

FALL
2012
MUSE
NEWSLETTER

SONOMA COUNTY **MUSEUM**



Building an Art and History Museum for the North Bay Area

Cover image:
Richard Shaw
Domino House on a briefcase
1998, mixed media
partial donation by the artist and Ruth Braunstein

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SONOMA COUNTY MUSEUM

The Sonoma County Museum is a collecting museum for art and history with a focus on the rich cultural landscape of the North Bay Area. It serves as a gathering place that engages the entire community through diverse changing exhibitions, education and public programs, receptions, and a sculpture garden.

Dear Friends,

As the year winds down, it's a good time to reflect on the successes Sonoma County Museum and also a good time to put these into perspective and to think about the long-term sustainability of the Museum.

During a tough period of economic recovery, the Sonoma County Museum made great strides in expanding our audiences and serving our community. The Museum's art exhibitions were diverse, ranging from the Tsar's Cabinet, an amazing historical Russian porcelain collection that brought audiences from throughout the west to Sonoma County, to a satirical look at death and taxes by contemporary artist Enrique Chagoya that encouraged serious questioning of the social and economic status quo. Our history programs included an investigation of Santa Rosa's Chinatown, a rich period in our city's history marred by anti-Chinese immigration policies.

This year the Sonoma County Museum was selected by the American Alliance of Museums and the State Department to represent the US in an outreach and exchange program in Korea. As a result, we were fortunate in September to take a group of students from Elsie Allen High School to Korea to participate in a program called "North-South: Art as a Tool to Mediate Social and Political Conflict." In January, we will host a Korean group and work together with artist Mario Uribe to create a collaborative sculpture project for a North-South gang-impacted community in Santa Rosa.

The Museum also made significant changes to our school visits program this past year. We established a new hands-on, classroom-based component to every visit where students participate in activities based on national content standards for art, social studies, and history. We are the only art and history museum in our region to offer this, and the only museum to offer this service free of charge. SCM continues even to pay the cost of student bus transportation to and from the Museum. So far this year, around 4,000 students in Sonoma County have benefitted from these programs.

In 2012 the Museum has done a tremendous job in quietly raising endowment funds to support our collections. But this success, coupled with the public success for our exhibitions and education programs, has created a problem. Because of the economy, and despite the Museum's remarkable accomplishments, grant and corporate funding remain at an all-time low for the Sonoma County Museum and we must rely on individual support to ensure we can keep our programs going strong. In order for us to continue offering great programs to benefit everyone in our community, we need your help. Fees for admission cover just a small portion of the Museum's operating costs. The Museum needs to build a strong donor base to ensure that our doors remain open.



Please consider making an annual fund contribution this year, and making a legacy gift through your estate planning. I've seen the tremendous thank you letters we receive from kids following their visits to the Museum and know that your support can directly change lives –and our community - for the better. We thank you very much for generosity.

Best Wishes for the holidays,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Diane Evans".

Diane Evans, Executive Director

Two New Museums: Expansion!

With progress on the new modern and contemporary art museum at the former AT&T building delayed, the Sonoma County Museum is moving ahead with the second phase of our long-term expansion plans.

Since the Museum first began building its art and history collections in the 1980s, storage space at the historic post office building has been inadequate. Having successfully documented all of the 20,000 objects in the collection, we have become keenly aware that in order to make these fascinating collections accessible to the public, we need to create a secure, temperature and humidity-controlled facility that can handle the wide variety of objects and allow both work space and a clean viewing area for researchers.

The Museum's 2010 Collections Initiative Challenge Grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities made it possible to start planning for the collections storage facility. With the expiration of the Conklin Bros. lease, the Museum decided the time was right to take over the building for Museum use, including a new storage and research facility for collections. Construction will begin next spring after Conklin Bros. moves out. The Conklin building was purchased by the Sonoma County Museum in 2001 with the intention that the 12,000 sq. ft. building would eventually be put to Museum use.

The Museum is seeking in-kind assistance for shelving and construction services. We will also need volunteer help in moving the Museum's Collections.

The Museum anticipates that construction on the new Museum on the Square art museum could also begin in early 2014. For more information and to support the Museum's expansion projects, please contact Diane Evans, Executive Director, at devans@sonomacountymuseum.org.



Ransome Gillette Holdredge, Untitled (Sonoma Landscape), ca. 1900, oil on canvas, gift of Robert Tuttle.

Building A Collections Endowment

NEH Challenge Grant Collections Initiative

The Sonoma County Museum received a \$300,000 Challenge Grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) in support of its Collections Initiative requiring the Museum to raise \$900,000 over five years. Only one other NEH Challenge Grant was given in California in December 2010.

In 2012, the Museum raised close to \$500,000 in donations and pledges for the Collections Initiative and received \$175,000 from the National Endowment for the Humanities. We are looking to complete the Challenge Grant by June 30, 2013 and need to raise an additional \$414,000. NEH will then give the Museum an additional \$125,000 for a total of \$300,000.

Endowment

Funds a \$1 million endowment in support of collections care and public accessibility.

Archival storage and research facility Funds \$200,000 in capital support for the renovation of the Conklin building.

We need your help to complete this campaign and ensure long-term protection for the Museum's collections. To make a donation or enquire as to how you can help, please contact Diane Evans at devans@sonomacountymuseum.org.



Honoring Henry and Holly Wendt for challenged the board to give or pledge \$500,000 towards the NEH Collections Initiative. In 2012 the couple gave \$150,000 as a result of the board's efforts to meet this challenge.



The National Endowment for the Humanities.
Because democracy demands wisdom.

Thank you to our Collections Initiative Donors

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Museum Collections: Our Vision

In 2012, the Museum's art and history committees approved new vision statements for the collection that reflect the nature and content of the objects we own. The vision statements will guide the Museum going forward with future acquisitions and exhibitions.

Art Collection

The Sonoma County Museum collects outstanding fine art and craft works by artists from the mid-nineteenth century to the present, focusing on work produced in and around the North Bay region. The Museum aims to forge and strengthen a collection that will serve as a definitive repository of important artists and artworks of the region, and that will emphasize the connections between regional character and nationally significant art movements and artists.



*Clockwise:
 Christo and Jeanne-Claude,
 The Running Fence
 1976, photograph
 Tom Golden Collection of the Sonoma
 County Museum;*

*Pat Lenz
 Nobody's Poodle
 2010, fibreglass*

*Richard Shaw
 Domino House on a briefcase
 1998, mixed media
 partial donation by the artist and
 Ruth Braunstein*

Building a History Museum for Sonoma County

The Museum's history committee members Eric Stanley, Steven Gelber, Gaye LeBaron, Daniel Markwyn, Jonah Raskin, Daniel Murley, Anthony Hoskins and Ed Von der Porten are working to develop the themes, stories, and exhibition plans for the future regional history museum. As part of this effort, the committee wrote a plan for the Museum's history collections to serve as a guideline for building and refining the collections.



The Sonoma County Museum's history collection showcases the history of the region north of the Golden Gate. Here, in the nineteenth century, three empires met, interacted and sometimes clashed in a unique landscape inhabited for millennia by Native Americans. That legacy of contact, conflict and adaptation continued through the twentieth and into the twenty-first centuries as the region attracted diverse peoples and trend-setting cultural movements.

The essence of the Sonoma County Story is the wide range of interactions among these diverse people, as well as the connection between the people and the land itself.

The Museum's collection reflects the full chronology of North Coast history and culture. The Museum will strive for a collection that represents the totality of Sonoma County history and culture, from early Native American settlements, through the time of the earliest Russian and Mexican arrivals, to the more recent American period of the region's history.



Russian Chest, nineteenth century
Fu Dogs, ceramic guardians of Santa Rosa's Chinese Temple, ca 1890
Pomo Baby Basket, Sonoma County, ca 1910

Fall 2012 Exhibitions



Thomas Cole: Peace at Sunset

November 17, 2012 – February 13, 2013

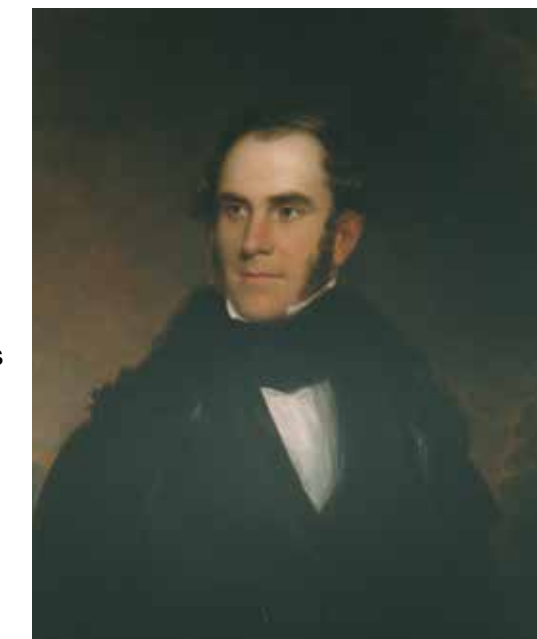
American painter Thomas Cole (1801-1848) is regarded as the founder of the Hudson River School. This signature painting *Peace at Sunset (Evening in the White Mountains)*, ca. 1827 is on loan to Sonoma County Museum from the Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco. Experience the wild and dramatic beauty of this Cole landscape!

Thomas Cole, American, (1801-1848),
Peace at Sunset (Evening in the White Mountains), ca. 1827 Oil on canvas
The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco,
museum purchase, M.H. de Young Art Trust Fund,
46.13

Wild Land: Thomas Cole and the Birth of American Landscape Painting

November 17, 2012 – February 13, 2013

Through a combination of large-scale banner graphics, immersive environments, media features, and other interactive elements, *Wild Land* takes audiences on a journey with Cole through the story of his creative process. The exhibition also examines how the meaning of nature has changed over time into a source for creative and intellectual inspiration. *Wild Land* is made possible by NEH on the Road, a special initiative of the National Endowment for the Humanities. The exhibition was organized by the Thomas Cole National Historic Site/Cedar Grove in Catskill, New York and was adapted and toured by Mid-America Arts Alliance through NEH on the Road.



Exciting Future Exhibitions



IMBY | In My Backyard The Sonoma County Museum as Subject

January 25 – February 24, 2013

An open-call group exhibition of photographers, taking the Sonoma County Museum and its historic 1910 post office building as subject.



Tools in Motion

March 9 – June 2, 2013

The exhibition features witty and light-hearted works based from emerging to world renowned artists, including notable figures such as Arman, Jim Dine, Claes Oldenburg and Jacob Lawrence. The works form part of a collection originally owned by the late hardware-industry pioneer John Hechinger Sr., whose father started the Hechinger hardware chain in 1911.



Margins to Mainstream: Contemporary Artists with Disabilities

May 4 - August 18

This exhibition features the work of seven outstanding contemporary artists working at Creative Growth Art Center in Oakland, California. The artists include Donald Mitchell, Dan Miller, Luis Aguilera, Terri Bowden, John Martin, Gail Lewis, and Carlos Perez who work in different media ranging from works on paper to fiber to ceramic and wood.

Tipping Points: How Wine Arrived

June 15 – September 15, 2013

Featuring the world-class collection of James McCormick, this exhibition explores the fascinating story of Sonoma County's wine industry.



Highlighting the Museum's New School Visits Program

New For Schools: Art for every child!

During this interactive 75-90 minute program, students explore various aspects of Sonoma County Museum's permanent collection and special exhibitions, and engage in discussions as well as activities involving writing, art, and social studies in response to works on view. Following a thematic gallery tour, students participate in a related experience that connects with national and state content standards.

Starting in 2013: Kids learn history!

A new series of docent-led programs where kids learn to become history curators, tell stories with objects, and learn about how objects were used.

Ensuring all Sonoma County youth have access to the Museum

The Museum is committed to ensuring every child in Sonoma County can visit the Museum and experience art and history first-hand. That's why we reimburse schools for the cost of transportation and make access free to all children, teachers, and parents for organized school visits. You can help keep these programs free by becoming a member of the Museum and by sponsoring this program. Contact Diane Evans at 707-579-1500 x 11 for more information on how you can help.



North-South: Art as a Tool to Mediate Social and Political Conflict

A joint outreach effort between the Sonoma County Museum and the Gyeonggi Museum of Modern Art in Gyeonggi-Do, Korea. The goal of the project is to compare the human side of the parallel experiences of living near Korea's DMZ and living in neighborhoods affected by the Norteño-Sureño gang conflict in Northern California. Students will explore similarities in experiences, reconsider their environments from the perspectives of their peers abroad, and create collaborative art that reflects and involves their communities. Museums Connect is made possible by a grant from the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and administered by the American Association of Museums (AAM). The SCM group includes students from Elsie Allen High School and will travel to Korea in September, 2012. The GMoMA group will travel to Sonoma County in January, 2013. Visit the project on Facebook and www.sonomacountymuseum.org.



Sonoma County Museum group poses with GMoMA students within the DMZ and overlooking the Imjun River.

National Youth Summit: The Dustbowl Project

Sonoma County Museum partnered with the National Endowment for the Humanities, PBS, and National Museum of American History for the 2012 Smithsonian National Youth Summit on October 17th. The Youth Summit coincided with the broadcast of Ken Burns' documentary, "The Dust Bowl." This program was organized by the Smithsonian Affiliates program and the Sonoma County Museum was one of ten museums nationwide to be selected for participation.



2012 Spring Gala

The Museum's Russian-themed gala was held at the Vintners Inn on Sunday, April 29. This year's speaker was Dr. Bruce Elliott who came dressed in costume with his wife Frances. The event raised close to \$100,000 for Museum education and exhibition programs with a silent and live auction. A big thank you to our 250 guests!



Pictured top left (l to r): Frances Frazier, Don and Jennifer Ammons, Deborah Eid, Bruce Elliott. Top right (l to r): Frances Frazier, Molin Malikay, Diane Malikay, Bruce Elliott, Diane Evans, Anthony Cohen. Lower left: Elaine Connell Lower right: Frances Frazier, Judy Voigt, Bruce Elliott.

Donors

Thank you to the individuals and corporations who have sponsored exhibitions in 2012

Featuring Museum Board members Dale Schmid (pictured with wife Susan) and Michiko Conklin who sponsored exhibitions in 2012.



Dale and Susan Schmid



Michiko Conklin

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