

The Docent Muse



November 2015

Website Matters: [artsconnected and artsmia](#)

Rose Stanley-Gilbert

Wondering how to find out what's currently on view? Frustrated by artsconnected? Artsconnected remains a valuable resource to find object information, but it is no longer being updated. In good time, all the articles on artsconnected will migrate to artsmia. Artsmia is the most up-to-date resource for gallery maps and objects on view.

[Using the Maps on artsmia.org](#)

Getting to your gallery

On the home page of artsmia.org scroll down to the black band at the bottom and click on "gallery maps." Below the map (lower right) click on the floor number. Then click on one of the galleries. Scroll down to see everything on view.

Navigating

Click on any object in a gallery. After viewing an object, it's easy to return to the page with all the gallery objects by using the "back arrow" at the top. Or go to the green bar and find "On View in Gallery G313," for example, and click on the "Gallery G313" written in blue.

Returning to the Floor Maps

On the upper left, click on the words "View Map" or the small icon of an unfolded map and continue your search.

As objects come and go in the galleries, updating the website can take time. The only reliable way to know what is in the galleries is always with a walk-through.

[Up and Running: ipevolunteers.org](#)

Rose Stanley-Gilbert

The new IPE website, which replaces the mgpvolunteers.org, is up and running. It has been designed to help you search quickly (fewer steps) and logically (better organization of information). Please realize that it is a work in progress!

Log-in and use your password as you did for the mpg website. Remember that the website is currently in "testing mode." If you cannot log-in or can't remember your password, contact Ann Isaacson aisaacso@artsmia.org.

[Home Page](#)

The home page has three main areas – headings with drop-down menus are at the top of the page.

Search Box

This has been enhanced to allow you to search by tags, document titles, category and content. Object files may be located by accession number.

Tags

Tags are keywords or terms assigned to a piece of information. For example, if you enter *Stampede* in a search box you will find the object file for Henry Jackson's work. You will notice it is filed in

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Decorative Arts, Textiles, and Sculpture/Object Files. A few of the tags for this object are: *bronze, cattle, cowboys, jade stampede, west, OOM* (object of the month). You can find an object by using any of its tags in the search box.

[Contact Us](#)

At the bottom of each page, you can email Mia staff without leaving the website. If you notice other website problems, send an email to Juline from this section. jchevalier@artsmia.org

[Headings and the information found in each section](#)

[Calendars](#)

CE schedule, Bi-weekly tour schedule, Picture Person Training schedule.

[Program: AAG, CIF, Docent](#)

Docent and honorary docent rosters. *Muse* newsletters. The Junior Docent section has some hidden treasures! Check out the *Digital Resources Online Research PPT* which shows some of the most helpful websites for docent research. The *Junior Docent Handouts* summarize key ideas for specific cultures and include timelines, Mia objects relating to the culture, terms and video resources of interest.

[References and Policies](#)

Docent procedures, VTS, Artful Thinking, iPad User Guide policies. All docents should be familiar with the general policies here.

[Permanent Collection](#)

Object files, Art Adventure booklets, Object of the Month essays, etc. This section is an additional resource which complements artsconnected. Consider it one of the many resources you can use in preparing tours. Over time, as object files are submitted by docents, this will become a more comprehensive resource.

[Exhibitions: Current and Past](#)

The Burke Collection manual is here. It is organized by gallery and has photos and descriptions of each object currently on view. These objects are not yet available on artsmia.org, but will be available in the future.

[Tour Topics and Themes](#)

Need fresh ideas? Find them here.

[Videos](#)

This is a work in progress.

If you discover clever ways to access information on our new ipevolunteers.org website, please email me

your ideas. I'm planning an article on helpful hints in the next *Muse*. rstanbert@gmail.com

[Metalwork: Raising 101: How was it made?](#)

Lynn Brofman

Hollow metal objects are created using a technique called "raising." A sheet of silver is methodically



hammered over a steel stake. The hammer leaves marks in the silver referred to as *martelé* from the French verb "to hammer." Nearly all of Mia's handmade hollowware objects were

raised. If the hammer marks are not apparent the silversmith smoothed them using a planishing hammer.

The *Martelé Coffee and Tea Service* (95.36.3) was designed in 1912 by architect George Washington Maher for the King family summer home, Rockledge, in Homer, Minnesota. It is currently on view in the Prairie School Architecture and Design Gallery (G300). In 1895, The Gorham Manufacturing Company adopted the term *Martelé* for an exclusive new line of silver. The *Rockledge Coffee and Tea*



Service represents the pinnacle of meticulous and skillful silversmithing.

Detailed information and bibliography is currently posted on the new ipevolunteers.org website under Permanent Collection > all object files. Use the search term *Martelé* to find it.

When a circa 1900 Gorham Martelé tea and coffee service was appraised on the PBS Antiques Roadshow (Washington #1516), the appraiser estimated that a far less-detailed coffee pot took 140 hours to produce. The video and transcript of the appraisal is on their [website](#).

Each one-of-a-kind piece was hand-hammered. The tray was formed using a special vise and a mechanized hammer. The silver typically used for hand-made hollowware and flatware is 95% silver. It is more malleable than Sterling silver, which is 92.5% silver.



The silversmith starts by making an actual-size drawing and template and then calculates the size of the starting disk based on the sum of the widest

and tallest measures. The sheet of silver is center punched, a circle is scribed and cut out. The disk is then marked with concentric guidelines. The disk is held over a steel stake and hammered around each mark moving from the inside circumference to the outer edge.

The metal becomes “work hardened” and must be



“annealed” in order to prevent cracking and to allow continued forming. To anneal the metal, it is heated using a torch until it reaches a dull red color. It is air-cooled for several seconds then quenched in water. This process restores the crystalline structure making the metal malleable again. Annealing must be done periodically throughout the entire raising process.

Here is a [link](#) to an excellent video demonstration of vessel raising.

Raising the vessels was only the beginning for the Rockledge set. The coral lily, monogram and dentils were created using chasing and *repoussé* techniques. The ivory inserts which keep the handles cool are attached using rivets. The handle on the largest piece is attached to the body with hinges that allow it to move side to side. The perfectly-fitting spigots and handles are formed separately and soldered to the body. ...and there's more!

The brilliance of the work leaves me in awe.

Objects in Focus

Moon Gate, 1728

Marilyn Smith

This incredible object is made from carved wood pieces that are joined to create a continuous ribbon of wood zigzagging up, down and around from one side to the other. With lots of time, this wooden ribbon's path can be traced with your finger. (Hint: start up at the top near the medallion.) Moon gates are common features in Chinese architecture and gardens. Often they might have a poem or saying that has the first part on one side of the gate and the second part on the other. Chinese couples about to be married make wishes before they go through a moon gate. So, I like to have my groups make secret wishes before they walk through our *Moon Gate*.



Portrait of George Washington, c. 1820

Thomas Sully

Marilyn Smith

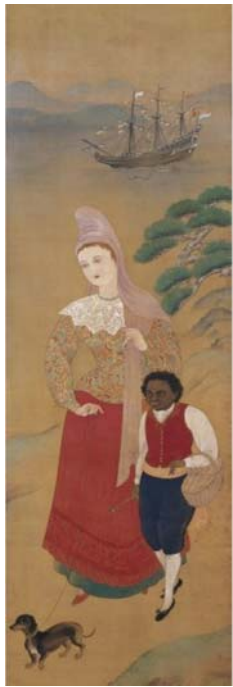
In discussing this painting I especially like to point out that Sully changed Washington's right arm from the original by Gilbert Stuart. In our painting, Washington's hand touches a rolled-up document. What document is it? It may be the Constitution because this is the document that gave Washington and all succeeding presidents their powers. All of Gilbert Stuart's portraits of Washington do not look like this one. So, how do we know what he really looked like? The French sculptor Paul-Louis Houdon made a life mask of his face. He used it to make a sculpture of Washington that is in the rotunda of the Virginia State Capitol, and several busts, one of which is in the National Gallery in Washington DC. Our bust of George Washington by Hiram Powers (currently in the same room) is a copy of Houdon's work. Information and photos of the life mask are available [here](#).



Dutch Lady with Servant, early 19th century (G238)
Kawahara Keiga (1786–1860?) or a follower

Rose Stanley-Gilbert

Concerned about the spread of Christianity, in 1639 Japan expelled all foreign missionaries and merchants with one exception. The Dutch



East India Company continued to trade from an island just offshore from Nagasaki. The hanging scroll may portray Titia, the wife of a Dutch merchant, with her Indonesian servant Maraty. Does her blouse remind you of the batik on the Indonesian-inspired dress by Yinka Shonibare?

Maraty appears to carry a pipe. Perhaps his mistress enjoyed smoking the “Indian Weed” in a clay pipe as was popular with many women at the time.

Paintings like this one would be displayed in Japanese homes so guests could discuss the customs and appearances of these strange

visitors. What do you think surprised them? How do you think the lady and her servant liked their new home?

Burst-bag-type freshwater jar (G226)
late 16th-early 17th century
Stoneware with natural ash glaze; lacquer cover

Rose Stanley-Gilbert

This jar holds the fresh water needed during the ceremonial preparation of powdered green tea. It has a relatively regular-shaped upper half and an irregular-shaped lower half and is thus called “burst bag.” This distorted beauty epitomizes the aesthetic spirit in the late 16th century. Firing at an extreme heat for usually seventeen days resulted in cracks, unusual glaze effects, and scorch marks, that could not be precisely planned, but the surprising results were appreciated.



Process

Burning wood produces both heat and ash. In the kiln wood ash settles on the pieces during the firing and the interaction between flame, ash, and the natural minerals of the clay forms a natural ash glaze. Loading a kiln is the most difficult part of the firing

of ceramics with natural ash glazes. The potter must imagine the amount of ash falling on a piece and the path of the flame rushing through the kiln in order to “paint the pieces with fire.” The craftsman plans carefully, but ultimately must accept the force of fire and nature within the kiln.

Aesthetics: Wabi-Sabi

During a Japanese tea ceremony, ceramics are admired for their asymmetrical shapes, gouges and dents, as well as for the tactile quality of the surface (from rough to smooth to glass-like). Each piece is examined and appreciated for its “rustic simplicity,” its flaws and uniqueness, its quiet and hidden beauty and its simple elegance. Pieces like this one exemplify the Japanese and Buddhist view of *wabi-sabi* which centers on the acceptance of the world as transient and imperfect and that wisdom is found in natural simplicity.

Docent Forum Summary

The Docent Forum on Thursday, November 5, 2015 was well-attended. It was a lively discussion and everyone had a chance to voice their thoughts during the two hours.

Study Groups - Boyd Ratchye

Each study group is self-sustaining and has had at least two meetings. They were initially established on a trial basis with fifteen members. The sign-up process and number of members in each group is being reviewed. If you wish to join one of these groups, contact the leader.

Artful Thinking - Gail Gresser-Pitsch

Members have different objectives. Some want a closed process: learn the skills of Artful Thinking and incorporate them on tours. Others want to create an ongoing network of docents using Artful Thinking strategies.

Birthday Year Tours - Dick Ploetz

Originally, the focus was on expanding beyond the Birthday Year tours to find other objects reflecting Mia’s history. Interest has expanded to discover a broader sense of Mia’s evolution. How have the gifts of our donors affected our development to become Mia? The final product will be posted on the ipe website. It was noted that Lynn Teschendorf has written much about Mia donors; her work is available on ipevolunteers.org by searching for “MN Collects.”

Pronunciation - Lynn Dunlap

Their focus has been on defining their scope and process. With multiple languages – French, Anishinaabe, Italian, Chinese, to name just a few – which languages should be chosen? With many native and fluent second-language speakers among docents, should there be a class on a specific language? How do we share pronunciation? Listen electronically or written phonetically? Should 8-10 objects be selected?

Secular in Art - Emily Shapiro

Their focus has been on creating a tour that complements the popularity of the Spiritual in Art tours. This is not expected to be an ongoing study group.

Possible study group: Accessibility/Logistics

Fran Megarry is interested in an accessibility study group that would review best practices for touring people with disabilities. The recent White Glove/ Verbal Description tour for visitors with vision problems was well-received.

Possible study group for new tours

Stroller tour

Cancer Survivor tour

Other tour group ideas? Contact Boyd Ratchye.

IPE Website

Debbi and Juline Chevalier (Head of IPE - Interpretation and Participatory Experiences) previewed the use of the new ipevolunteers.org website. See the “Up and Running: ipevolunteers.org” article in this *Muse* for more details. Lynn Brofman stated that there are excellent informational articles in the *Muse* and it would be helpful to have tags for previous *Muse* Newsletters (now on the website) so they can be located for research. Rose Stanley-Gilbert will form a group for this project.

Modes of Communications - Debbi Hegstrom

The Docent Muse

The *Muse* is one form of communication. The *Muse Addendum* generally was helpful. The longer version about the Delacroix exhibition was appreciated by the docents touring the show, while the shorter article fit the needs of those not touring.

Volume of Emails from Multiple Staff Members

Staff members work together and divide up the tasks of email communication. Expect to receive emails from different staff:

Ann Isaacson - Art Adventure/CIF guides – emails of interest to all guides doing tours.

Debbi Hegstrom - Docents. Her priority emails have “Please Read” in the subject line.

Brooke DeWaard sends out the calendar of the week and other announcements.

Juline Chevalier generally sends emails through Michael Bennes.

Michael Bennes is the new Volunteer Coordinator for all types of volunteers. His emails have important information.

Anna Bethune has graciously taken on the task of funneling all the supplemental docent research on Delacroix into just two emails per week.

The Bi-Weekly tour list on the IPE website has problems – this will be corrected.

Log-in problems go to *Ann Isaacson*.

In time, the goal is to have the IPE Video area carry links to CE, Public, and Affinity lectures.

Tour Feedback from our Visitors – Juline Chevalier

Feedback on tours is a priority topic in museums throughout the country. Juline is currently focused on reaching out to K-12 tour groups. A card would be given to each teacher and chaperone and it could be filled out at Mia or dropped off in the mail. The card would identify the tour, day, time and several questions about the tour experience. It could include a rating scale, or have general questions with an opportunity to write an opinion.

Docents provided suggestions and comments:

Was the tour engaging? Did students learn something? Did they talk to each other?

How could the tour be done differently?

Which object was best? Which one should have been dropped? Why?

What were your expectations/objectives? Were they met? What worked?

How could Mia enhance the visitor experience?

If you tour again, what would you like to happen?

What did you see that you didn't expect?

Not all chaperones have knowledge of school curricula, goals, or art museums.

Teachers and students can differ on what they *think they are studying!*

Delacroix Exhibition

Frustration was expressed about not receiving the catalog and tour-related information earlier to give adequate time for preparation. There were some problems with the audio guide link. Getting materials to docents in a timely manner is, and will continue to

be, a priority of staff. Debbi considered the possibility of using draft forms of some materials, but docents would have to expect that all drafts would be subject to change. Special exhibition tours are not now scheduled during the first week to give more time for docents to prepare.

After all had a chance to express their thoughts, the Docent Forum ended as scheduled at 1:30.

Afterthoughts

Jane Mackenzie

When we started meeting school groups in the Target Wing a few years ago, some things changed immediately like routing – which I still have to consciously rethink almost every tour. Hard to break old habits.

Other changes were more subtle and there was one I didn't really grasp until this week when we were talking about receiving teacher and chaperone feedback at the Docent Forum. When we used to start and finish in the Main Lobby, it was easy to go into the Docent Lounge shortly after the tour, unwind and do a Shine and Whine session with the other docents on the tour.

But now, when I bring my group back down to the Target Lobby, I look around for some sympathetic docent faces and there aren't any – everyone has wandered off. Poor me – I go home with all my whines stuffed inside!

That's why at the Forum I suggested that we remind people to try to make a date to debrief after a tour. It doesn't have to be in the Lounge – maybe one of the tables in the Lobby would be better, but it is so helpful to get other perspectives and to hear what went right and what was not so good.

Besides, docents are a lot of fun to talk to and nobody wants to drive all the way home full of unheard whines.

MIA to Mia: "Thoughts While Flossing"

Tom Byfield

Thinking back to when I was a docent and letting my mind sew a seam across the hem of my life, I have to be critical and admit I was ordinariness personified, while giving unmemorable tours at the MIA. So, when it comes to influencing public opinion or gaining a respectful audience, I have a record unblemished by success. Thus it may be cheeky effrontery to offer a few suggestions to Mia that will prove a firm grip on reality is not critical to affect changes in

established practices there. Here are a couple of motions I doubt anyone will second.

At one time the initials MIA stood for something of substance, an edifice of classic beauty housing a magnificent collection of art. Those initials bold, upright, echo the museums iconic ionic columns at the lion-guarded front entrance. Now we are to call it Mia, a word one would expect to see in referring to your Italian girlfriend, "Mia Carlotta." Is naming it "Mia" a cutesy effort to humanize and make it more cuddly or does it diminish the grandeur of the MIA like calling Mount Everest a pet rock?

The anonymous, unidentified "They," have taken away the guards natty sports coats and replaced them with sweaters that make them look like tourists from Fridley. No longer do they have inside pockets for storage or the look of authority the jackets gave them. We knew who the guards were and respected their obvious specialized position. The guards themselves prefer the jackets over sweaters but apparently weren't consulted. In the continuing effort to dress the staff in a warm friendly manner, what's next? Flip-flops, shorts and a tank-top?

In reading this over, I realize I sound like a crotchety old curmudgeon. Well, I am. I was inducted into the halls of cantankerousness long before Newton said "ouch" under the apple tree. I would, however, like to believe I'm seen as a beloved old relic with a benign manner and benevolent demeanor that gives thoughtful suggestions in an effort to improve the common good. Fat chance! I'm still that old grump that sits on the sidelines in catatonic rectitude saying, "Whatever it is, I'm agin' it."

Remembering Gep Durenberger

Morry Rothstein

Gep Durenberger, Docent Class of 2005, died on October 1, 2015. But he lives on in memory. This is



not a eulogy. It is a recollection and tribute to Gep, the man. Gep was my friend – as he was to so many others in and out of the museum community. Gep was a nationally-known and respected expert in Decorative Arts. He was a notable designer, lecturer, and antiquarian. He was a famous, brilliant and accomplished man. He knew

many famous and important people. But, that was not the Gep I knew, and grew to love.

The Gep I knew and admired was a dapper, charming, kind, thoughtful, and witty person. A gentleman (gentle man), in every sense of the word. He was modest, self-effacing and self-deprecating. He was also an imp, and young at heart.

I met Gep the first day of our docent training. We were, of course, wearing our name tags – with red dots on them, I might add – and, when I saw that his name was Durenberger, I said to him: “*Not one of those Durenbergers, I hope.*” Gep responded, “Of course, I am! Dave is my cousin.” Gep and I laughed, and instantly became friends. We remained friends for the rest of his life. So there we were, me, “a nice Jewish boy,” (actually, not always so nice), and a liberal Democrat. Gep was a nice (truly, nice) devout Catholic, and conservative Republican. We were very different. However, that *never* stood in the way of our friendship. Our differences enhanced our understanding and respect for each other.

We sat next to each other in docent training, and to Debbi Hegstrom’s chagrin, Gep and I continuously whispered and passed notes to each other. Like fourth-graders. (Which we were, and continued to be, at heart.) We laughed, and had fun. Gep loved to have fun. Gep and I cemented our relationship, which continued to flourish and grow over time.

When I didn’t see Gep at the museum, or at one of those indescribable soirees at his fabulous and historic, antique-filled house in Henderson, Minnesota, we would sometimes converse by phone. Gep only had a landline. No cell phone for him. In addition we communicated in writing. I emailed him – via his wonderful, longtime companion, Jeff Ducharme’s email. Gep did not use a computer. He wrote me notes, via snail mail – all in his inimitable left-handed scrawl.

I earlier referred to the fact that Gep was a gentleman. He fulfilled the dictionary definition of that word: civilized, educated, well-mannered, and considerate. When I think of Gep, I think of the Yiddish word for human being/man: *Mensch*. Gep was a *mensch*, in the true sense of the word. As strictly defined: “An upright, honorable, decent person. Someone of consequence. Someone to admire. A true *human being*.” Gep Durenberger was all of those things. However, it is difficult to convey the special sense of respect, dignity, and approbation that can be

conveyed by calling someone *a real mensch!* To be a *mensch* has nothing to do with success or status. The key to being *a real mensch* is nothing less than to possess character, rectitude, dignity, a sense of what is right – being a responsible, kind, and loving human being. Gep Durenberger was *a real mensch!* He will be missed, and fondly remembered.

A Remembrance of Bruce Dayton

(An informative article on Bruce Dayton's public life and generosity can be found on the Mia [website](#). The following is a personal story about him.)

Julie Kollitz

In 1991 I taught an Art Adventure class at my local school to 7th and 8th graders. They really loved the *Elkhide*, even asking questions after the 45-minute class was over. A few days later, I was walking in the hall and noticed a locker door was open. Inside was taped a postcard of the *Elkhide*. Most of the other lockers had posters of rock stars in them. I took a photo of it and sent it to Bruce Dayton (who donated the *Elkhide* to Mia). Shortly after, I received this letter on tastefully-engraved stationery:

Dear Ms. Kollitz,

How very thoughtful you are to write me concerning your students’ interest in the Elkhide. It is most gratifying to receive such a kind letter and to learn of the impact the museum and its works of art have on visitors.

The docents do a marvelous job, and it is you (docents) who deserve our thanks. All of us need help in understanding and appreciating the items in the Institute. Docents help make the visits of many more meaningful.

Sincerely,
Bruce Dayton

Winter Exhibition Announced

State of the Art: Discovering American Art Now

Feb 18 - May 29

Much more information will be arriving soon, but if you would like to sneak a peak at the upcoming show, go to the [website](#) at the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville, Arkansas. There are videos to view and a mobile app you can download to learn more about the show.

September Docent Luncheon and Class Anniversaries

The Docent Luncheon was held in the Villa Rosa Room. Seventy-three people attended the Asian-themed event celebrating the opening of the Mary Griggs Burke Collection. DEC Chair Jane Mackenzie gave a humorous update on her visit to the National Docent Symposium. Thank you to Sue Hamburge for arranging this event. The classes of 1985, 1995 and 2005 were honored.



Joanne Platt and Debbie Baumer display their selections for the pop-up table centerpieces.



Class of 1985



Diane Redfern Ross and Pam McDavitt

Not present
Theresa Carufel,
Barb Pinto,
Betty Wright

Your Comments are Welcome

Whether you have a suggestion, a complaint, or praise, your Docent Executive Committee is available to listen. Let us know your thoughts.

Jane Mackenzie, Chair
Boyd Ratchye, Chair-Elect
Emily Shapiro, Treasurer
Vicki Sperry, Secretary
Sue Hamburge, Social Chair
Susan Tasa, Communications
Rose Stanley-Gilbert, Newsletter Editor

Class of 1995



Mary Gilbert, Pam Friedland, Peggy Dietzen,
Georgia Engebretson, Rose Stanley-Gilbert,
Jane Piccard

Not present: Shari Boehnen, Beverly Fiman, Ron Hovda, Sharon Johnson, Lyn Osgood, Jane Tygesson, Maurine Venters

Class of 2005



back row: Jane Mackenzie, Colleen Watson, Ginny Wheeler,
Mary Bowman, Cheryl Barnes, Carreen Heegaard,
Vicki Sperry, David Fortney, Joanne Platt, Merritt Nequette,
Morry Rothstein, Marilyn Smith

front row: Jean Marie Burtness, William Bomash, Lisa Berg,
Grace Goggin, Mary Grau, Antra Pakalns, Sally Rice

Not present: Annie Arkell, Sharon Bestrom, Mary Costello,
Wendy DePaolis, Jacque Foust, Linda Jeffrey, Karen Nerison,
Anastasia Pydych, Marcia Rinek, Kathleen Rothenberger,
Emily Shapiro, Florence Walklet, Mary Westra,
Michelle Yates, Joy Yoshikawa