 30th—was unanimously passed by the Docent Council on October 18th. All Docents, including New Actives will now begin to accrue their touring hours in the summer, retroactive to the graduating class of 2023 only.

This change brought me many questions from you, a reflection of the careful consideration you all gave in approving this change.

To all, a very happy, heathy, and yummy Thanksgiving.
Teda



Teda Pilcher
Docent Council
President

From our **Vice President**

Pattie Firestone



Mark your calendars!

Monday December 11, 2023 – Holiday Party from 4-7pm

At Laura DePaoli's home: [645 Stoddard Lane, Santa Barbara, CA 93108](#). If you're interested in helping, look for a sign-up sheet at the next Docent Council meeting or email Pattie.Firestone@gmail.com

January 31 – [The Broad](#) & [MOCA](#)– 2.25 hrs each way. Cost and transportation TBA. Sign-up sheet at the next Docent Council Meeting or email Pattie.Firestone@gmail.com.

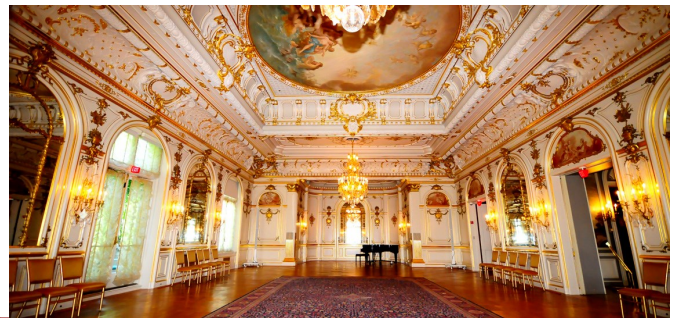
April 14 – 18 – Washington, DC Docent Trip – sign up sheet at next Docent Council meeting or email Pattie.Firestone@gmail.com.

Book your own airline fight. Rooms are reserved at the [Cosmos Club](#) two blocks from Dupont Circle Metro and next door to the [Phillips Collection](#) (with Bonnard and Cezanne exhibitions scheduled for that time). **To reserve rooms**, call 202-387-7783 or email fd@cosmosclub.org. Mention you wish to book in the “**SBMA Docent Group**” block (10 rooms) to get these discounted rates until March 14th. Breakfast included prices range \$218-\$388 (plus 16% taxes) depending on size and location in or next to the historic building.

Please call to reserve your room ASAP. Every room in the Cosmos Club is different and April is the busiest season in DC. You can cancel with a full refund before March 14.

For questions or comments you can email me:

Pattie.Firestone@gmail.com.



From our **Membership Chair**

Mary Ellen Alden



Our docent roster for the 2023-2024 year is finalized! As of mid October, our ranks include **62 Active Docents, 43; Sustaining Docents; and 22 Provisional Docents.**

Remember to record your touring and research hours, either on spreadsheet at the sign-in table at meetings, or by emailing me at mea.mnlaw@gmail.com.

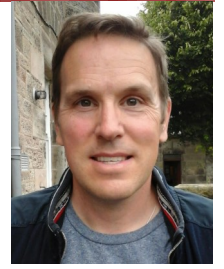
One hour tour credit is given for each public tour, regardless of length. Research hours include reading, self study, Docent Council business, etc. Active Docents are required to complete eight public hours per docent service year.

Mary Ellen

From our **Student Teams Co-chairs**
Nicola Ghersen and Andrew Baker



October launched the Student Teams into the new touring year with 534 students exploring our galleries. Many docents are including Keith Mayerson's *Someday we'll find it, the Rainbow Connection, the lovers, the dreamers and me* on their tours. This piece elicits fascinating reactions from our students. Tommie Rae Barnett shared how a second grader asked her why the painter had made the road Kermit's bicycle travels on so bumpy be-



cause gravel roads make bikes hard to ride. Another said the dark colors in the background were spooky, but the green frog and yellow bike were happy. Still another wondered what Kermit had under the red scarf in the basket. Obviously, students are approaching this work with observant and critical eyes as they scrutinize the composition. Thanks to all of our docents who encourage these burgeoning art lovers to dig deeper into the work. This is what learning to look at art is all about!

Remember that team leaders must record tour details in the **White Notebook** at the front desk.

Nicola and Andrew



From our **Adult Teams Co-chairs**
Denise Klassen and Susan Lowe



The fall touring year is off to a great start with the *Ellsworth Kelly* and *Flowers on a River* tours. I thank those teams for all their hard work and I'm sure many of you are looking forward to taking one of these tours.

As I am sure you have noticed, we have several new staff members on the desks, so it would be a wonderful idea to introduce yourself when you come in—remind them of the kind of tour you will be giving as well as where you will start so they can let incoming visitors



Susan Lowe

know where to gather. Give yourself plenty of time to sweep the galleries as well.

Signing out after your tours continues to present problems. Please complete your adult tour by signing and filling out **The Red Book** before you leave so we can track visitor numbers. Regularly scheduled tours are in one section and Special Request tours are marked in the green section—we appreciate your help in keeping these separate. These numbers are not only used by the docent council but are what we turn in to the Museum itself, numbers used in grant applications, for example. Your help with this is really important. This information is one way in which we document our public service as docents. If by chance you do forget to fill out the **Red Book**, simply let one of us know your touring numbers as soon as possible.

Happy Touring,
Susan & Denise

From our Evaluations Co-chairs

Christine Holland and Irene Stone



Christine Holland

Your Evaluations Co-Chairs are pleased to report that Evaluations are set up and progressing for Student Tours as well as for Adult Tours of Highlights, *Flowers on the River*, and *Ellsworth Kelly*. Again, we thank the generous Docents who are giving their time to attend tours and provide evaluations. As we have repeatedly noted, the evaluations are a great way for all Docents to receive thoughtful and helpful feedback on their tours. Our Docent Council is proud of its high standards and dedication to providing the best tours for the visiting public.



Irene Stone

In addition, the Provisional Class is already busy learning, studying and practicing. Their first excursion into touring will be in mid-November as they give their Three Minute Tours. If you see them practicing in the galleries, be sure to say “hello” and provide welcoming encouragement.

Christine and Irene

From our Community Speakers Team Leader

Lori Mohr



Dear Docents,

The new team members—Belle Michael, Sarajum Quazi and Doug McElwain are doing a great job! Sarajum’s talk focuses on how artists evoke emotion through the use of color. I am very pleased to be part of this small but mighty team.

Here are the October numbers. *Lori*

VENUE	PRESENTATION	ATTENDANCE
Maravilla Assisted	Delacroix to Dufy (Sarajum)	35
The Californian	Ellsworth Kelley (Doug)	13
Mission Terrace	“	21
Total Attendance	34	Average Attendance: 11

CSP



Zhu Da/Bada Shanren, Qing dynasty, 1626–1705, *Flowers on a River* (detail), 1697. Ink on paper, hand scroll. Tianjin Museum.



From our **Provisional Chair and
Coordinator of Docent Programs**
Patty Santiago

Meet the rest of the 22 Provisionals from the Class of 2024



Debbie Auday My husband and I recently moved to SB after living on the North Shore of Massachusetts for 34 years. My career was spent as an educator, teaching elementary school, middle school English, and graduate education. I am still teaching my graduate students remotely on their journeys to become teachers. I also observe and evaluate teacher candidates who are preparing to start their practicums. During my years as an educator of elementary students, I wove art education into the curriculum, studying an artist a week. At the end of the year, we invited family and friends to join us at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, where students gave talks about an artist of their choice. This memorable experience hopefully created a lifetime appreciation for and love of art, which is my goal as a docent. I love to read, walk, lift weights, juggle, hula hoop, and go to Newcomer events.



Kendra Chappell As a writer, collaborator, and teaching artist/ theater director I am committed to the abundance and multiplicity offered in story. My previous career included 32 years as a public high school theater teacher; an adjunct educator for Missouri State University; a guest director at Springfield Little Theatre; and currently a resident director at The Gillioz in Springfield. I am the writer and director of *The Milly Project* as a member of Theater Ambassadors for the Ensemble Theater Company at the New Vic. I am excited to put this background to use as a future docent and pleased to be in the training program. My husband and I are grateful that life has recently delivered us to our new homeland in Santa Barbara, and look forward to time with family, friends, and adventures in this magnificent natural environment.



Sheryl Denbo Following both of our children to California, my husband and I moved to SB in 2017. I had worked as a social studies and English teacher in middle and high school while completing my education. Trained as a sociologist, I moved on to teach on a wide variety of urban education issues, first at Brooklyn College and later at Dartmouth. Working as Director of the non-profit Mid Atlantic Equity Center in Washington, DC, I supervised a diverse staff of professionals to assist schools to support the achievement of Black and language minority students.

Twenty-two years ago a friend signed me up for a community based abstract painting class and I fell in love. Fifteen years ago I retired from education and became a full time artist. I now divide my time between a small community in Lubec, Maine and Santa Barbara, and have the privilege of painting and showing my work on both coasts.



Liz Silacci I am a Southern California girl born and raised in Redondo Beach. I attended Chico State University where I graduated with a BA in Graphic Design and a minor in Spanish. Following college I returned to LA where I worked at Princess Cruises in marketing and graphic design and had the opportunity to travel to far away lands. Marriage to my husband Mike took me back to the Bay Area where I worked for a print production company and an advertising agency in San Francisco. After the birth of our two children, I became a stay at home mom. In 1997 Mike’s career brought us back to SoCal where we landed in beautiful Newbury Park! Art in all its forms has always been a love of mine. I’ve been a Student Tours docent at the Getty Center for five years and also volunteer teaching art at our local elementary school. My family has spent a lot of time in Santa Barbara over the years, and while I would love to live here, I am happy to travel weekly to learn and share with the wonderful new friends of our docent class.



And in class....The provisional docents have been learning about “Elements of Art” and “Principles of Design.” They have been using Object Worksheets and gallery exercises to help them to understand how to analyze an artwork. Each provisional docent has chosen a piece to present for their Three Minute Evaluation on November 15th. In anticipation of this first milestone, provisional docents have been assigned a mentor to assist them in their preparation. Thank you to all active docents who have agreed to serve in this very important role. You are an integral part of the training program. *Patty*

Patty Santiago, Provisional Chair

Mentor		Provisional	
Josie Martin	Linda Gorman	Marcos Christodoulou	Bobbi Corbin
Irene Stone	Sandra Stingle	Christine Holland	Debbie Auday
Teda Pilcher	Sandy DeRousse	Tommie Rae Barnett	Carol Forham
Seraphim Albrecht	Johanna Chase	Andrew Baker	Becka Chester
Mimi Baer	Lynda Gilderman	Mary Benedict	Thea Van Tonder
Pattie Firestone	Betsy Randolph	Laezer Schlomkowitz	Michael Wilk
Barbara Boyd	Emily Mariano	Laezer Schlomkowitz	Kendra Chappell
Gretel Rothrock	Allou Guthmiller	Belle Michael	Liz Salacci
Jeff Vitucci	Michael DeRousse	Judy Dewey	Paula Campanelli
Elizabeth Russell	Sue Walker	Greg Farrington	Darcie Burk
Mary Ellen Alden	Sheryl Denbo		

From our **Research Chair**
Barbara Ross



“November is the last month of autumn, but the beginning of a new adventure; time to take a risk and do the unexpected.” ~Unknown

Therefore, November is the perfect month to be so inspired by a work of art that one can hardly resist the drive to write a research paper to be shared with fellow docents on our website. These research papers are the first step in constructing our tours. The format is clear, and help is available. Please look at the lists of works below that are in need of papers. The pieces from Ridley-Tree Gallery are on long term loan from the Hammer Museum, hopefully hanging in what will become their eventual home with us, nine of which need research papers. New Active docents have been using *Children with A Goldfish Bowl* and *Dressing the Dolly* in their student tours. *Portrait of Trude* is a treasure trove of color and expression for adult tours.

~Looking forward to researching with you...

Barbara

ARTWORK	ARTIST
Coastline at Antibes	Pierre-August Renoir
Summertime	Mary Cassatt
Three Dancers in Yellow Skirts	Edgar Degas
View of a Farm in Osny	Camille Pissarro
Laundress Carrying Linen	Edgar Degas



Walt Kuhn, American, 1880-1949. *Portrait of Trude*, 1930, oil on canvas, 48 x 37 in. SBMA.



De Scott Evans, American, 1847-1898. *Dressing the Dolly*, 1884, oil on canvas, 20 1/8 x 16 1/8 in., SBMA

ARTWORK	ARTIST
Children with a Goldfish Bowl	Hugh Newell
Dressing the Dolly	De Scott Evans
Landscape	Charles Codman
Landscape	William Keith
Landscape	William Keith
Passion Play, Oberammergau	Edward Lamson Henry
Peconic Bay	Worthington Whittredge
Portrait of Trude	Walt Kuhn
Scene on the Upper Delaware	Worthington Whittredge
Taos Woman	Della Shull



Hugh Newell, Irish, 1830-1915 (active USA). *Children with a Goldfish Bowl*, 1873, oil on canvas, 12 x 14 in., SBMA

Ilana Savdie's *Carnaval* of Existence

by Ricki Morse



Carnaval

Ilana Savdie was born in 1968, in Barranquilla, Colombia, home to the second largest *carnaval* in the world, celebrated in

the four days before Ash Wednesday. *Carnaval* filled her life with the grotesque, flamboyant, exuberant world of masked protest which both frightened and excited her, particularly the images of Marimondo, the spirit of the Barranquilla *Carnaval*, said to be a cheerful local man, half



monkey/half elephant, dressed in mismatched colors noted for his phallic nose, mocking the ruling class. The indigenous Colombians celebrated by turning their clothes inside-out, wearing clashing colors, and dancing in the streets to their drum ensembles in their "rags," establishing the power of their presence, making fun of the wealthy Spanish invaders/land owners.

Though *Carnaval* was brought to South America by the Spanish conquistadores as a Catholic Lenten festival, the slaves they brought with them, who were forbidden their native languages and rituals, soon introduced their music, dances and costumes into the parades. Thus *Carnaval* became a Catholic, African, indigenous festival celebrating the identities of the disenfranchised.



Savdie lived in Colombia until she was 13 and began collecting masks and with them the exuberant individuality of the dancers. She was also collecting tempos, swirling lines, flashing bodies. We see in her paintings the throb of *Carnaval* drum beats and the flowing path of the parade, the rejection of decorum, the identification with society's misfits.



The Outsider



Ilana Savdie was born into a family of immigrants. Her father was a Lebanese Jew, born and raised in Egypt before fleeing Europe during WWII, and her mother moved from Venezuela to Colombia where they met. Their neighbors included many European Jews, and as a child Savdie experienced the separateness of the Jewish community and stories of their escapes from the death camps. Being different was inherent in her world. Their move to Miami added more layers of difference. Now her mother was a brown woman in a white world and Savdie recognized herself as gay. Her art takes us farther into difference, displaying all the disparate aspects of life, from repulsive to seductive, from bizarre to tender, from grotesque to beautiful, stretching our capacity for repugnance and acceptance. This self-portrait wearing the Marimondo mask of the protesting commoner asks that we see her as unique, unconventional.

Ilana Savdie as Marimondo, the Spirit of *Carnaval* figure, 2022, in her studio.

RISD and Yale

At 20 Savdie entered the Rhode Island School of Design, though she was very conflicted about pursuing art as a career. Painting seemed impractical, yet her skills were apparent; so she enrolled as an illustration student, denying her lifelong dream career of painting. In the process she was able to pursue her interest in Baroque art. A student of how art repeats itself through time, she later incorporates the age old aggressions of man against man embodied in the 16thc by Peter Paul Rubens, in the 1800s by Francisco de Goya, into her colorful processions. Upon graduation from RISD in 2008 she took jobs in graphic design, re-touching images of models for Maybelline and similar companies.



Peter Paul Rubens, *The Massacre of the Innocents*, c. 1610, oil on panel, Art Gallery of Ontario.



Francisco Goya, *The 2nd of May 1808 in Madrid or "The Fight against the Mamelukes,"* 1814, oil on canvas, Museo del Prado, Madrid

Though it provided her with a living, the

task of purifying images came to feel so toxic she was consumed with the impulse to distort and destroy. The urge to paint full time became a necessity. Her evenings were consumed with trying out various painting mediums, sorting out what felt right. Once clear about her direction, she enrolled in graduate school at Yale, completing her MFA in 2018 and accepted a yearlong fellowship and residency at the NXTHVN Foundation in New Haven. She knew what she wanted to explore: "perversion, identity and the confines and expanses of the human body."

Exploiting a Suitable Host

Savdie's work was already drawing attention. With the support of fellowships, residencies and sales of paintings, she was now painting full time and moved into a studio in Brooklyn. In March 2022 she signed up with



White Cube, a prestigious international contemporary art dealer with showrooms around the world. That same year we acquired our painting, currently on view in our *Inside Stories/Outside Tales* exhibition in the Contemporary Gallery. Standing before the painting, we are drawn in and repelled. The open spaces are gracious and inviting, the sky a little cloudy. The predatory figure of a giant sperm-filled insect looms over the naked woman and her companion, her face fragmented as she leans against him. The insect, the woman and the blue man share and exchange limbs, as the figures interact. The flow of the design appeals while the grotesque content repels. Is the predator also the seducer and which role falls to the artist? Savdie challenges us to accept these complexities as the constants of our world—to know the world as it is, not as socially reconstructed into fixed identities and roles.

Ilana Savdie, *"lágrimas y mocos (exploiting a suitable host),"* 2021, oil, acrylic, beeswax on canvas stretched on canvas, SBMA

Drawing and The Process

Savdie collects scientific drawings of insects, incorporating these images into her own work. The insect world widens her image vocabulary into unseen, often unknown, manifestations of our life on earth. She says, "I like to think about how two things meet: how to create a seam, a joint, a link, and then these two things that are supposed to stop each other from existing, form and bend and become something else." In combining the insect world with the human body Savdie invents something new, an insect antennae drifting through an eye socket, a human couple holding insect appendages, a human dancing on insect legs.



Ilana Savdie, Ilana Savdie, "*Ojos, mis ojos (eyes, not eyes)*," 2021, ink and acrylic on paper.



Ilana Savdie "*Me meneaba la cintura (shake your waist)*," 2022, pen and acrylic on paper.



Ilana Savdie, "*Nice and tight, everyone's happy*," 2021, ink and acrylic on paper

Each of her paintings begins as a drawing. Sketches turn into works on paper which are then moved into Photoshop where she adds color, often expanded and evolved into a roughly 70 x 60 inch image. Materials are noted on pieces of tape stuck to the canvas. Paint and beeswax are melted in a crockpot and poured onto the canvas spread on the uneven floor of her studio or a table which she describes as a "power struggle" between giving the materials their way and conveying the images. Next is encaustic painting, smoothing the beeswax, which she limits to preserve the wrinkled surface of naturally dried wax, and finally detailed retouching on a vertical mounted canvas.

Savdie's first solo exhibition was mounted by the Kohn Gallery on Highland Ave. in Los Angeles in November 2021. Her work burst on the art scene early and rapidly. Not only did we acquire a painting in 2022, but the Whitney Museum of American Art in NYC opened her one woman show in their lobby last July. It will be closing November 5, 2023, so there's still time to get there.

Ilana Savdie, "*Buen provecho, Occupy the Mouth*," 2021, oil, acrylic, and beeswax on canvas over wood, Whitney Museum, NYC.



BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ilana Savdie Catalogue, Kohn Gallery, Nov. 6, 2021-Feb. 3, 2022, Los Angeles.

Francesca Anton, "Like an 'Exposed Nervous System, Ilana Savdie's Whitney Show Captures Collective Dread," *ARTnews*, July 2023.

Steph Echhardt, "In the Studio with Ilana Savdie, The Artist Testing the Body's Limits," *WMagazine*, July 2022.

Jasmine Wahi, "Euphoric and Grotesque: Savdie on Painting Parasites," *Interview Magazine*, Dec. 17, 2021



Luxury & Power: Persia to Greece

British Museum

4 May - 13 August 2023

Reviewed by Tracey Miller

Editor's Note: Tracey Miller is a former SBMA docent from the Class of 2006-2007 (with Ann Hammond and me). When I began as editor of *La Muse* fourteen years ago, I encouraged docents to share their museum experiences. Consider it an open invitation. Your experience, your words. Here is Tracey's review.

My husband Brad and I were fortunate to attend the Special Exhibition at the British Museum this summer, the intent of which was to explore luxury as a concept—the exploration of objects of luxury as representing prestige and political power. The exhibition covers 500 years of Persian and Greek history focused on the theme of luxury. That is a key word in classical historical and political texts, the flaw that corrupts and destroys societies, associated with the East and Persian power. The items on display were pulled from Central Asia, the Middle East and Central Europe and originated approximately 600 BCE to 100 BCE coinciding with the rise of the Mighty Persian Empire—the largest to date at that time. It was a very well documented time in history, but interestingly, all that documentation was done by the Greeks, not the Persians. So ultimately, we are viewing the Persian Empire as seen through the eyes of the Greeks. The Persians were an oral historical culture recorded by voices that have long fallen silent.

The ruling tribal family of the Persian King was that of Achaemenid and the main Palace was Persepolis. The Persian Court moved seasonally, so there were five palaces in total and the flavor of their nomadic roots was kept by the luxuriously sumptuous tents that moved with them. When at war, a Royal Command was set up in one of these elaborate tents—capturing one of these was considered by the Greeks to be the next best thing to capturing a palace, as they were so filled with treasure. A description by Herodotos after a Royal Command Tent was captured by Pausanias: "Treasure there was in plenty - tents full of gold and silver furniture; couches overlaid with precious metals; bowls, goblets & cups, all made of gold! When Pausanias saw it, with its embroidered hangings and gorgeous decorations....he could hardly believe his eyes." The Exhibition was divided into 3 sections: 1) Achaemenid Iran: Feasting like Kings; 2) Classical Period Athens: Feasting like Equals; 3) Alexander's World: Feasting like Persians (back to Iran but under Alexander's rule).



Panagyurishte Treasure, National Museum of History Bulgaria

Achaeminid Iran

The King represented Absolute Power. His feet didn't ever touch the ground, he was always surrounded by incense so he never breathed the same 'common air' as the people and the sun never directly touched his skin.



Gold armlet (part of the Oxus Treasure), Tajikistan, 499–300 BC. Photo: British Museum

These were all significant luxuries and were shown as important political tools. Tribute was a very important part of life. As the Persian King and his Court traveled, so did their luxury—and tribute was not only paid to the King, the King would bestow gifts upon the high ranking officials and families of the other palace cities. Others then emulated what the royal court used as a way of buying into their power. The Ryhton was a very popular item and a few spectacular pieces were on display. This was a way to drink theatrically, with showmanship, with panache! They look like wine horns, but they're not—they're wine pouring objects. The Ryhton would be held up with the thumb over the bottom spout. A servant would pour wine into the vessel (holds 1.5 bottles of wine!) while in the other hand would be held a drinking bowl. When full, the holder would remove their thumb as wine would stream into the bowl.

During the time of Achaeminid rule, there was a rippling style of luxury that spread throughout the empire with the same items being



Gilt silver rhyton displayed in *Luxury and Power*. Photograph, British Museum



found in all directions and at all levels of society, but made from cheaper, more accessible materials. Another form of luxury found throughout the kingdom during this time involved the making of purple pigment which was worth more than its weight in gold! It comes from Murex Shellfish and the Phoenicians held the secret to how the gland is extracted to create a rare purple pigment.

Athenian drinking mug in the form of the head of a bearded Persian. Greece, about 410–400 BC . Photo British Museum.



Classical Period Athens By the 5th century BCE Athens has emerged as a Democracy—still young, still defining what it means to be ruled by the people and they're decrying wealth as an evil decadence. This drinking mug personifies how the Greeks treated their 'win' over the Persian Empire—this mug depicts a Persian Soldier, (we know this as he's wearing a leather cap and has a luxurious mustache & beard). His face is terrified and around the lip of the cup is a fresco further demeaning him by showing a woman at her toilette being waited on by a serving girl wearing trousers, very important as trousers were considered 'sleeves for your legs' —"The Persians did that, not us" and now look where they areterrified of us! Athens becomes wealthy, in part from defeating the Persians, in part from silver mines and thus became the problem of what to do with this wealth. The maxim was 'Nothing in Excess' which was inscribed at the Temple of Apollo in Delphi. A statement recorded by Thucydides summed up how the Greeks viewed the Persian objects of luxury: "...Our love of what is beautiful does not lead us to extravagance. We regard wealth as something to be properly used, rather than something to boast about."

The Persians burned down the original Parthenon which was made of wood. After the Greeks defeated the Persians, they rebuilt it, literally on the ashes of the original, but out of marble, and held the Persian riches, the loot, within. And human nature prevailed as there's always been the danger of private luxury. This began with Greeks finding ways to emulate some items of the Persians. The exhibition had a truly lovely assortment of these drinking vessels that were fashioned after the Persian Rhyton's but were a 'play' on them as all would recognize these but instead of being wine pourers, they were wine vessels, so at every sip the drinker would look like the animal depicted.

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Alexander's world Here we have a Kingdom again—not a democracy—and Alexander III recognized the fundamental role that 'luxury' plays in legitimizing authority and perpetuating it around the empire. For the first time, luxury is now traveling west to east. The funerary wreath (left) is a beautiful example. A new form of luxury, visual aesthetic, emerges at this time—the Hellenistic world—and centers of craft production



emerge. Glorious glass started to rival, for the first time, gold and silver at tables of royalty and the uber-wealthy.

Nine gold drinking vessels wrapped up the exhibition, crafted around 300 BCE but not uncovered until 1949, and bind it together as they show both Persian & Greek influences coming together. All but one of the vessels have spouts for pouring wine, so they're

Rhytons in function, but Greek in decoration as they're each depicting scenes from Greek Mythology. Absolute bling and almost blindingly beautiful to behold. In the ancient world, there was far more to luxury than simple decadence, and far more to the Persians than luxurious excess.



"Now we are suffering the calamities of long peace. Luxury has settled down on us, crueller than fighting, avenging the world we have conquered....It was filthy money that first imported foreign ways, and effete wealth that corrupted our era with its disgusting decadence." Juvenal (about AD 55 - 130) Roman Satirical Poet. ■

The Last Page



Doug McElwain, *Platform Holly, Goleta, 2014*. Doug is a member of the Community Speakers Program, currently giving presentations on our current exhibition, *Shape, Ground, Shadow: The Photographs of Ellsworth Kelley*

Lori Mohr, Editor , 2009—

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