

Some Re-Openings

Bob Marshall

The weekend of February 11 saw the re-opening of Galleries 301-304, with many familiar objects but also some exciting new ones. To help docents better understand this suite of spaces, Jason Busch gave the Docent Muse the following tour:

Collectively, these galleries show the flourishing of American art from the 18th century to the early 20th century, with an emphasis on our region. In addition to pieces that speak directly to Minnesota or the Midwest, there are objects that were brought here and objects that relate to pieces found here, even some from Europe.

The story, which is roughly chronological, begins on the balcony at the top of the stairs with the *Colchester chest-on-chest*, made in the 1780s in Connecticut but brought out here in the 1850s.



It is a rural mélange of design elements found in furniture from the nearby design capitals of Newport and Boston. The curled beaded molding along the legs is characteristic of Colchester. The Norwegian chest next to it is from the same period, came west about the same time and represents another tradition – Scandinavian immigration. With its

decoration of S scrolls in asymmetric foliage, it offers a different take on the Rococo design. The adjacent corner cupboard shows the continuing Scandinavian influence; it is very similar to what one would find in Norway in the 1870s in terms of paint colors and motifs; but the American seal

escutcheons are a distinctively New World touch.

Gallery 304 remains our showcase for folk art, which is traditionally defined as work created by an artist who is not trained in an academic tradition. Ammi Phillips was arguably the most competent of the itinerant painters in western New England and New York during the first half of the 19th century, and Sam and Patty McCullough have loaned us three splendid examples of his work. The first, from 1819, was recently restored, which brought out wonderful colors, including the pink-rose color of the subject's supple flesh.

Twenty years later we come to the *Dusenberry Sisters*, one of my favorite paintings in the McCullough collection. These four paintings also document the changes in fashion during this period. We have placed a chest below to create a dialogue with the painting. And atop the sisters' chest is a basket of collected shells, which reflects a popular pastime among refined women in the early 19th century, as does the theorem painting on the opposite wall. Created on cotton with stencils, these textile paintings were extremely important for young marriageable women to show off their skill.

This gallery also sets the stage for exploring the arts of the Mississippi, with objects such as the corner cupboard, which you've seen before, and the Anna jug, which is bizarre, yet strangely attractive. It was made in Anna, Illinois, with Mississippi clay and is rife with political and temperance sentiment. The writhing snakes invoke the evil of drinking: they are chomping away at the soldiers who are dunking in and out of the jug. The highlight is the Union officer apprehending Jefferson Davis, the president of the Confederacy, who was purportedly wearing female attire when he was caught in 1865.

The lasting legacy of self-originated exhibitions is evident in a half-dozen recent acquisitions you will find in the next gallery (303), all of which were located for *Currents of Change*. They enable us to tell a coherent story of the development of our region, which begins with Fort Snelling, a fortress on a precipice much like West Point, which now hangs nearby. This view shows a landscape already in transition, with Dakota tepees in the foreground and houses of the American fur company (that still exist today) down by the river. Ferdinand Richardt's painting of a steam wheeler on the Mississippi from 1865, the same moment as the Rudolph Lux plate, reminds us of the dual identities of the river, for com-

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merce and pleasure, with people waving on the upper deck and goods stored below. With dramatic bluffs and wide waters, Richardt romanticizes the Mississippi, just as Henry



Lewis does in his fictional portrayal on the opposite wall. For both artists, it is a wilderness paradise not yet corrupted.

Below the Richardt is a sofa made in the 1840s, the same time as the *Rosedown dresser*, the centerpiece of this gallery. The sofa, with its richly grained smooth veneers and feet consisting of lion's claws with emerging cornucopia, is a New York design but is similar to ones that were selling out of New Orleans. Our example is unique in that it retains its original black horsehair upholstery and its innovative spring seating, an 1820s invention that flourished in America in the 1830s.

Furniture like the dresser and this sofa should really be seen as sculptural. They would have been found in homes that also displayed marble busts and silver objects like those in our cases; and they would have been brought to the Twin Cities by people like the Kimballs, whom we have placed on either side of the great new Severin Roesen still life. The Kimballs traveled throughout Europe, especially to Rome, looking at ancient sites and acquiring a taste for classical design. Mrs. Kimball's father, Minneapolis's first mayor, built Villa Rosa, a wonderful Italianate home on the land where the MIA now stands.

The wealth of the Twin Cities was powered by its rivers, and it is interesting to compare the two early images of lumber milling along the St. Croix River with the more precise depictions by Alex Fournier in the 1880s, showing a very transformed landscape. St. Anthony Falls is a shadow of what it had been. One clearly recognizable feature is the Stone Arch Bridge, one of the contributions of James J. Hill, whose legacy we explore in the next gallery.

Here is the bridge again, in the Tiffany silver tray presented to Hill in 1884. The *étagère* actually came from Hill's wife's family and was displayed in their Summit Avenue mansion. It was the creation of Jules Dessoir, a French immigrant who brought the Rococo Revival to America, and has a smoothly grained veneer like the sofa we just saw. You can see how its design was influenced by European objects like the *Biedermeier desk* of the 1830s. The clock came from a home not far from Hill's on Summit and is in the late Renaissance style, with winged griffons, cherub motif and a charm-

ingly self-referential Father Time. If you time your tour right, you will hear its chimes.

The chairs flanking the *Biedermeier desk* are a technological achievement, made of laminate wood. They are decorated with palmettes and *putti* with lyres, all taking their cue from ancient Greek vases. That classicism also inspired Hiram Powers in his depiction of George Washington in a toga. This particular bust was bought in 1929 for the Foshay Tower, which stood like the Washington Monument on the Minneapolis skyline and is still visible from Gallery 300.

The desk below the Erastus Dow Palmer marble reliefs is from another fashionable New York dealer and shows the French influence in the third quarter of the 19th century. The agricultural trophy with sickle, hoe and rake is not too dissimilar from what you see in our French Grand Salon. In all, this gallery shows the European influence and how styles – including French, Renaissance Revival, neo-Grec, architectural – were mixed together. It brings us forward to the late 19th century, with furniture, glass, silver and marble displayed together as they would have been in a wealthy late 19th century house – or at a World's Fair.

The final gallery in this suite (301) contains fine arts of the American West. I think all of these works are familiar to the docents; the only surprise may be what's missing. For instance, I'm sure we'll find a home for the horn chair at some point, but it's not in the plans for this space. One governing idea for all these galleries has been, less is more. While we do like the layering effect, we feel the works we've chosen can shine more as we have them installed.

Minnesota Collects

Lynn Teschendorf

A new tour is in the works. Its focus is on past Minnesota donors who generously contributed artworks to the museum, and on the artworks they donated. Some of the names are familiar – James J. Hill, T.B. Walker, Alfred Pillsbury. Others are less so – Herschel V. Jones, Augustus Searle, Richard Gale, James Ford Bell, Walter Briggs, the Van Derlips, William Hood Dunwoody, Atherton Bean. But without these dedicated individuals, the MIA would be a vastly different place. For instance, Clinton Morrison, founder of a local milling company, gave the old Morrison family homestead as the building site for the MIA. The homestead was called Villa Rosa.

Many of these donors were self-made men. Augustus Leach Searle, for example, arrived in Minnesota from New York in about 1882, nineteen years old with a new bride and fifty cents to his name. He'd had a job in a flour mill, so with that vast experience behind him, he became a wheat buyer, then a traveling superintendent for an elevator company, then an "executive" for various Canadian grain firms, then an investor in some of them. In 1928 at age 65, he consolidated four of them into the Searle Grain Co., operating about 400 grain elevators in western Canada and Minnesota. He died in 1955 at age 92. He began collecting after a trip to China in the 1920s, and his legacy to the MIA included his collection of Chinese jades, snuff boxes, some of the many lacquer boxes on display, and the five gold presentation boxes once

owned by the Chinese emperor.

Herschel Jones made his fortune in the newspaper business. He, too, was born in New York, just two years before Searle. He left school at age fifteen to become a reporter for the local paper, and within three years was able to buy it. In 1882 he traveled west to make a survey of potential newspaper markets, and decided on Minneapolis as the most opportune. Three years later he was a reporter on the staff of the *Minneapolis Journal*. He bought it in 1908. In one of his opening editorials, he announced that the *Journal* would not



publish “advertisements of whisky or beer, fake investments, nor the line of medical and other objectionable advertising.”¹ Jones’ first art collection was devoted to rare books, but in 1916 he acquired the William Ladd print collection, and its donation to the MIA basically founded the Prints and Draw-



ings Department. He also collected paintings, many of which were donated to the museum after his death by Tessie, one of his three daughters. These include the Canaletto, di Nardo, Cranach’s *Madonna and Child*, and Ghirlandaio’s *Portrait of a Lady*.

Thomas Barlow Walker was yet another self-made man. He was born in 1840 in Ohio, which was then on the American frontier. When he was nine, his father died on his way to the fields of the California Gold Rush, leaving young Walker to help support his family by hunting (he apparently also spent a lot of time playing checkers). He arrived in St. Paul during the height of the Civil War, and found a job as a surveyor of timber lands. He began buying up timber properties, and in 1882 he organized the Red River Lumber Co., built a lot of sawmills and made his fortune. Almost immediately, he began acquiring art and put together a collection that was both huge and eclectic. It soon filled the headquarters of the Art Society, then the public library, then his home. He offered it all to the city, but was turned down, “mainly because the aldermen did not want to obligate the city to pay for a suitable gallery, aside from the Minneapolis Art Institute. A proposal to build a ‘Walker wing’ to the Art Institute did not find favor with Mr. Walker... [He] then proceeded to build his own gallery.”² It opened in 1927 and eventually became the Walker Art Center, leaving the MIA with nothing. (As an aside, Walker violently opposed the choice of the Morrison homestead as the site for the MIA on the grounds that it was too far from downtown.)

It gets worse. The Walker Foundation lent most of its Chinese jades, including the jade mountain, to the MIA in 1987 with the understanding that the MIA would buy them. The museum dragged its feet, and the Foundation began considering a sale elsewhere. Luckily, retired director Evan Mauer took the bit between his teeth and finalized the acquisition in 1992. And that is the only reason why the MIA owns anything at all from Walker’s collection. One wonders if

Walker would appreciate the irony of it all.

Several donors to the MIA were connected to the Pillsbury family. Pillsbury Mills was co-founded by John Sargent Pillsbury, entrepreneur and three-time governor of Minnesota, in about 1870. His son, Alfred Fiske Pillsbury, gave the museum its Chinese ritual bronzes, ancient jade, and much of its monochrome porcelain, as well as the Luristan bronzes. His grandson, Richard Pillsbury Gale, donated his Japanese prints and scroll paintings.

Alfred was quite a character. He went to the University of Minnesota, where “he is remembered as one of the first great Minnesota football players.”³ He was team captain for two years. He owned the first high-wheeled bicycle in Minneapolis and one of its first three automobiles, which he entered in hill-climbing contests. “He horrified New York art experts by shipping priceless blue jade items...by regular express without a guard.”³ He earned a law degree in 1894, then went to work full-time for his dad. Yet he found time over the years to serve as director or trustee on the boards of banks, life insurance companies, Twin City Rapid Transit, Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, First Universalist Society, Minneapolis Park Board, and thirteen years with the MIA.

Richard Gale lived right across the park from the museum. His mother was a Pillsbury, and his father, Edward C. Gale, was a corporate lawyer. Like his grandfather, Richard was a politician – during WWII he was a U.S. Congressman. Born in 1900 in Minneapolis, he went to The Blake School, Yale, and then did graduate work in agriculture at the U. His passion was “dirt farming,” by which he meant experimenting with seeds, and cultivating in eroded soils, as well as raising thoroughbred horses and prize-winning beef cattle. He also served as trustee for the MIA.

The MIA has been fortunate enough to win the patronage of many other famous local families, such as those who founded General Mills, International Multifoods, the Great Northern Railway and Dayton’s Department Stores. James Ford Bell, founder of General Mills, gave the museum much of its colonial American silver, including the Paul Revere tea set. Atherton Bean, grandson of the founder of International Multifoods, was a generous financial contributor as well as the donor of Bierstadt’s *Merced River*, the little ivory diptych and the Sommer table. James J. Hill, the railroad empire builder, gave the museum Courbet’s *Deer in the Forest*, believed to be the museum’s first painting, and his heirs gave many other pieces from his collection, from Corot’s *Springtime to Theseus and the Centaur* to Delacroix’s *View of Tangier*. His son Louis gave the museum *u-kiyo-e* prints, Korean ceramics, the *Haniwa horse*, and the portrait of *Prince Duollo*. And the generosity of the Dayton family is incomparable in many areas of the museum’s collection.

The history of the MIA’s collection includes many fascinating stories, only some of which have been outlined here. Hopefully this tour will be of interest to both schools and the general public, incorporating glimpses of Minnesota’s colorful past.

¹ “Herschel V. Jones, Noted Editor Dies,” *New York Times*, 5-25-28

² “T.B. Walker Reached Top in Lumber Industry After Struggles as Poor Youth,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, 7-29-28

³ “Arthur Fiske Pillsbury, Milling Executive Noted for Collection of China Jade, Bronze,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, 3-13-50

The Inner Anatomy

Tom Byfield

For this column we will eschew the nonsense and meaningless persiflage that usually inhabits this section of the *Muse*. We are going to explore that part of the MIA's inner anatomy that we often take for granted.

There are in our society those people who exist in the background shadows of our lives. We hardly ever see them. They might even pass unnoticed in an otherwise empty room. They serve us everyday, the maid cleaning our hotel room, the teller who cashes our check, the proctologist who invades our privacy in a routine colonoscopy. We remember their faces only so long as it takes us to leave the place. In the case of the proctologist we probably didn't see his or her face anyway. But by and large these individuals remain unacknowledged and anonymous in our daily pursuit of the homely absurdities we call life.

One group that may qualify for that description is the corps of guards at the MIA. I have to confess that what I knew about them would engrave nicely on the head of a pin and have room left over for one of those ghastly printed holiday letters. Ross Guthrie, director of security, who has been with the MIA fourteen years, having come from a similar position in Tulsa, graciously agreed to an interview. What follows is a distillation of our spirited conversation. This should be provoking as most of us enjoy the stimulation of distilled spirits.

At this time there are about 76 guards inside and out of the MIA. Four to seven more will be added when the new wing opens. Their training consists of one or two days of classroom instruction and two to three days with a senior staff member on the floor. They have no instruction in the works of art but of course after working awhile they may have a better knowledge of where things are located than most docents.

Many of the guards are artists themselves. In their ranks are musicians, painters, sculptors and studio photographers. They work about 30 to 40 hours per week on average and operate under a three-year union shop contract. Off duty Minneapolis police also work about 25 hours a week with outside security. The Children's Theatre is a separate business but is patrolled and monitored by MIA security. The museum furnishes their blazers, pants and shirts and provides a free dry-cleaning and laundry service. They also enjoy paid holidays, vacation and sick leave along with health care benefits. They have a 20-minute morning break, 40 minutes for lunch and a 20-minute rest break in the afternoon usually taken in their basement lounge. They have a locker room with shower facilities.

As one might imagine, "sit down jobs" are the plums and usually go to the more senior guards, some of whom have been with the museum 25 years or more. Each day they get their assignments by floors from the shift captains. Over their radios they receive any alarms and normal rotation redeployments. They are taught not to "profile" but to take note of any unusual behavior no matter how sartorially dressed or well-spoken the individual. The guards are working on improving the visitor experience by the handling of people with even

greater respect. All exhibits such as the *Villa America* come with special demands by the lender, in this case the requirement to have five guards in the exhibit at all times. The contract for the up-coming Calder exhibit may require eight to ten guards.

We ended with a tour down into the bowels of the MIA, a rabbit warren of some dimly-lit passageways and cubbyholes. I wondered if it might not be prudent to carry a caged canary as miners usually do. We came to the control center where one wall was filled with a panel containing hundreds of red lights that looked like they could have been taken from a nuclear sub, or a futuristic spacecraft. "Beam me up Scottie." Another wall had eight TV screens which monitor the 210 cameras scattered both in and outside of the building. They are watched 24 hours a day in three eight-hour shifts. The camera feeds are transcribed on digital video recorders and are kept for an extended length of time. The new wing has its own control room similarly equipped.

As we were leaving I asked Ross what he enjoyed most about the job. He said he was proud to be working for such a fine organization, the diversity of his work, and the daily contact with everyone from the director on down and the unique environment of a superb museum. The downside? Wedded to his cell phone being on call 24 hours a day seven days a week.

I was impressed with my brief exposure to the inner workings of our museum and have gained a new respect and empathy for the guardians of our treasures housed here. Maybe it's time we introduce ourselves and show our appreciation. The next time you see a guard in the hall, march right up and give him or her a great big hug. You will be the better for it.

Visitor Experience Workshop

The Great Skeptic

Carol Stoddart

Friends and family who call me The Great Skeptic know me pretty darn well. That skepticism was well in place when I took my seat at the Visitor Experience Workshop on January 23. I bet my body language clearly communicated to the workshop facilitator, "Okay, let's just see if you're going to do anything but totally waste my time."

Well, surprise, surprise. David McNair grabbed my attention, held it for three hours and totally entertained me. Of course, my entertainment was not the point, and he did much more. He challenged me and shook me out of my complacency.

It is pretty amazing to think that a docent could become complacent after less than three years of giving tours. But I realized I had. The faces greeting me at the beginning of a tour might be fresh, eager and exciting something new, but for me a highlights tour was becoming the same old thing, whether the visitors were seven, eleven, or seventeen. He made me question the face – my face – that was greeting these children, and wonder if my face was letting them down.

A few days after the workshop I was scheduled for a highlights tour for first graders, an age group that has not

brought me pleasure as a docent. My response to Mr. McNair's shakeup was to reassess my personal responsibility for making every visit to the MIA as positive as possible. I walked the route I had selected, looking at the works from the physical perspective of a small person, and thinking about questions to ask that would relate to their developmental stage, versus that of a fourth grader.

You know what the result was? I had fun with those first graders, and they had fun with me. I learned from them, and I think they got a taste of the joy of art from me. I discovered that a small change in my attitude could make a big change in the end result.

The Great Skeptic realizes that it takes more than one three-hour workshop and one tour to create a change in behavior. But it's a start, isn't it?

The Power of Six

Terry Edam

I attended the Visitor Experience Workshop with David McNair on January 23. He encouraged us to take our museum from excellent to exceptional. He calls this difference the "Power of 6." Those extremely satisfied are 6 times more likely to return.

He encouraged us to take one of his suggested improvements to work on over the next months. One way I decided to try to improve is to be aware of my "Zone of Approachability." He suggested that if someone is within ten feet we should acknowledge them; five feet engage. It is as simple as using

eye contact. I happened to be standing in front of Navez' portrait of the *Moereman's Family* with some high school students last week. I asked if I could answer any questions for them. One asked why the girl had a hoop. We talked about the symbol and how it gave us a hint about her name. They were quite excited and when I ran into them later said they had been sending all of their friends to view the painting with their



new found secret.

To me, though, the highlight of the workshop was sharing ideas with other museum staff members. We rarely get to do that off the floor.

I look forward to the next workshop.

Tour of Tours

Fran Megarry

Working on tours consumes so much of my waking moments. Even when I am not sitting at the computer with books open and piled high I am still making connections and transitions, creating ideas for routes and thinking of the perfect theme. My dream tonight was so different from my regular organized life, perhaps more like the definition of surreal. This is what happened.

The visiting group was asked to divide itself into three tour groups before arrival. As I was waiting in the lobby for their bus to come I decided I didn't like my outfit. The bus was about ten minutes late so for some reason I thought I had plenty of time to change.

I took my dress pants off in the hall on the way to the office. As the pants hung around my ankles I realized I had to unbutton my boots before I could get the pants off. Several friends in the office helped me unbutton the boots which took some time because there were so many buttons. There were also so many people coming and going in the office. The boots off, I put on a lovely skirt and roller blades. I then realized the guests had arrived and now I was about ten minutes late.

I went to the guests who had scattered a bit but I got them back into their groups of three and assigned one person from each of the other two groups to be in charge...of their tour. I did an introduction for the three groups together, while skating in and around the groups, talking about the theme for our highlights tour and then told the groups to follow their leaders. As I took my group to our first piece, not yet decided, I thought to myself, how will the leaders in the other two groups know where to go. Sitting bolt upright in bed my dream ended.

Oh my goodness I must have eaten something a bit too old from my refrigerator. As I re-read this dream tale I can almost see an illustrated children's book. For me this dream is a near nightmare, but for kids they may find it pointless but very funny.

Where Should George Sleep?

Just for Fun: AAG and Docent Poll

WHEREAS Sully's *Portrait of George Washington* is arguably the most-toured painting in the museum; WHEREAS George is currently in his third location and apparently hasn't settled into a permanent home; and WHEREAS no one has asked our opinion; THEREFORE the *Docent Muse* would like to propose a permanent resting place for George, based on your responses.

Please select from one of the following locations, identified by what he would be replacing:

- A. Where he is now (1st-floor corridor)
- B. Gerard's *Cupid and Psyche*
- C. West's *Drummond Family*
- D. DeMura's *Self-Portrait*
- E. Navez's *Moeremans Family*
- F. Chinard's *General Brune*
- G. Chardin's *Attributes*
- H. Wall behind the *Lost Pleiad*
- I. Inness and Browne
- J. Schillmark's *Still Life*
- K. Other (of your inspiration)

The winner will be announced shortly after August 20, 2006.



Keeping in Touch



Letter from the Docent Chair

I would like to take the opportunity of this letter from the chair to thank all of you who, in addition to leading your tours, have made contributions that assure the success of the docent organization.

When the social chairs plan a luncheon event, they do so with some trepidation. Planning and commitments have to be completed before they have an indication how many will be accepting the invitation. This year, the turnout for the luncheons surpassed our expectations and we thank you for making the events a success. Thanks also to Cynthia O'Halloran and Ann Davis for planning and organizing the events. You will soon be receiving invitations from them for a special spring luncheon at the Swedish Institute.

Thank you to all who generously responded to the appeal from Linnea Asp, our treasurer, for contributions to the Sunshine Fund and to those who contributed to the fund for maintaining the docent lounge. I would also like to thank Pat Williams, Barbara Kvasnick-Nuñez, Manny Saadat, and Sharon Hayenga lending their paintings and photographs that decorated the docent lounge this year.

A special thanks must go to the *Docent Muse* editor Fran Megarry, to both those who have contributed articles on a regular basis and those who have written special pieces and Merritt Nequette for getting each *Muse* ready for publication.

As this edition of the *Muse* is being prepared, we are also preparing for the election of the members to the Docent Executive Committee for next year. The election will take place at the General meeting on May 1. Thanks to those who agreed to serve on the nominating committee and those who agree to run for committee positions.

Patrick George

From the Museum Guide Programs Staff

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. These are the most important words I have to say.

I believe, however, that you would like to know more about next year's very special exhibitions so I have committed to saying a few more words and taking up a bit more space. I am focusing here on US Bank and Target exhibitions, but keep in mind that we will also have other special exhibitions and so many brand new galleries—many of which will regularly rotate exhibitions drawn from the permanent collection.

I am not kidding when I say we have some special exhibitions coming up. You have heard recently about *From Dürer to Cassatt: Five Centuries of Master Prints from the Jones Collection*, which will be in U. S. Bank Galleries 315, 316 and 344 from May 20 – September 17. Thank you to all of you who have volunteered to tour this exhibition that showcases the remarkable depth of the Herschel V. Jones Collection, the gift at the core of our print holdings.

Many of you are already signed up to tour *The Surreal Calder* in Target Gallery from June 11 – September 10. This exhibition shows Calder in the context from which he initially emerged as an artist. His artistic parentage consisted of Mar-

cel Duchamp, who provided the name of and concept for the mobile, Mondrian who introduced pure abstraction to him, and Miró who communicated the central thesis of Surrealism. *The Surreal Calder*, consisting of seventy works including thirteen paintings and objects by artists other than Calder, will put Calder back in the midst of Surrealism so that his achievement is more profoundly understood within that context.

I am particularly excited about the next Target Gallery show, which runs from October 8 to December 31: *Renaissance to Rococo: Masterpieces from the Collection of the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art* (working title). The Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art is internationally renowned for the quality, rarity, and beauty of its European painting collection. Perhaps the most famous aspect is the concentration of Italian Baroque masterpieces. I can hardly believe we will have Caravaggio's *St. Francis of Assisi in Ecstasy* and Zurbarán's *Saint Serapion* right here in our midst. Other artists in the collection include Claude, Frans Hals, Boucher, Greuze and Goya.

From February 18 to May 6, 2007, we will feature *An American Vision: Henry Francis du Pont's Winterthur Museum* in Target Gallery. This exhibition chronicles America's past through the decorative and useful arts of our ancestors. The exhibition will cover five themes using the depth and richness of Winterthur's unrivalled collection of decorative and fine arts made or used in America between 1640 and 1860.

This is just a sampling of what we have to look forward to in the year ahead. I haven't even mentioned *Vermillion Editions Limited, 1977-1992*, *San Francisco Psychedelic*, *Uzbek Embroidery in the Nomadic Tradition*, or *A Mirror of Nature: Nordic Landscape Painting 1840-1900*. I am so glad we will all be learning about and touring these special exhibitions together.

At the risk of repeating myself—thank you, thank you, thank you!

Sheila McGuire

New in the Library

- ABC Hieroglyphics*, Amr Hussein, Elias Modern Press, Egypt (2000) [Ancient]
- Ancient Egypt in Africa*, David O'Connor and Andrew Reid, UCL Press, London (2003) [Africa]
- Art Beyond the West*, Michael Kampen O'Riley, Harry N. Abrams, New York (2002) [Art History]
- Art of India: Prehistory to Present*, Frederick M. Asher (Ed.), Encyclopedia Britannica (2003) [India-Non-Circulating]
- Art, A Brief History*, Marilyn Stokstad, Pearson, Prentice Hall (2004) [Reference-2 copies]
- Arts of the South Seas, The Collections of the Musée Barbier-Mueller*, Ed. Douglas Newton, Prestel Verlag, Munich (1999) [Oceania]
- Body of Clay, Soul of Fire: Richard Bresnahan and the Saint John's Pottery*, Matthew Welch, Afton Historical Press, Afton, MN (2001) [Decorative Arts]
- Can You Spot the Leopard: African Masks*, Christine Stelzig, Prestel, Munich (1997) [Africa]

China: Dawn of a Golden Age, 200-750 A.D., James C.Y. Watt, Metropolitan Museum of Art and Yale University Press, New Haven (2004) [China]
Concerning the Spiritual in Art, Wassily Kandinsky, Dover Publications, New York (1977) [20th Century]
Early Art and Architecture of Africa, Peter Garlake, Oxford University Press, Oxford (2002) [Africa]
Early Cultures of Mainland Southeast Asia, Charles Higham, Art Media Resources Ltd. (2002) [S/SEA]
Egypt in Africa, Theodore Celenko (Ed.), Indianapolis Museum of Art (1996) [Africa]
Hero, Hawk, and Open Hand, Richard F. Townsend (ed.), The Art Institute of Chicago and Yale University Press, New Haven (2004) [Americas]
Oceanic Art, Nicholas Thomas [Oceania]
Sculpture Since 1945, Andrew Causey, Oxford University Press, Oxford (1998) [Sculpture]
The Great American Thing: Modern Art and National Identity, 1915-1935, Wanda M. Corn, University of California Press, Berkeley (1999) [20th Century-Non-Circulating]
The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down, Anne Fadiman, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York (1997) [S.E. Asia]

Junior Docent Update

The Junior Docent class of 2005 has just completed the fourth of five units in the first year of training. Our class has heard lectures, discussed, and viewed art on broad topics such as: “Art Before the Written Word,” “Ancient Art: 3000 – 300 BCE,” and “Art in the Service of Religion and the Ruling Classes: 300 BCE – 1000 CE.” In addition we have worked on the elements and principles of art and the basics of giving a tour.

The current Junior Docent training may sound a little different to the docents who have been around for a while. The format of the course has changed and is more chronological and cross-cultural than in the past according to the Museum Guide Programs teaching staff. Debbi Hegstrom, coordinator of the docent program said, “We are adding a cross-cultural breadth to the training in the first year. For example, in the Art of the Ancient World segment, we looked at all areas of the collection from the Mediterranean to China, Japan, Korea, and Southeast Asia as well as the Americas and Africa.”

Our class has spent time in the galleries practicing tour techniques not only in small groups but also in front of the camera. We have worked on connecting the history we have heard in the classroom to the objects in the galleries.

Most of our homework has been devoted to developing good touring skills. We have compared and contrasted objects and developed open-ended questions to encourage conversation with our guests. We are encouraged to look at art for details in order to guide guests toward discovery and deeper meaning.

Many of our assignments encouraged us to do research using the files in the docent/guide library. We have even contributed to these files by researching objects from the ancient world that did not have files. Docents might run across some of these new files that have already been incorporated into the library.

We have been taught to use the books in our library and to take advantage of the knowledge of the Senior Docents we may meet there. We have also been taught how to use ArtsConnectEd and its links to the MIA library and old MIA journals. In addition, we have developed an e-mail network so that we can share useful Web sites, book reviews and other information that will help us become better docents.

One particularly useful assignment was our recent Ancient Cultures paper. We used a tour planning worksheet to guide us through the paper, which was submitted in two parts. For the first part, we decided on a theme and objects for a tour, organized the objects and began research. We submitted the theme statement, an introduction to the tour and a worksheet on four or five objects. The worksheet included three open-ended questions, six points of interest for each object and a transition to the next object that tied back into the theme. Our instructors gave us feedback and then we completed the assignment for four or five more objects and added a conclusion. This approach is very practical as we can apply what we learned right away in the galleries.

In the spring we will participate in the Visitor Experience Training similar to what the Senior Docents received this winter. It has been an eventful five months. We have learned a lot, made some friends and become more comfortable talking in front of people. Through our exposure to the collection, and practicing different techniques, we are developing the right skills to become great docents.

Bill Bertram

Book Club Meeting



Docent Book Club will be meeting on March 20 after the morning lecture for a discussion of Louise Erdrich’s novel *The Painted Drum*. This meeting will take place at the Todd Bockley Gallery for a presentation on Native American Art followed by a tour of the Birchbark Bookstore. The bookstore is owned by Louise Erdrich and is devoted to Native American literature along with a selection of arts and crafts. If you have questions call Dale Swenson.

Dale Swenson

Honorary Docent Doings

The Honorary Docents started the year off with an inspired tour of Villa America lead by Sue Canterbury, associate curator of paintings and modern sculpture.

In February the group toured the Ruth Duckworth show with Jennifer Komar Olivarez, the associate curator of architecture, design, decorative arts, craft and sculpture.

In April the group will visit the studio and gallery of landscape artist Jim Conaway in downtown Minneapolis.

The Honorary Docents Book Club reading list this spring includes:

View From Delphi by Jon O’Dell

Dark Star Safari by Paul Theroux

The Poisonwood Bible by Barbara Kingsolver

Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe

The Professor and the Madam by Simon Winchester.

Nancy Pennington

Honorary Docent Book Club

Thanks to Sydney Rice, participants of the Honorary Docent Book Club were delighted to have Jonathan Odell join them to discuss his first novel, *The View from Delphi*, February's book club selection. Odell, who now lives in Minneapolis, grew up in Mississippi. He spent three years researching and writing *The View from Delphi*. He is currently writing his second novel.

The View from Delphi is set in Mississippi during pre-civil rights days. The characters are all based on individuals known to Odell. The dialect of each character is unique, enabling the reader to identify each person as they converse. Odell said he spent a lot of time listening and interviewing people so he could accurately record their different dialects.

When asked how he develops his story, Odell said it's the characters who lead the way. The author must repress his ego, then listen and follow the direction his characters take. Book club members asked him many questions about his characters, which he described in detail, making it possible to better understand each person in the novel.

Prior to becoming an author, Odell had a career in human resources. Wanting to write, Odell enrolled in writing workshops at the Loft Literary Center, which he said were very helpful. Fellow classmates critique each others' writings, in essence, becoming mentors.

We continued our conversation over lunch, beautifully co-hosted by Sydney Rice and Helen Salzman.

The March book club title is *Dark Star Safari* by Paul Theroux.

Did You Know?

In our junior docent class, a question was raised about a "tych" as in diptych and triptych. Could there be a monotycho? Well, no. But since I like etymology, I started looking into what a "tych" was, and found I was on the wrong track. What I needed to find was a "ptych" which is a Greek word *ptychos* from the verb *ptyssein* meaning "to fold." Therefore, one needs at least two parts in order to fold, and depending upon the number of parts, the prefix is *di*, *tri*, or *poly*. Triptychs are more common in Christian painting representing the trinity.

And then the subject of triptychs brought the class to the Daddi *Madonna and Child*... The little building on the left



panel with St. Francis is the Portiuncula. The basilica of Santa Maria degli Angeli was built around it. The basilica is down the hill from the town of Assisi, and the little chapel was one restored by Francis. The following information is taken from the Web site: www.porziunca.org/english/porziuncaengli.htm

The very ancient chapel, venerated for an apparition of angels within it, was originally property of the Benedictines of Subasio. It was

located on a piece of land known as the Portiuncula (little portion); this name became attached to the chapel.

After a long period of abandonment, it was restored by St. Francis. Here he was given an understanding of his vocation. He founded here the Order of Friars Minor (1209), "establishing here his home," St. Bonaventure tells us, "because of his reverence for the angels, and of his great love of the Mother of Christ" to whom the little church is dedicated. He obtained the use of the land and the chapel from the Benedictines and made this place the centre of his new religious family.

Merritt Nequette

From the Editor...

Thank you to all *Muse* contributors and especially to Merritt Nequette for all his work formatting and preparing this document for publication. Articles for the next issue of the *Muse* are due on April 27. Articles may be put into my P.O. box or e-mailed to megar003@tc.umn.edu