

DOCENT DATES

February 7

"Important Works on Paper from the 18th and 19th c."

February 21

"Janna Ireland: True Story Index", Charlie Wylie and Frederick Janka.

March 6

TBD

March 20

"Born Digital" lecture by James Glisson

April 3

TBD

April 14-18

Docent D.C Trip

May 1

"LGBTQ", James Glisson

May 15

"New Media", Fabian Leyva-Barragan

May 24, 4-6P.M.

Docent Service Recognition and Graduation



Nick Cave, *Soundsuit*, 2011, found objects, knit head and bodysuit, and mannequin, MOMA, NY. "Nick Cave was born in Fulton, Missouri in 1959. He creates "Soundsuits" —surreally majestic objects blending fashion and sculpture—that originated as metaphorical suits of armor in response to the Rodney King beatings and have evolved into vehicles for empowerment. Fully concealing the body, the "Soundsuits" serve as an alien second skin that obscures race, gender, and class, allowing viewers to look without bias towards the wearer's identity. Cave regularly performs in the sculptures himself, dancing either before the public or for the camera, activating their full potential as costume, musical instrument, and living icon." Art21, Sept.2016. Submitted by Ricki

Dear Docents, Sustainers and Provisionals,

Days of spring-like weather have reminded us that we are on the downhill side of the service year. We eagerly await the *Janna Ireland: True Story* exhibition, opening February 11th. Co- curated by Charlie Wylie, our Curator of Photography and New media, along with Frederick Janka, MCASB, this is the largest exhibition of Ireland's photographs and installations to date. Don't miss Charlie's lecture at our February 21st meeting. And on February 11th we have the highly anticipated opening of *19th and 20th century Works on Paper*. Due to their delicate nature, rarely hung works by Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso, Mary Cassatt, Jules Harpignies, and Jean- Francois Millet will be on view and rotating. You won't want to miss this opportunity to see them.

The Park entrance is a visual delight with the recent acquisitions by Nick Cave (*Rescue*), Ena Swansea (*Area Code*) and Ann Craven (*12 Moons*). These winter additions will no doubt feed our docent energy as we immerse ourselves in the ever changing rotation of riches.

Onward!

Teda



Teda Pilcher
Docent Council
President

From our **Vice President**

Pattie Firestone



Mark Your Calendars!

January 31 – [The Broad](#) & [MOCA](#)– 8am – 6pm. SB Air Bus with a bathroom cost \$70/person plus \$20 for the docent-led tour at 11am. We had 30 for the bus, 22 for the tour. Two docents from the Broad led two tours with ten docents each.

February & March - MEET & GREET Provisionals and Active Docents – After a three-year hiatus, we are reviving a much-loved tradition: the in-home, docent-hosted social gatherings for provisionals so that we can have another, more personal opportunity to get better acquainted. Here's how it works: two Active Docents host two-four Provisional Docents along with another four-six Active Docents at the host's home in February or March. We have seven homes and those invitations will go out soon by email. When you receive your invitation, please let us know ASAP if you can join your host or not so we can reschedule you for another time and place. Looking forward to seeing you!

April 14 – 18 – Washington, DC Docent Trip

Make your airline reservations and room reservations soon! We have a dozen people signed up for this trip and six rooms out of eleven are reserved at the Cosmos Club. Activities are planned for Monday April 14 through Thursday April 18. I will send information via group emails to those who sign up or email me. Thanks!

For questions or comments you can email me: Pattie.Firestone@gmail.com *Pattie*

From our **Adult Teams Co-chairs**

Denise Klassen and Susan Lowe



Denise Klassen

We hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season. The New Year is off to a great start despite the touring challenge of two exhibitions being de-installed. We're looking forward to seeing the *Janna Ireland* exhibition which should be installed shortly.

In December the over all touring numbers remained high and the average attendance per tour for the *Flowers on the River* was at 14.2 visitors per tour. *Ellsworth Kelly* was 6.2 and *Highlights* 7.79.

The winter *Highlights* team and the *Influence & Innovation: Art in Europe and the Americas* team are off to a great start and are covering several large Special Request tours as well as the regularly scheduled tours. Thanks so much for their enthusiasm and dedication.



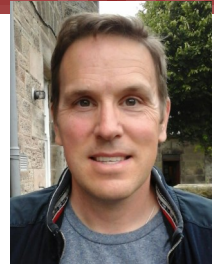
Susan Lowe

Denise & Susan

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



The Provisionals are now observing student tours, an essential part of the training program as they apply classroom theory and discussion. “Hands-on-training” paves the way for them to prepare their own tours, as well as a rich opportunity for us to mentor them. It really does take a docent village. By graduation day, we as a body will have invested in the preparation of our new fellow docents.



One high point this month was our “Career Day” on Friday January 12th with 100 high school students participating. This is part of the pilot program, “First Fridays in Focus” aimed at junior high and high school groups which features special, thematic programming. Here’s a description from our Molly Kemper:



“January’s theme was “Careers in Art” and featured a panel of SBMA employees sharing their career paths and experience at the Museum with students in the AVID Program at La Colina Junior High School, an elective class aimed at students from groups traditionally underrepresented in higher education who will be the first in their families to attend college. It prepares students for life outside the classroom with college preparedness and career readiness. Employees from five areas of the Museum were represented: Registration, Facilities, Security, Curatorial, and Public Relations. Speakers shared inspirational stories that were striking in how different each journey had been. The students then toured in smaller groups with docents who asked questions that helped focus on possible jobs or careers beyond traditional fine art skills. “

Courtesy of Molly Kemper

The event was met with great enthusiasm from students and touring docents alike. A very special thank you to the Friday team for stepping up and offering these amazing tours. I am continually reminded of how our Student Teams docents are a part of the discovery process, opening the eyes of many SB school children to the wonders of art that they may not have experienced otherwise. In February, 562 students will have this wonderful art experience on student led tours.

Nicola and Andrew

Yassi Mazandi, *Nine*, 2013. Unique Born-Porcelain, geo-polymer bound dolomite stone, casein-based coating. Santa Barbara Museum of Art.
From *Made by Hand/Born Digital*, on view March 3-August 25, 2024



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Denise & Susan



Susan Lowe

From our **Evaluations Co-chairs**



Christine Holland

We are pleased to say that evaluations are continuing as scheduled. We are grateful to the evaluators and to our touring docents, all of whom are working to make our tours so effective for the public. The provisionals will be presenting their 8-minute tours on Wednesday, February 21. This may be a good time for all of us to review the **HIGH FIVE Touring Tips**:



Irene Stone

- I. a) Delivery:** Position: NEXT to piece, FACING the audience, NO distracting mannerisms. Use of APPROPRIATE gesturing;
- b) Speech:** PITCH—loud enough to be heard; VOCABULARY; VARIATION; PACE;
- 2. Entry into Object:** Capture the viewer with a) Provocative STATEMENT; QUESTION; Unique OBSERVATION to create a common understanding;
- 3. Analysis:** Note the apparent ARTISTIC ELEMENTS; Uncover the artist's INTENTION (Connect the elements to the voice of the artist); BRING the viewer into the image analysis;
- 4. Spice:** Mention only relevant details about: the ARTIST; TIME period; SIGNIFICANCE of the work; SOCIAL impact, past and present;
- 5. Transition:** IMPEL the viewer to follow you to the next object: PLACE the object into your theme; SUGGEST that the next piece will take things further into the theme; keep it simple and state it CLEARLY BEFORE moving on; make it intriguing.

Christine Holland and Irene Stone

From our **Nominations Chair**
Shirley Waxman



Dear Docents,

According to our Docent Council By-Laws, the month of January begins the cycle for nominating and electing officers for next year's Docent Council Board. The Nomination Committee consists of the President, Vice President, and Nominations Chair. Active Docents are invited to nominate colleagues and/or to self-nominate as candidates for election. The deadline for submitting nominations is March 15. Please e-mail your nominees to the Nominations Chair: Shirley Waxman at shirleywaxman@gmail.com. The slate of candidates for service year 2024-2025 will be published in the April edition of *La Muse*. The nominees will be presented at the April 3 Docent Council Meeting. If there are no additional nominations from the floor, the election of officers and chairpersons will be by a majority vote of the Active Docents present at this meeting. Information about Nominations, board positions and responsibilities can be found in the Docent By-Laws on our docent website under Business. *Shirley*

From our **Membership Chair**
Mary Ellen Alden



Thanks to all of you who have submitted your Touring and Research Hours. If you haven't yet done so, please remember to either record them on the spreadsheets available at the table before and after the Docent Council Meetings, or email me at mea.mnlaw@gmail.com. I've recently input all of the reported hours to date. Please check the sign-in sheet, and revise your hours as necessary. Several of you have recorded Tour Hours which appear to include Research Hours. Let's review.

Docent By-laws require Active Docents to do at least eight tours per year.

PUBLIC Hours include *actual time in the galleries giving tours to visitors*. One hour credit is given for each tour, regardless of tour length.

If you have no attendees, you still get credit for one public tour hour toward your required eight. Your research and prep for the tour would be counted as research hours. The same is true for Student Tours; if you are not needed due to fewer students visiting, you still receive PUBLIC tour credit.

RESEARCH hours—include attending Docent Council meetings, all tour prep, committee work, Meet & Greet time, attending other museum exhibitions, etc.

I hope this helps clarify the distinction for you.

Mary Ellen



From our **Research Chair**
Barbara Ross



"Everything old is new again." Jonathan Swift.

There are two recent additions to the Ridley-Tree Gallery: *Composition* by Fritz Winter and *The White Door (Interior with an Old Jamb Stove)* by Wilhelm Hammershoi. In an interesting twist, *Composition*, in our collection for 62 years, was created in 1934, while *The White Door*, a new acquisition, was painted in 1888. Both of these pieces are excellent choices for research!

The "old" piece (right) by Fritz Winter was donated to the museum in 1959. According to the label text: *"This is a relatively early example of the type of abstraction that Winter practiced during the 1930s, while still under the influence of the Bauhaus. Classified as a 'degenerate' artist by the Nazis, Winter was banned from painting or exhibiting during the War. In this piece, he employed the characteristic scaffolding of black line that he designated as a "grille," thereby creating dynamic tension between surface and depth."*



Fritz Winter, German, 1905-1976, *Composition*, 1934, oil on paper mounted on Masonite. 19 1/4 × 29 3/4 in. SBMA Gift of Paul Kantor.



The "new" piece (left) by Wilhelm Hammershoi was purchased last year in honor of Larry Feinberg, our retired director. Curator Eik Kahng said of the piece: *"The painting is the first interior created by Vilhelm Hammershøi that is entirely devoid of people—a poetic vehicle for his nuanced psychological portraits of the experience of domestic spaces that still resonate today. Dubbed "the Danish Painter of Solitude and Light" by the breakthrough 1998 retrospective organized by the always prescient art historian Robert Rosenblum, the artist's hauntingly melancholic, nearly monochromatic interiors have caused some to dub him "the Danish*

Wilhelm Hammershoi, Danish, 1864-1916, *The White Door (Interior with an Old Jamb Stove)*, 1888, oil on unlined canvas. 24 5/8 × 21 1/2 in. SBMA, Museum purchase in honor of Larry J. Feinberg, SBMA Director, 2008-2023

From our Provisional Chair

Patty Santiago



The provisional class is continuing to study the history of Art. Ralph Wilson recently gave an excellent presentation on "The Renaissance". Our docents-in-training will soon be turning their attention to Asian Art before returning to European and American Art of the 19th century. In addition, provisional docents have been observing both Student and Adult tours. Many thanks to both the student and adult tour team leaders and all touring docents for welcoming and facilitating these observations. In addition, the provisional docents are preparing their 8-minute talks. Those evaluations are scheduled for February 21st after the Docent Council lecture.

Patty

From our Community Speakers Team Leader

CSP



Lori Mohr

Dear Docents,

We gave two presentations in February, and one public tour. Belle's follow up tours in the gallery continue to be popular with groups. *Lori*

VENUE	PRESENTATION	ATTENDANCE
Samarkand	<i>Delacroix to Dufy</i> (Sarajum)	50
Casa Dorinda	<i>The Human Body in Art</i> (Belle)	30
SBMA Tour for Casa	"	10
Total Attendees	90	Average 30 (including the tour)

DOCENT BOOK CLUB NEWS

Gail Stichler



At our January meeting, we were able to talk to Lisa See via ZOOM about her 2023 book, *Lady Tan's Circle of Women*. The meeting was well attended with lively conversation. The author offered rich insights into her creating this beautiful story about the historical life of a Ming Dynasty practitioner of women's medicine. Many thanks go to Pattie Firestone who arranged this opportunity for us to spend time with her friend Lisa.

The next SBMA Book Club meeting will be Monday, April 22. The next book selection will be announced soon. *Gail*

Nick Cave: Master of Celebration and Transparency

By Ricki Morse



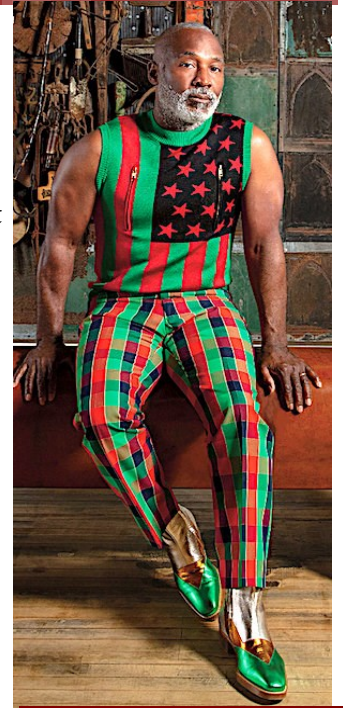
Nick Cave (b. 1959) sees himself as a messenger, bringing people together in celebrations of connectedness and confrontation with reality, rejecting denial as a betrayal of life. His optimistic, joyful spirit was buoyed as the third of seven brothers in Fulton, Missouri, and later Columbus, tightly knit communities that watched after all the kids. His mother was a single mom, a medical administrator, who often took the boys to her parent's local farm, sharing chores, caring for the animals. Today he marvels at the "unconditional love" surrounding their childhood and the prominence of handywork in the household, including grandmother's quilts and aunts' skilled needle work, a necessity for hand-me-downs among the seven boys. Nick remembers removing the sleeves from an older brother's jacket and replacing them with plaid fabric, and his mother entertaining the boys with handmade sock puppets.

Nick's innate talents guided his educational choices, from entering the Kansas City Art Institute to meeting Alvin Alley when he was 20 and attending the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre summer schools in New York City for the next several years, polishing his skills as a dancer and experience as a performer. After graduating from the Art Institute in 1981, he worked professionally as a fashion designer, including a stint at Macy's designing displays, continuing his pursuit of a career as an artist and dancer at the Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, in 1988. Upon graduation he accepted the chair of the Fashion Design Program at the Art Institute of Chicago, the first of many academic positions he has held through the years.

Soundsuits

As a black, gay man, Nick's personal identity was intertwined with racial and gender inequalities which coalesced around the 1991 LAPD beating of an unarmed black man, Rodney King. Nick wrote, "*I started thinking about myself more and more as a black man – as someone who was discarded, devalued, viewed as less than. I started thinking about the role of identity, being racially profiled, feeling devalued, less than, dismissed. And then I happened to be in the park this one particular day and looked down at the ground, and there was a twig. And I just thought, well, that's discarded, and it's sort of insignificant. And so I just started then gathering the twigs, and before I knew it, I was, had built a sculpture.*"

Nick Cave, *Soundsuit*, 1992, collected twigs, Torrance Museum, CA.



One of the covers for the 2019 *NY Sunday Times Magazine* series *Four Greats*, photo by Renée Cox. Cave's costume fabric is his adaptation of David Hammon's *African-American Flag*, 1990.



Cave's mother taught him that you can create something magical out of something mundane.



Nick Cave, *Foreothermore*, 2022, Guggenheim Museum, NY. *Soundsuits* displayed in Cave's retrospective.

He hadn't thought beyond the moment of capturing his separateness, his insignificance in the twigs. But when he tried it on, its meaning began to expand. The suit made rustling noises, increased and amplified by his dance movements. He became invisible as a black man, or as gay, free to move through the world creating his own sound, being his own unique individual. *Soundsuits* began, then, as disguises, providing the wearer with protection from judgment or marginalization. The universality of the *Soundsuits* expanded with Cave's imagination, from African shamans to

Ku Klux Klan robes, without gender or skin color, they provided the artist with widely varying costumes in which to embody human dilemmas, leading to his production of over 500 iterations. With the 1992 release of the LA police officers, the need for protection was magnified, as was the significance of the *Soundsuits* and heralded Cave's elaboration of *soundsuits* into choreographed performances.

Heard.NY

In 2013 Cave was commissioned by the MTA to design a seven-day performance commemorating the centennial of Grand Central Station in collaboration with the Alvin Ailey Dance Company. He designed and constructed a herd (note the pun) of 30 synthetic raffia encrusted horses, each manned by two dancers, who enacted "crossings" twice a day in Grand Central's Vanderbilt Hall for just a week. Accompanied by music, one dancer manning the head, the other the body, the cavorting, swirling figures filled the space with color and motion, creating a space for an African inspired dream, vision, in the hub of New York City bustle. Requests from around the world ensued, and Cave designed dozens of "crossings" including *Heard.SYD* performed



Nick Cave, *Heard.SYD*, 2016, *Soundsuit* horses, performed on streets of Sydney.

in the streets of Sydney, Australia.

Nick Cave's productivity is astonishing, particularly when we realize that each project generates a multitude of re-productions, major among these the ongoing creation of new *Soundsuits*, each unique. He rented an abandoned factory the size of a football field for his first installation of *Until* (2016-2017), a combined townhall



Nick Cave, *Until*, 2016, found objects, mementoes of racism and violence, scattered among decorative, playful objects, forcing us to acknowledge pain and suffering.

and performance space and a “sinister wonderland,” a play on the phrase “innocent until proven guilty,” or in this case “guilty until proven innocent” — he addresses issues of gun violence, gun control policy, race relations, and gender politics in America today. Entering through a hanging screen of glittering wind spinners, we come upon startling objects, caricatured African Americans, guns, the residue of violence. The Massachusetts Museum of Modern Art installed the exhibition in June 2017, followed by shows in Sydney Australia and Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Arkansas.

Foreoftermore

In May 2022 the first museum retrospective of Cave’s work opened at the Chicago Museum of Contemporary Art.

foreoftermore dedicates his work to those who live their lives as the “other,” because of race, sexual identity, “difference,” and celebrates the power of art to envision a new future which honors the individual. From the harsh confrontation of the black head on American shells, we are lulled by the found thrift store paintings of ships and puffy



Above left: Cave’s Untitled (2018), features a found carved head and an American flag made of used shotgun shells, courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York. Photo by James Prinz Photography. Right: Cave’s, Sea Sick, 2014, found objects: thrift shop ship paintings, gold hands, black head (originally tobacco container —later spittoon) assembled to re-enact not only the sea sickness of the enslaved Africans but the corruption masked by the romantic ships and billowing clouds. The gold hands cover the slave’s ears, warding off his fate.

clouds, rocking in various directions, suggesting the motion within the holds of ships carrying Africans toward slavery, the black man covering his ears against what comes next.



Nick Cave, Unarmed, 2016, cast bronze arm, glass-beaded flowers, a powerful contrast to the raised black fist.

In 2019 *The New York Times* described Cave as “the most joyous, and critical artist in America.” His optimistic energy fuels an innate transparency, allowing him to reveal his own sense of insignificance in the face of marginalization as a black man. His expressions of anger through the raised black fist soon evolved into the upward pointing hand, just as the *soundsuits* give anonymity to the performer, allowing him to express his individuality, to actualize himself. Cave’s fresh presence enlivens each image.

Amends

Nick Cave and Bob Faust, also an artist and designer, work from their studio in Chicago, called “Facility,” alluding to their commitment to be a facilitating energy in their community. In 2018 they acquired an 18,000 square foot abandoned textile factory in central Chicago. The first floor is home to the partners’ joint ventures, SoundsuitShop and the Facility Foundation, as well as exhibition space for emerging artists which can be seen from the street. The second floor is their home, housing their art

collections and providing a quiet haven midst their wide reaching projects and commitments. Long time partners, they are now married, and developed a project called “Amends” to introduce themselves to the community through a public high school across the street. Initially a response to the May 2020 killing of George Floyd by Minneapolis police, Phase 1 was a display on the front windows of their building of comments on racism written by their friends and community leaders. Phase 2 offered members of the community yellow ribbons on which to write their comments on racism. Hundreds of these ribbon comments were tied to



“Letters to the World Toward the Eradication of Racism,” quotations by community leaders and friends written on the windows of the Nick Cave and Bob Straus Facility in Chicago as part of their *Amends* project.

clothes lines mounted across Carl Shurtz Public High School campus, facing the Facility. Phase 3 invited black artists, poets, performers and speakers to perform in the Facility, on view to the community. The deeply personal nature of the messages spread through the community, offering amends for racist acts or words, amends for remaining silent. The fluttering yellow ribbons and bold handwritten statement on their windows offered a tangible, vibrant amends from the people of this neighborhood. The Amends Project was re-enacted at the Madison Museum of Contemporary Art, MMoCA, in May 2021.



Nick Cave, *Rescue*, 2014, mixed media including ceramic birds, metal flowers, ceramic Basset Hound, and vintage settee, SBMA.

Our recent acquisition of Nick Cave’s *Rescue* was installed in the Park Entrance two weeks ago and carries that same silken punch we’ve experienced that still leaves us breathless. The delicate, precise arrangement, the elegant velvet settee, the china dog all suggest wealth and indulgence, also an easy familiarity with the attention we give our pet dogs. Our desire to protect them is mirrored in the surrounding, carefully arranged vines. The underlying reality comes slowly, first that the dog is our possession, not our child, so perhaps our care is a little overdone. And with that the parallel with slavery becomes obvious. Then comes our treatment of black people as slaves, and now as fellow citizens. The title “Rescue” labels the dog as a fake. It is made of china. The complexity adds more dimensions, leading us to question the authenticity of ownership of another creature, unless, of course, it is China.

Nick Cave will have none of our glossing history or sidestepping personal responsibility, though he wrapped it such a pretty package he almost gets away with keeping it disguised. ■

Bibliography

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 Lesso, Rosie, “The Incredible Art of Transformation in Nick Cave’s Soundsuits,” **The Thread**, March 14, 2023.
 O’Grady, Megan, “Nick Cave is the Most Joyous, and Critical, Artist in America,” **New York Times Magazine**, Oct. 18, 2019.
 Interview with Nick Cave on his new-work, “*Is There Racism in Heaven?*,” **The Guardian**, London, Nov. 20, 2018.

Nicola Shares Career Day Comments from Students

A first grader viewing Mary Cassatt's "Summertime" was asked, "What is going on?" The student responded, "It looks like the two moms are on their honeymoon. That is a happy time."

Mary Cassatt, *Summertime*, 1894, oil on canvas



Unknown, Chinese. *Bodhisattva of Compassion, Guanyin, Seated in Royal Ease*, Jin dynasty. SBMA

On touring *Guanyin*, the docent pointed out that the figure was an enlightened being who could have gone to Nirvana but stayed on earth to help people. A high school student asked, "Nirvana — you mean like the band?" The docent responded that yes, the term could also refer to someone being in a state of Nirvana, like when something is extremely pleasant.

The student's face lit up with the realization that things they've heard of out in the real world may have a connection to ideas in an art museum!



Nick Cave, *Rescue*

From a second grader observing *Rescue*: "My dog creates a nest just like this dog around himself using his blanket. I think he needs a special bed now like this one, to make him feel important."



Lori Mohr, Editor, 2009—

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