

A Lovely Lady

Marge Buss

The relatively new spotlight tour format is an especially appropriate method of introducing visitors at the MIA to in-depth looks at individual objects of art. This format gives docents the opportunity to offer a different viewing experience to our public. In a 30-minute timeframe, information can be presented through a casual give and take exchange, allowing ample time for the viewer to look carefully at the art and contemplate the open-ended questions being asked them. Their observations provide the seeds for the narrative through casual, guided conversation.

One object I had the pleasure of presenting using this format was the *Comtesse d'Egmont Pignatelli in Spanish Costume*, painted by Alexander Roslin in 1763. A brief introduction sets the stage:

Here we have a masterpiece of French portraiture from the 18th century, painted by the great portrait artist Alexander Roslin. The MIA purchased this piece in May of 2006. Prior to it being shown here, this painting was shown only four times publicly. It was first shown in 1763 at the Paris Salon, a major art house in France. It depicts a woman in a parlor setting. Take a minute to look at her.....What do you notice?

The audience observations that ensue can then be guided, through inquiry, to produce information. Audience descriptions of the lady's clothing, hair, skin, hands and surroundings tell a lot about her status in life. The aesthetically beautiful painting offers much for the group to enjoy remarking about. After gaining audience interest by engaging them in figuring out what type of a lady we are looking at, the opportunity can be taken to relay additional information

that can't be found in the painting such as: the *Comtesse* was the daughter of the 18th century Duke de Richelieu. Known as a "rake" he was a high ranking officer in the French Royal army and a co-hort to Louis XV.

The audience notices she is holding a book, offering another opportunity to explore further and get to know the lady. Symbolizing refinement and learnedness, the *Comtesse* began her schooling process at the age of 7 at a Benedictine convent of Notre Dame. Here she received three years of formal education, after which she was sent to her aunt's house

where she received formal societal training. She was taught elocution and deportment – no longer everyday words, but critical elements in the 18th century to become a lady of prestige. Elocution is the study and practice of oral delivery such as speaking manner, gesture and voice control. Deportment is the way in which one conducts oneself through demeanor and behavior. Together they polish the person for proper society interaction. Our *Comtesse* was ready to be presented for marriage at the age of 15.

In the portrait she is 23 years old, having been married some eight years to Casimir Pignatelli, *Comte d'Egmont* of Italy. He was a wealthy, well-bred man from two families of European nobility. Casimir Pignatelli was a grandee of Spain and Knight of the Golden Fleece, which may explain the Spanish costume his wife is posed in. Other explanations can be proffered. The wearing of a Spanish

costume was a sign of wealth and international stature. Spain was considered exotic. The 17th century Spanish dress the *Comtesse* is wearing was attire the Spanish would have worn in the 18th century as they conveyed pride in harkening back to their past. Another influence pertained to the power of the Paris Salon. Paintings alluding to Spain were particularly popular during this time, giving them an edge to be selected for exhibit at Salon shows. The Spanish dress may have been chosen for this reason as exposure here gained not only attention for the artist but also commissions. The French *Comtesse*, married to the Italian *Comte* posing in her Spanish costume portrays an international aura of class and refinement.

The book in her hand is not all that portrays her learning. The guitar on the settee with music spread nearby speaks to her



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refinement and accomplishment. The *Comtesse* was most probably a gifted player of this instrument. Other paintings of her with a guitar exist and if the audience is asked to look closely they can notice the worn center of the instrument, the loose tuning strings and the rumpled sheet music that indicate actual use. The overall portrayal of her stature can lead the audience to conclude that the *Comtesse* was an intellectual and glamorous player in French high society. In fact, she played a role in Sweden's King Gustav's political decisions through reciprocal correspondence, informing him of France's political matters. She was smart and influential.

The *Comtesse* did not live to see the historical outcomes of her time. Small pox was killing people. She got inoculated for it and later became sick from the shot. Her immune system weakened and she contracted tuberculosis which took her life in 1773. She was 33 years old. Her husband, Casimir Pignatelli, bequeathed this portrait to his nephew, which suggests there were no children of their own to inherit the piece. I found no research addressing the existence of children, so left this wonderment to the wish of the audience, using those famous words, "I really don't know."

The biography of the artist, Alexander Roslin, is well documented and lengthy. For purposes of our painting it makes some sense to limit the information to what the audience asks for, or minimally convey that he was a highly-trained portrait artist. Born in 1718 in Sweden, he was educated there and then left to take further art training in Paris. He also traveled extensively in Europe to glean artistic perfection from other masters. His art technique became polished to perfection and critics would comment that he could capture a speaking likeness of his sitters. He was in demand and made a good living with his commissions. His work was popular at the Paris Salon. It consistently showed his exceptional gift as a colorist. One of his final paintings before he died in 1793 was a self portrait that hangs in the Uffizi Museum in Florence, Italy.

Spotlight tours offer the opportunity to direct the audience to other galleries in the MIA that hold thematically-connected objects to the featured piece. This painting can be associated with the Jingdezhen *China Plate with Coat of Arms of Pignatelli* in gallery 209, belonging to the ancestors of Casimir Pignatelli. The pair of French armchairs in gallery 314, fashioned by Jean-Baptiste-Claude Sene in 1785 echoes the style of furniture in the portrait. The French Grand Salon is a perfect place to direct the audience to visit. It offers them a sense of entering the world of the *Comtesse*. This room displays the wonderful Rococo gold gilt that stylistically is shown in the portrait and its frame. Have the audience look closely at the wood floor in the painting and then notice the same wood floor pattern in the Grand Salon period room. It's a remarkable resemblance.

If at the end of thirty minutes your audience is begging for more and you can stay a little longer in the presence of this lovely lady, here are some more fun facts to consider exploring through looking and casual conversation:

- Neoclassical motifs present in columns, arched wall frieze and garland.
- Neoclassical motifs allude to classical antiquity.

- Neoclassical motifs on frame repeat patterns in the painting.
- Frame is original which is rare for a piece this old.
- Pristine condition of frame and painting speaks to minimal public exposure.
- Rococo motifs are seen in serpentine contours, ribbons and excessive decoration.
- Neoclassical harkens back to the past while Rococo livens to present taste.
- Neoclassical builds character while Rococo is pure fun – a nice juxtaposition.
- Furniture considered Louis XVI style.
- Still life of floral arrangement on table portrays miniature *vanitas*.
- Symbolic elements of *vanitas* are discarded objects (ribbons, pearls, dead flower).
- Dress is white satin with Medici collar and slashed sleeves.
- Hair style is lightly powdered, slightly less than typical for the era.
- French needle lace is depicted on the dress flounce.
- This painting exemplifies sensibility of the Enlightenment period.
- Enlightenment was a time of using human reasoning to obtain truth.
- This is the MIA's only female portrait masterpiece of the Rococo period.

Presenting this portrait painting in the spotlight tour format gives the audience time to ponder many things and provides the opportunity for the docent to thoroughly engage the viewers on a journey of discovery through looking. What a pleasant portrait to offer guests a museum experience with. The *Comtesse* sits proudly in the spotlight.

A special thanks to Jane Stull for enunciating the correct pronunciation on my voicemail, allowing me to listen to her perfect French repeatedly while practicing it myself. That was a true gift. I offer it here phonetically as close as I can get it:

cohn-TESS degg-MOHN pee-nah-TELL-ay

Information for this article was obtained from MIA member magazines, docent files, MIA label copy, artsmia.org Web site and Webster's Dictionary.

A Treasure in our own Backyard

Joanne Platt

On Saturday, October 21, 2006, several members of the junior docent class visited the Hindu *Mandir* or Temple in Maple Grove. This visit afforded us an opportunity to see first-hand the ongoing construction and adornment of the largest Hindu temple in the Midwest. Although the Hindu community celebrated the temple's grand opening in July, much work still remains to be done before the completion of the temple, which is estimated to be finished in about two years.

The simple, modern exterior belies the traditional design and decoration found within. Because Minnesota winters can be severe, all of the traditional delicate decorative elements are found inside. Upon entering the facility, a hallway leads to the left where the auditorium and classrooms are located. These multipurpose rooms are used for instruction in religion, languages, dance and yoga. There is a kitchen which is operated entirely by volunteers who prepare a traditional lunch on Saturdays and Sundays for a minimum requested donation of

\$3.00. To the right of the entry hall is a coatroom where visitors remove their shoes as a symbol of respect prior to ascending a staircase to the temple itself, located on the second floor.

The effect is quite dramatic as one enters the spacious, brightly-lit room. Beautiful orange pillars and gleaming stone floors serve to accentuate the seventeen shrines dedicated to various incarnations of the Hindu deity. These individual temples run along the perimeter of the room, allowing space to move freely and socialize in the center.

Only five of the seventeen temples are completed, but a team of artists from India will work for the next year and a half to complete these smaller shrines within the worship space. Each small temple will house a deity that is sacred to the Hindus and handmade back in India, and each temple will have an intricately and uniquely carved roof above the deity.

In Hinduism, an image of a god is a direct symbol of the god himself. In this image of the god, one can see the spirit of the god, and it is through prayer and worship that the god is served. The Maple Grove temple is a classical Hindu structure, and the images of the deities are carefully sculpted according to ancient tradition. Although Hinduism may appear to be pantheistic, each temple honors different representations of a single God. When a particular deity is the focus of devotion and worship, he or she is always considered to be the greatest and most important at that particular time.

We were quite fortunate to have had a knowledgeable escort throughout our visit. Shyamala Ganesh approached us in the coatroom, inquired if this was our first visit, and welcomed us warmly. She then offered to treat us to a tour of the temple, and explained the customs and traditions of the *Diwali* festival which was being celebrated that weekend. Shyamala showed us her favorite shrine, dedicated to Ganesh, the elephant-headed god, and her family's namesake.

She pointed out the beautiful and delicate carvings around the exterior of the shrine and explained about the carving process and the men who have left their families in India to travel here for several years in order to sculpt such exquisite statues and decorations. Shyamala then led us to the main and largest shrine, dedicated to Vishnu, who is one of the most revered figures in the Hindu faith. Inside the shrine is a standing statue of Vishnu, flanked by two female figures who represent his wife, Lakshmi, the goddess of prosperity and happiness, in both her earthly and heavenly incarnations. The Vishnu temple faces east, and two sets of massive copper-covered doors can open to allow the light of a sunrise to shine on the face of the central deity.

Shyamala emphasized the dual usage of the temple both as a place of worship and of fellowship. She noted that many Hindus come to pray and then spend the day in conversation with one another. Thus the temple satisfies both the need for

prayer and ritual, as well as the communal need for socialization.

The Hindu community is scattered throughout Minnesota, and this large temple offers a central gathering space for the growing Hindu population, estimated currently to be about 20,000 people.

Shyamala proved to be an engaging and informative guide and was obviously quite proud of this beautiful Hindu temple. We also toured the classrooms and were fortunate to be entertained by Shyamala's daughter and her dance class, who performed for us a graceful traditional dance which they were practicing. Many of the other worshipers were also quite friendly and welcoming, and combined with the unexpected pleasure of Shyamala's generous and gracious gift of her time and knowledge, our visit was quite memorable.

The Hindu *Mandir* received some unfortunate news coverage last April, after it was vandalized by two local teenagers. These vandals used baseball bats to smash their way through the building, and decapitated and dismembered several statues of the deities and caused several hundred thousand dollars in damage to the temple. Even minimal damage to the deities precludes consecration and worship, and new statues had to be ordered from India to replace those damaged by the miscreants. The young men have been making restitution for their behavior and the Hindu community has forgiven them for their reckless disregard for the temple and their religion. Through community service at the temple, it is hoped that these young men will better appreciate the lessons learned about tolerance and forgiveness and the negative and damaging effects of ignorance.

The simple majesty of the temple and the welcoming grace of its worshipers simply must be experienced first-hand. I encourage the docent community to visit this singular temple. In fact, the Hindu community wishes visitors would come to learn about their culture and religion. It is truly a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to witness the construction and continuing evolution of a Hindu temple and place of worship from inception to completion.

Our visit not only provided an excellent opportunity to explore a culture to which many of us had not been exposed before, but also deepened our appreciation of the Indian objects found in our collection at the MIA. We can all benefit by embracing diversity and the added richness this diversity brings to our community.

The Hindu Temple
10530 Troy Lane North
Maple Grove, MN 55311
763-425-9449
<http://www.hindumandirmn.org>



On the Road: Two New Museums of Chinese Art

Bob Marshall

No country in the world is erecting new buildings like China, and the push to prepare for the 2008 Olympics has, if anything, accelerated this trend. Among the new structures are museums, and your correspondent was fortunate to visit two new important additions to any art lover's tour of the Middle Kingdom.

The Suzhou Museum, opened October 6, has received the most attention in the U.S. because its architect was I.M. Pei, whose ancestors hailed from Suzhou, an hour northwest of Shanghai. This is the region, recognized as a center of *literati* culture, that the MIA's two period rooms also hail from. For what may be the final building of his storied career, the 89-year-old Pei has adapted traditional Suzhou garden architecture, arraying a ring of wood-warm galleries around a central pond, which features a viewing pavilion and a focal rock sculpture.



Everything is geometrical – all squares and angles, no curves or rounded surfaces (think National Gallery East Wing and Louvre pyramids, not Walker, Guthrie or Weisman). The walls are white, the roof and framing accents are gray, and wooden lattices let in natural light onto the gray-tiled corridors that run inside the galleries. Like other modern Chinese art museums, the objects are dramatically displayed – spotlights on freestanding cases and wall vitrines somewhat like the MIA's in which each piece is separately highlighted.

The collection contains the usual range of suspects – jades, bronzes, Buddhist relics, *literati* objects – with an emphasis on pieces from the Suzhou region. The most unique items are ones discovered buried in local pagodas during renovations in 1956 and 1978. My favorite gallery featured burial objects from the tombs of two local families, one from the Yuan Dynasty, the other late Ming. To know that all these “museum pieces,” including clothing, jewelry, a gold coronet, ivory eulogy tablets and a miniature furniture set, had belonged to the same family gave them a context normally missing in an art museum.



Probably because the new building had been open less than three weeks, maybe because the “Venice of Asia” now has six million inhabitants less than an hour from Shanghai's 17 million, the museum was packed with visitors, 99% of them Chinese, who noisily jostled from display to display, gazing familiarly at their country's rich cultural heritage.

By contrast, the Beijing Capital Museum, open ten months, was as uncrowded as the MIA on a typical weekday afternoon. The building, like Suzhou's, shared some of its locale's character – if massive can be called “character.” A

block-long five-story concrete-and-glass box, it sits on an eight-lane thoroughfare 15 minutes west of Tiananmen Square, seemingly undiscovered by tour groups, foreign or Chinese. Which is a shame, because the collection is (a distant) second only to the Shanghai Museum's and just as beautifully displayed.

Inside the outer frame are two enclosed interior structures: a brick-colored rectangular box houses stunning galleries of porcelain and Buddhist statues plus several floors showcasing the urban history of Beijing. The museum trademark, though, is an off-center cylinder made to look like a Shang bronze that protrudes through the front and top of the museum's outer wall. On each of its five floors is a circular, self-contained gallery expounding on one of the great artistic traditions of China: painting, calligraphy, bronze, jade, “stationery” (i.e. scholar's objects).

Given the MIA's Dayton-era emphasis on *literati* art, it's interesting to note that the Beijing museum has an entire gallery devoted to inksticks and inkslabs, plus discrete case displays for brushes, brush rests, brush-tip retouching dishes, paper weights, seals, seal paste boxes, incense burners, arm rests, water droppers, water pots and paper.

Finally, in the realm of museology, both the Capital Museum and Shanghai Museum combine China's strengths in technology and manpower: lighting for the cases containing works on paper is activated by motion sensors, going dim when no one is at the case. And for those who get too close, a small army of window washers patrols the galleries, rubbing as they go.



While Looking at the *Paintings* One Day...

Tom Byfield

Once more the MIA biorhythmic cycles are awash with the hormones that spur the seasonal activities here. An unhappily short fall has morphed into winter with the usual accumulating precipitation of school buses at our curb, kicking off another yearly series of tours at our home away from home.

Some years ago we wrote a column describing the perils of signing up to tour a future exhibition sight unseen. Given the complete inanity of our past efforts, the editor of the *Muse* could run it again with complete confidence that no one would recall ever reading it before. In it we suggested the gamble to do an unknown tour was like buying a pig in a poke. For those who are not lexicographers, a poke is a sack, a pig is a pig, and a lexicographer is one who draws pictures of Lexi, Toyota's *crème de la crème*. Why one would go out and actually buy a pig no matter how attractively wrapped is an enigma. I expect nothing on a silver platter except tarnish so I'm not surprised when I often end up touring a skint exhibition feeling like O.J.'s lawyer defending the indefensible only gaining acquittal by verbal slight of hand and feigning enthusiasm that requires the acting ability of a Barrymore. When I finally do stumble into an exhibit that is a succulent plum I feel it is a miracle and wonder what God is saving up for me later. Such is the *Passion for Paintings* blockbuster. Seldom have we had so many quality paintings in one exhibit. That said, there are some rather unusual pieces in the collection that I will attempt to judge with my usual godlike superior impartiality.

The first painting one encounters at the entrance is *Catherine of Alexandria* by Strozza. She was the feisty queen that put it to the emperor that he should shuck his Roman gods and stop being an all-around pill. Apparently he was eight-ulcer man on a four-ulcer job. He took umbrage with the criticism and called for her heard. As painted, she looks less like a beleaguered saint than a coy whipped cream parfait with a cherry on top. Put her in a short skirt, add a couple of pom-poms and she would be the perfect pubescent cheerleader with an eye to dating the star quarterback. Most would never peg this as a seventeenth-century work.

After Michelangelo and da Vinci, artists had nowhere to go. At first they copied the great nudes of Michelangelo and composed religious scenes around them creating a cross between an ecclesiastical nudist camp and a gay athletic training session. Since they couldn't improve on perfection, they switched to distortion and became Mannerists.

A good example of this brief burp in the history of art is a painting by Orsi, *Noli me tangere* "Touch me not." We see a remarkably muscled Christ outside his tomb warning Mary Magdalene not to touch him as he had not yet risen to his father. She appears to be lunging forward, clothing swirling, as if to breast the tape in a hundred-yard dash. Christ has an adz in his hand and when asked during a tour why, I could only respond, "Many people are confused about that. Unfortunately I am one of them."

The last painting that gives me pause is Tiepolo's *The Building of the Trojan Horse*. You all are familiar with the story, having read Virgil's *Aeneid* in the original Latin. Taking nothing from the artist's virtuoso brush work, his presentation stretches the viewer's credulity. Building the horse in plain view of Troy's walls seems dumber than Gary Hart's little vacation junket to Bimini. We all know it was made of wood but he artist has made it look like a sculpted stone. We see workers in furious activity swarming over the structure like frenzied teeny-boppers at a rave. The horse is only twice life-sized and could only accommodate three or four Munchkin-sized soldiers at most. Artists are allowed some leeway in how they interpret events but in this case I think his artistic license had expired.

In criticizing these pieces I don't intend to demean them in any way. Our artistic sensibilities have evolved from those of three hundred years ago. Today our culture has been refined and polished and we live by those arbiters of good taste such as Jerry Springer and the Reverend Ted Haggard.

Keeping in Touch



Letter from the Docent Chair

The holiday season is upon us, which of course may provide us the challenge of finding a parking place at the mall (parking lots bring out the worst in people I do believe) or forcing the poor UPS delivery person into overtime work delivering all of our online purchases.

Perhaps a more personal gift for your friends would be a tour specifically crafted with their interests in mind. Better yet, let this be the opportunity to enter the *Super Tour Challenge* sponsored by the Museum Guide Program!

Think of the possibilities...all those groups we are associated with, coming to the museum for tours. Not only can they enjoy the current special exhibits, but also this is a chance to show off the now familiar new Target Wing and your favorite art selections.

Groups must be a minimum of eight people, consisting of family, friends, colleagues, club members, and religious groups to name a few. To have a tour eligible for the contest, you must either lead the tour or simply make a referral to another docent through the tour office. Remember, you must also notify the docent office that the tour is part of the *Super Tour Challenge* to ensure eligibility.

More details are available in the tour office regarding procedures for *Passion for Paintings* tours as well as flyers to distribute to interested groups.

Speaking of tours, a few weeks ago there was a third grade dark-haired little boy in my tour group. He was almost a clone of my son, Randy, at that age who is graduating college this spring. It reminded me of how quickly our families mature and how we need to take time this holiday season to enjoy our loved ones. It is a frenzied time for most but try to slow a bit and enjoy the memories you will create for the future.

Happy Holidays to all!

Pamela Friedland

From the Museum Guide Programs Staff

Daily, I see you in action, and marvel at your dedication and generosity. I truly cannot thank you enough for being so giving of your time and spirit. I tell people all the time how fortunate I am to work with such an incredible group of volunteers.

Thank you to everyone who provided feedback following our first annual docent meeting. Although I must admit I anticipated hearing from a lot more of you, I was able to make some clear decisions about new tour topics from the responses we did receive. Although we have decided not to add stand-alone tours on the Modern Crafts and Textiles galleries, we are optimistic that you will continue to find interesting ways to incorporate these fabulous new galleries into your other tours. While you did not express too much interest in adding thematic tours in the modern galleries on Art and Popular Culture, or Materials and Media, we hope you will consider these themes as you develop your modern highlights tours.

While many of you have expressed concerns about getting through the whole new museum for general highlights tours, we have also heard loud and clear that some of you want to continue to offer these. We will gladly keep "highlights" in the menu of tours. We know that some of you who give these tours have already changed your tours to incorporate the *Tatra* and *Frankfurt Kitchen*. I think it would be fun if someone who has mastered the new all-inclusive highlights in-one-hour tour would contribute an article to the next *Muse* to let us all know how you do it!

Here are the brief descriptions that will appear on the Web site to describe our new tours.

Modern Art to 1950

Take a trip back in time to see how the revolutionary Impressionists and Post-Impressionists paved the way for such modern art world giants as Picasso and Matisse. Then examine how their art, in turn, inspired developments in modern art to 1950.

Art Since 1950

Is that art? Discover the many ways modern artists have responded to their environment and challenged conventional notions of what constitutes art. View abstract and photo-realist paintings, minimalist sculptures, modern works on paper, and more.

The Art of Building: An Architectural History of the MIA

From large artistic ideals to fine details, see how three buildings from three unique eras work together to form an art museum. Discover architectural complements and elements that weave through the spaces and create relationships among these architectural gems.

Modernism!

Explore the world of modern design (1880-1940) for the home, the office, and the highway. See how forward-looking architects, designers and artisans revolutionized everything from furniture, lighting, and punch bowls to typewriters, telephones and cars.

An Introduction to the Target Wing

Enjoy the MIA's new post-modern addition designed by Michael Graves, housing galleries dedicated to modern and contemporary design, crafts, textiles, works on paper, paintings, and sculptures, as well as the art of the Pacific Islands. Discover some of the unique architectural features and the treasures that await within.

Perhaps you will want to invite a group of friends or colleagues to take a tour with you on one of these new topics. Or an old topic. Be sure to read Pam's article on the *Super Tour Challenge* and book your groups today!

Enjoy the season and a terrific 2007. Peace.

Sheila McGuire



Docent Book/Study Group

The Monday noon Docent Book/Study Group has changed its format and schedule for spring meetings. Meetings will be the third (3rd) Monday of each month at noon, following continuing education, in the Board Room on campus. However, meetings are subject to change by consensus. For instance, the May 21 date will be changed to May 14 because junior docents graduate at a spring luncheon on May 21, 2007. Meetings will last 60-90 minutes, and bag lunches are welcome. Occasionally the group goes off campus for a shared lunch out.

Discussions will be based on a topic per session, and will be supported by selected packages of readings, guest specialists, and Power Point presentations of pertinent art objects, particularly those from the MIA.

Topics for spring quarter may include:

January 15, 2007 (definite)

Modern, modernism, and postmodernism, with an emphasis on definition of the terms, and the relationship between the culture and the art. Power Point displays of comparative images and a discussion of the definition of the terms and the cultures to which they and the art belong will be the emphasis.

February 19, 2007

Tentatively, A Q&A session with David Ryan, curator of the modernism collection. He may suggest a short set of reading materials, but mostly will discuss with the group power point images on design and contemporary art.

March 19, 2007

Tentatively, a comparison/contrast discussion of the progression of art among Mesopotamian, early Greek, Hellenistic, Classical and Roman art. It will be a comparative discussion that will also include images and recommended readings (probably including sections of Ovid). Brief time on the impact of Greek/Roman artistic influence through the ages may be included.

April 16, 2007

This topic has not been fully developed, yet, but the group hopes to have a session with Molly Hennen, Associate Curator of Oceania, during which she talks about fundamental aspects of tribalism and its impact on art as well as a history of the region.

May 14, 2007

This and the summer session will focus on Chinese Art if this can be scheduled. The group is looking for history and cultural context in the region and the impact of those two things on some of the specific art types: painting, furniture, silk clothing, Confucianism and Daoism, and ceramics. As always, selected readings and the use of power point images will help with these difficult concepts.

Single Summer Session

Date, location and time TBA. See May 14, 2007, about content

The group invites new people who are interested to join the book/study book. But we do want the size to stay around 10 persons per meeting. Early joiners will have the best luck. The chairperson of the group is Dale Swenson, who should be contacted with questions and discussions about joining the group. His contact information is in the docent roster.

Dale Swenson

Honorary Docents

The Honorary docents are having a good year – the Sculpture Garden at the Walker, the Goldstein Gallery at the U. of M., the Grain Exchange – to name a few of the events. And of course our great book group which meets once a month.

Georgia George and Arlene Baker would like to remind the membership to call and let us know if you will attend any of the events on our calendar.

If any of you are not on our e-mail list, please let us know. Nancy Pennington and Jean Eastman update us with e-mail.

Arlene Baker

From the Editor...

All docents are encouraged to write an article for the *Muse*, about a particular artwork that you really like, a tour idea that seemed to be particularly effective, or just something interesting that happened around the MIA.

Submissions for articles may be sent any time to me at mcnequette@stthomas.edu or leave an article (or an idea for an article) in my MIA box in the docent lounge.

The deadlines for the next two editions of the *Muse* are:

Spring issue – February 2

Summer issue – May 4

Merritt Nequette