

September 2024

Treasure House News



President's Message By Annette Drey

Welcome Back

I hope you all enjoyed your summer, relaxing, getting caught up on projects, visiting friends and relatives and/or traveling. I am sure you will have great stories to tell at our first Docent Council meeting. Just a reminder, we meet the second Tuesday of every month at 10:00AM.

A big welcome to Lonnie Goodwin who will be replacing Janelle as an assistant to Valentina. A lot of you have questions about the new arrangement of the museum, and wonder what and why this is happening. Be sure to read the article in this THN that explains what PST ART is and why USC PAM is involved. There also is an article on Cai Guo Qiang, our museum's featured artist and the current hot contemporary artist of China.

You all signed up for your preferred committees when you filled out your membership form. Your Committee Chair will be contacting you with your scheduled meetings. PLEASE, be responsible and attend, or at least notify your Committee Chair. Much of the work of the docents happens in these committees.

Also, be sure to check the [Docent Calendar](#) regularly for scheduled events and the [docent touring calendar](#) for your touring assignments. Contact Lonnie if you need to make additions to the calendar.

IMPORTANT DATES

Tuesday, September 17

Cai Guo-Qiang [蔡國強]
exhibition opening in all the
downstairs galleries.

Featured item of the month

Yi Kong Shi Bi

(Precipice Leaning Against the Sky)

Artist: Shen Yong Ping and
Ge Chan Hung
Origin: Nanjing, China
Date: 1982
Medium: Marble
Gift of Mr. Richard Kelton
1983.48.1



Gongshi (Chinese: 供石), also known as scholar's rocks or viewing stones, are naturally shaped rocks which are traditionally appreciated by Chinese scholars for their intrinsic beauty and likeness to a scene from nature. These stones represented a microcosm of the whole universe on which the scholar could meditate and admire the beauty of nature within the confines of a studio or garden. These objects were appreciated for their ability to capture nature's essence, especially qi 氣, the universal energy of things.

Scholar's rocks first emerged during the Tang Dynasty (618-906) and were common in the studios of rulers and intellectuals throughout Chinese history. With the increasing influence of Daoism, the aristocrats and educated elites of the era began to have a greater appreciation of the natural world and landscape art in all forms. The "Golden Age" of Scholars' Rocks was the Tang (690 - 908) and Song (960 – 1279) dynasty.

These stones are usually displayed on a custom carved stand, often a precious wood, and displayed on desks, tables or bookshelves. These landscape sculptures are as appreciated as paintings. Given the size of this viewing stone, it is placed on a marble stand for outdoor viewing in in the museum's courtyard.

This piece received the highest award at an exhibition held in Nanjing Province in 1982.

Touring Tips

Fran. De La Rosa

While visiting the Norton Simon Museum earlier this year, the Docents introduced an activity to us which has proven to be a star activity for several of our PAM Docents. Briefly, in a room full of various statuary we were given a clipboard, paper, and pencil, and then asked to choose an artifact of interest and stand in front of it. It was precisely explained that we were to begin a sketch of the statue with a time limit of one minute, after which we were to put the clipboard down in front of the artifact and move to the next clipboard in order and continue the sketching. This continued until everyone had added to all the sketches. At the end of the activity we shared our sketches and our opinions of the activity.

On the My Masterpieces (Silk Road) tours in the South and Southeast Asia Gallery. I found it to be an extremely valuable activity for 6th grade students. In keeping with the Learning Objectives of the Exploring the Silk Road theme, I chose some of the various Buddha artifacts in the gallery. Rather than have students choose the object, clipboards were placed on the floor beneath the object, and they were asked to choose a space. In one minute intervals they sketched and rotated through the objects. As a wrap up and connection to my goal of demonstrating how ideas, philosophy and art traveled along the Silk Road, I asked the students to compare the differences and note how the different countries (from India to Vietnam) depicted their interpretations of the Buddha. Another way this activity was used was to engage 3rd grade students, with the Theme of Nature in Asian and Pacific Art, in the Courtyard. Connecting to the idea of how different materials are used to create art, students were guided through the same procedure. After sketching and closely looking at the objects, the discussion focused on the various materials (stone, bronze, concrete, etc.) and their relationship to nature.

The materials for this activity are contained in a basket in the Docent Office.

Museum Highlights

CAI GUO-QIANG, USC PAM FEATURED ARTIST September - May



Cai Guo-Qiang (b. 1957, Quanzhou, China) was trained in stage design at the Shanghai Theatre Academy in the early 1980s. From December 1986 to September 1995, he sojourned in Japan. Cai has resided and worked in New York since 1995.

Cai has excelled in a broad range of creative mediums, from painting, installation, video art, and performance art, to new technologies such as virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), NFTs, blockchain, and artificial intelligence (AI). Grounded in the conceptual foundations of Eastern philosophy and contemporary social issues, his often-site-specific artworks interpret and respond to the local culture and history, establishing a dialogue between viewers and the larger universe around them. His famed gunpowder paintings, explosion events, and installations are imbued with a force that transcends the two-dimensional plane to oscillate freely between society and nature.

Over three decades, Cai has had numerous solo exhibitions in major art museums around the world, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York in 2006, and a retrospective at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York in 2008, the latter of which broke the museum's then-attendance record of a visual art exhibition.

In 2015, Cai realized the explosion event *Sky Ladder* in his hometown of Quanzhou. [The eponymous documentary film](#), directed by Academy Award winner Kevin MacDonal, was released globally on Netflix. In recent years, Cai embarked on his Individual's Journey Through Western Art History—a series of exhibitions held in world-renowned museums, including the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow (2017); Museo del Prado, Madrid (2017); Uffizi Galleries, Florence (2018); National Archaeological Museum of Naples and Pompeii Archaeological Park (2019). In December 2020, on the occasion of the 600th anniversary of the Forbidden City, Cai presented *Odyssey and Homecoming*, becoming the first contemporary artist to have a solo exhibition at the Palace Museum in Beijing. The following year, *Odyssey and Homecoming* travelled to the new Jean Nouvel–designed Museum of Art Pudong in Shanghai, as one of the opening exhibitions.



For several decades, artist Cai Guo-Qiang has used gunpowder and pyrotechnics to create drawings, paintings, and explosion events. The exhibition *Cai Guo-Qiang: A Material Odyssey* will fill the first floor galleries at the USC Pacific Asia Museum. Based on years of research by the Getty Conservation Institute and the Getty Research Institute, *A Material Odyssey* will explore the nature and properties of gunpowder and chronicle its use by the artist. This explosive material, invented in China over 1,100 years ago, has come to define Cai's work. Its unpredictable nature dictates his artistic process and determines the outcome. Through gunpowder, the artist invites uncontrollable forces to participate in the creation of his work. With an abundance of artworks and scientific displays, the exhibition will narrate the lifelong love story of Cai Guo-Qiang with gunpowder.

PST ART??? WHAT'S THAT? NEVER HEARD OF IT?



I'm sure you have heard about the "big changes" to the exhibition spaces in the museum starting this Fall –that the museum will be devoted to the work of one Chinese artist, Cai Guo-Qiang (see newsletter article "...And who is Cai Guo-Qiang"). How did this all come about?

Why is USC PAM participating in PST ART?

PST stands for Pacific Standard Time, and in this context, it refers to a series of art initiatives sponsored by the Getty Museum involving exhibitions across the southland. To date, the Getty has sponsored research and exhibitions toward four PST iterations.

The first PST launched in Fall 2011, Pacific Standard Time: Art in L.A., 1945–1980, was a scholarly initiative funded by the J. Paul Getty Trust to historicize the contributions to contemporary art history of artists, curators, critics, and others based in Los Angeles. Planned for nearly a decade, PST, as it was called, granted nearly 60 organizations throughout Southern California a total of \$10 million to produce exhibitions (on view between September 2011 and April 2012) that explored the years between 1945 and 1980.

The second, Pacific Standard Time Presents: Modern Architecture in L.A., took place from April–September 2013. The focus of this iteration of PST was modern architecture in Southern California, focusing on a celebration of the legacy and impact of the movement.

The third, Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA, was a citywide exhibition, which ran from September 2017–January 2018, focusing on Latin American and Latino art in Los Angeles. With thematically linked exhibitions throughout the city, PST: LA/LA sought to place Latin American and Latinx art in dialog with the city, and to raise provocative and intricate issues about current relations in the Americas and the expansive and ever changing social and cultural fabric of Southern California.

This Southern California landmark arts event, the fourth Pacific Standard Time (now PST ART) returns in September 2024. PST ART is the largest art event in the United States, supported by nearly \$20 million in grants from Getty. Starting in September 2024 and continuing for five months, PST ART: Art & Science Collide will comprise more than 60 deeply researched exhibitions developed by arts organizations and scientific institutions throughout Southern California, featuring over 800 artists in mind-expanding explorations of topics ranging from ancient cosmology to Indigenous sci-fi, and from artificial intelligence to environmental justice. The new public programs organized by partner organizations, community-based groups, and Getty itself will make Art & Science Collide not only the largest art project in the United States but also an innovative model for public programming at an unprecedented scale. USC PAM is one of the art institutions participating in this epic event.

[Click here](#) for a listing of some of the exhibitions across SoCal.

Things outside the museum

**Friday, September 6, 2024
4:00 pm - 7:00 pm**

Free Fridays at Norton Simon

Sunday, September 15

This event is taking place at the Coliseum.

PST ART Opening Event:
Cai Guo-Qiang's "WE ARE"

Stories and Voices from Los Angeles Chinatown

An ongoing collaboration between The Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens; the Library Foundation of Los Angeles; and the Los Angeles Public Library. You can peruse the historic photographs, documents, and maps drawn from the Huntington's and LAPL's vast collections through online exhibitions and interviews with community members, whose personal reflections and connections bring the archives to life.

Author Interview: Kevin Kwan

author of *The Crazy Rich Asians* series, has new book, *Lies and Weddings*, which has some references to the Huntington. You can watch the interview from June here:

(CHINESE) MID-AUTUMN FESTIVAL [中秋節]



The Mid-autumn Festival (or Zhong Qiu Jie in Mandarin), also known as the Mooncake Festival, falls on the 15th day of the eighth lunar month. It is called the Mid-autumn Festival because on that day people celebrate by coalescing with family and/or friends, eating mooncakes (which can be purchased at Chinese bakeries or markets) while watching the full moon.

Holidays like the Chinese mid-autumn festival are not exclusive to the Chinese. Because the festival coincides with the end of the autumn harvest, we in America celebrate Thanksgiving, which was inaugurated because of our gratitude as well. Other nationalities have similar celebrations during the fall season. Examples include Chuseok in South Korea and Homowo in Ghana.

The uniqueness of Zhong Qiu Jie revolves around the many legends associated with that holiday. Among the Chinese the most popular of all the tales connected with the Mid-autumn Festival is that of Chang-E (嫦娥), also known as the Moon Lady, and her husband Hou Yi [后羿]. This myth is said to have originated from storytellers in the Tang dynasty (618–907 CE), and even as far back as the time of Emperor Yao (2346 BCE). One of the many versions of that myth is as follows.

Hou Yi – an archer and member of the Imperial – was said to have saved the earth from scorching when he shot down nine of the 10 suns circling the planet. As a reward, he was chosen by the people to be their king but he later became tyrannical. In his possession was the elixir of life, but Chang-E, his wife, stole the elixir and drank it.17 Chang-E then ascended to the moon and became the Moon Goddess. Hou Yi, on the other hand, was given a cake by the Queen Mother of the Western Paradise (Xi Wang Mu). Upon eating the cake, he was able to withstand heat and was sent to the sun. With a special talisman he was able to visit Chang-E on the 15th of every month, during the full moon.

Bibliography:

1. Tan, Bonnie: National Library Board of Singapore
2. yahoo.com



Library Corner

Here is a simplified set of directions for checking out books online in TinyCat:

1. **Search for the Book:**
 - Enter the book's title or author in the search bar.
 - Press the Enter key or click the magnifying glass icon to start the search.
2. **Check Out the Book:**
 - If the book's status is "AVAILABLE," click the green "Check Out" button.
 - Enter the password "asia" in the "Hey! What's the password?" field.
 - Select your name from the "Who is checking it out?" list.
 - Click "OK" in the checkout box.
 - Confirm your checkout by clicking "OK" when prompted.
3. **Book Status and Confirmation:**
 - The book's status will change to "checked out" in red, with a due date two weeks from today.
 - You will receive an email confirmation about the checked-out book.
4. **Finding and Returning the Book:**
 - Locate the book in the Docent Office, organized by the Dewey Decimal system.
 - When returning the book, place it in the large black box in the Docent Office.
 - A Library Committee member will re-shelve the book and update its status in TinyCat.

[Link to Digital Library](#)

Study Group Activity

The subject of **Study Group 1's** August meeting was the novel by Kazuo Ishiguro entitled "An Artist of the Floating World." The beauty of the Nobel Prize winning author's descriptions allowed members to appreciate post-war (WWII) Japan's many changes in attitudes between the differing generations, the role of art in politics, and family role relations, Japan's arranged marriage customs, and American influences. The book was well-received by the majority of the members.

Study Group 2 has been reading and reporting on the biographies of various collectors highlighted in the book, *The China Collectors: America's Century-Long Hunt for Asian Art Treasures* by Karl E. Meyer and Shareen Blair Brysac. We have focused on J. Pierpont Morgan, Arthur Sackler, Avery Brundage, Langdon Warner, C.T. Loo among others over the past several weeks. We also had a presentation on graphic artist Ikko Tanaka before the Paris Olympics; we revisited the 2015 Ikko Tanaka exhibit held at PAM and some of our holdings in the online archive.

We had a synopsis by an attendee of the China Society presentation and author talk on Anna May Wong: *Not Your China Doll* by Katie Gee Salisbury. A review and strong recommendation for the new book from Tan Twan Eng (*Garden of Evening Mists*), *The House of Doors*.



Docents On the Go

HWAJODO Exhibition at the Descanso Gardens

July 30, 2024

The docents visited the exhibition “HWAJODO: Flowers and Birds in Korean American Art” curated by Meher McArthur at the Descanso Gardens. Meher kindly provided us the curator guided tour.

The exhibition combines traditional representations of flowers and birds with contemporary artists’ abstract and stylized interpretations, reflecting a bridge between the past and present, tradition and innovation.



Get Together at Annette’s house

August 10, 2024

It was a lovely Saturday afternoon that run into the evening. Our president Annette, graciously opened her home for our docents, as we were able to enjoy her well manicured backyard.

It was a lovely way to celebrate summer 2024 with other fellow docents, to share food and to enjoy each other’s company without the frenetic pace of life.

We look forward to more opportunities to get together and energized ourselves and programming!

HAIKU

Karen Margolis

Descanso Gardens,
Korean art on display,
Super summer tour!

August outdoor treat,
Pasadena potluck fun,
Docents reconnect.

September is here,
PST ART exhibit,
Explosive new tours.

Cai Guo Qiang,
Art and science intersect,
Gunpowder magic.