

October 2024

Treasure House News



President's Message By Annette Drey

Dear Docents,

Here we are in October already and what increasingly looks like the beginning of the holiday season. I am still waiting for fall. The leaves on my ginkgo tree are not yet a fall yellow (some are summer crispy brown). I spent most of the month in the state of Washington where fall has definitely begun along with the accompanying drizzle/rain, which is the mark of the Pacific NW.

Our *Cia Guo Qiang: A Material Odyssey* exhibition is off to a successful start. USC PAM hosted a Zoom artist's talk with Cai followed by the opening of the exhibition. Many of you have had the chance to visit the galleries. At our October Council Meeting on Oct. 8 we will hear from **Rachel Rivenc**, the Getty curator of the exhibition. Lonnie and Valentina have put together a lot of touring ideas for you on Google Drive. Here is the folder:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Cr6kExG2IHkYit6L7Zlm06xfYum2z15?usp=sharing>

Lonnie has also made the docent tour calendar available for October sign ups; so, let's make her proud of us by filling up the calendar as soon as possible. A final note: The USC PAM website has been redesigned and now includes much more information. Check it out.

Annette

IMPORTANT DATES

September 7th - December 7th

Exhibition at Cal State San Bernardino
Korean Craft: Yesterday and Today.

[Link here](#)

October 20, 2024 - March 2, 2025

LACMA - Mapping the Cosmologies
Across Cultures

[Link here](#)

November 2, 2024 at 11:30 a.m.

Tour of Cai Exhibition - Reservations
Required

[Link here](#)

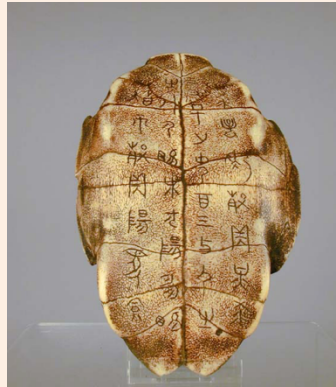
November 10, 2024
Movie Screening at Chinese Mann
theater. More to come.

December 10, 2024
USC PAM Docent Holiday Party

Featured item of the month

ORACLE BONES

Place Made: China
Date: 1300 BCE
Medium: tortoise bone
Dimensions: 7.5" H x 5" W x 1" D
Accession Number: 2000.41.3
Category: CEREMONIAL OBJECTS



Some of the most fascinating objects in USC PAM's permanent collection are the four Shang dynasty oracle bones, dating to approximately 1200-1050 BCE. The collection includes 3 tortoise bones (one shown here) and an ox scapula. These are now on display in the Snukal Family Ceramics Gallery.

If you look closely, you will notice cracks and incised characters. These characters are the earliest form of Chinese writing. Some classical Chinese characters can be traced directly to those found on oracle bones. These inscriptions give insight into the pressing concerns of the Shang elite: natural phenomena, life events, crop health, battles, and more.

Oracle bones were used to seek knowledge of the future or the unknown by supernatural means. To start, the Shang king or his diviner would pose a question. A heated rod was poked onto the surface of the bone which then cracked as a result. Next, the cracks were read or interpreted by the king or his diviner and information etched into the opposite side of the bone. From the around 200,000 existing oracle bones, researchers have learned the names and royal succession of Shang kings and even the exact date of a solar eclipse. Researchers now know that Shang kings wanted to understand natural phenomena and its causes as a means of solidifying control of the kingdom. The Shang believed that all events that transpired, both good and bad, were the will of their ancestors.

These oracle bones provide us with a window into the past, and yet even today we look for answers to many of the same questions.

Ancient inscriptions,
Shang era oracle bones,
Prognosticating.

Docent Spotlight



Eiko Kubota is Japanese, but was born in Laos. She grew up in Laos, Japan, Hong Kong and Singapore and has worked in Japan, Indonesia and the United States. She loves to embrace different cultures and foods.

Eiko has been a docent at USC PAM since 2016. She particularly remembers a tour she gave for the exhibition "Winds from Fusang: Mexico and China in the Twentieth Century", where she had an opportunity to teach "Surrealism" to 4th graders. When they understood what it was, they got so excited and told her that they wanted to see more of this type of art. She still remembers their facial expressions and felt that she made a small change to their interest in art. Being a docent is a very important part of her life, because she enjoys giving tours and learning from the students and adults.

Asian Highlights

Jidai Matsuri - Kyoto, Japan

Jidai Matsuri, the "Festival of the Ages" is held annually on October 22nd at Kyoto's Heian (Jingu) Shrine, and in addition to the Aoi Matsuri and the Gion Matsuri, is considered to be one of the three most important festivals in Kyoto. Initiated in 1895, the Jidai Matsuri serves to commemorate the ancient capital's history and traditional arts, as well as to honor Emperors Kanmu and Komei, credited with unifying the country and consolidating imperial power.

Participants are dressed in historical garb dating back to 780, the Enryaku period, through the 19th century Meiji period. The parade begins at the Imperial Palace (Gosho) and ends at Kyoto's Heian (Jingu) Shrine, built in 1895 to commemorate the 1,100th anniversary of the founding of Kyoto, and to promote a city-wide revival amidst a period of concern after the capital was moved to Tokyo (Edo) in 1868. Many historical figures, princesses, warriors, priests, politicians, merchants and commoners are represented. The parade is a comprehensive look into the clothing and appearance of Japan's past.

[Read more here](#)



Touring Tips

Fran De La Rosa

The best tours always start with the best beginnings. As excited as you are to begin the tour, the visitors are even moreso. The first few minutes with any group is as important as any other part of the tour. The connection you make with the visitors in front of you will assure a successful experience for everyone.



Introduction. Take the first five minutes of a tour acquainting yourself with your visitors and letting them know who you are. This is especially true when touring with children. Whether young or old, the child visitor needs to know that you are happy they are there. Introduce yourself, share a sentence or two about yourself, if they are wearing nametags review their names with them (ensure that you are pronouncing their name correctly), and generally put them at ease. This initial connection is key to a successful tour experience for you and the students.

Discuss purpose and expectations. Present expectations in a positive way; use “do”, not “don’t” statements. Instead of saying “don’t run”, say “walk”; rather than “don’t touch”, say “keep hands to yourself”. Discuss the reasons behind the behavior. Let the students know that you are going on an adventure with them and that they are welcome to share their ideas and opinions. Assure them that there are no right or wrong questions or answers. Let them know that by the end of the tour, they will be happy they came.

Assess prior knowledge. Depending on the theme of the tour (Nature, Animals, or Silk Road) try to discover what they already know about the subject and what they hope to learn. Try to meet their expectations while keeping your goals in mind. Also, let them know what they can expect to see, learn, and discover while you are together.

Chaperones. Make the chaperones feel welcome as well. If there is a specific task for them (watch end of line, pass out materials, etc.), inform them at the outset of the tour. Having them on board with you will make your tour easier.

Remembering to treat your museum visitors as you would a guest in your home will go a long way to achieving a successful tour. Be kind. Be involved. Show you care.

Study Group Activity

Study Group 1:

For the month of September our study group focused on Central Asia, especially the countries that were once a part of the Soviet Union (the “stans” - which means “land of”): Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan.

We also included Afghanistan and Pakistan. Each member was responsible for one of the countries listed above.

Study Group 2

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; in addition, 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*.



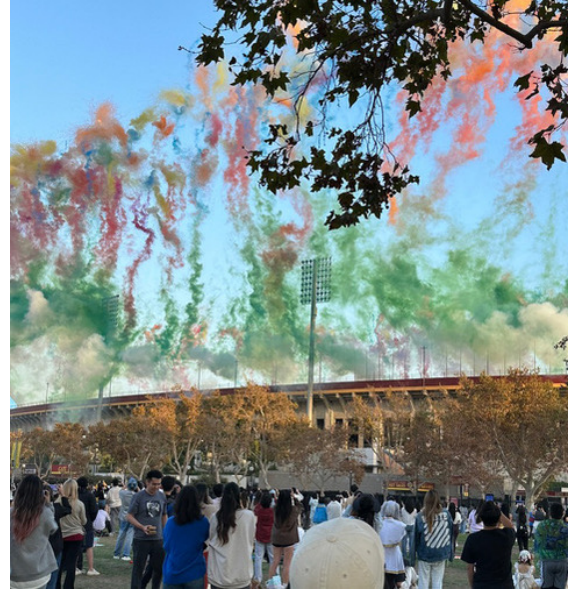
Docents On the Go

Cai Guo-Qiang fireworks "WE ARE"

September 15, 2024

Kathy Wales, her friend and Eiko Kubota went to see Cai Guo-Qiang's fireworks "WE ARE" at Los Angeles Coliseum outside lawn on September 15.

It was great late afternoon to see the fireworks. They were very beautiful and noisy...



Cai Guo-Qiang: A Material Odyssey Opening Ceremony

September 16, 2024

Many fellow docents attended the opening ceremony of Cai Guo-Qiang's "A Material Odyssey" opening ceremony. The interview was done in Chinese with simultaneous translation. We were able to catch Cai's humorous personality from the interview.

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

