A Top Priority

Next to the care and display of our art collection, education is the main priority at The Irvine Museum. This has been the case since January of 1993, when we first opened our doors to the public.

The education program is the responsibility of Dora James, our curator of education. Together, Dora and our small but highly dedicated group of docents do an outstanding job of presenting our museum’s collection to visiting school children.

Our education program takes many forms. We have an active school field trip program which encompasses public and private schools at all levels, serving colleges, high schools, middle schools and elementary schools. Most of our field trips are designed for our community schools, primarily grades 3, 4 and 5, and offer the children an enjoyable and enlightening program on our California art heritage. In addition to teaching art history, we also teach cultural history and environmental awareness. As most of our collection comprises landscape paintings, the message of having a balanced and enlightened view of natural preservation comes across quite easily. In most cases, we have found that our children already have a basic knowledge of the environment and natural biodiversity, a testament to the effectiveness of our schools. Thus, when they visit the museum, our paintings serve more as a refresher course on the subject.

In addition, our docents lead adult level tours for a variety of visitors. We hold an open docent tour every Thursday, at 11:15 a.m., where we welcome anyone to follow our docent for an insightful explanation of our exhibition. Moreover, any group of ten or more visitors can schedule a docent tour of their own by calling Dora James at (949) 476-0294 to request a guided tour. On any given day, a visitor to our museum may find groups of senior citizens and art teachers with their classes viewing our exhibitions. These tours, as well, are open to anyone to follow along.

I invite you to take full advantage of our educational programs and to tell your friends and local teachers about the wonderful opportunities offered by The Irvine Museum.

—James Irvine Swinden, President

In celebration of our twentieth year as America’s foremost museum of historical California Art, The Irvine Museum has assembled a remarkable display of the very best paintings in our collections. Many of the works in this Twentieth Anniversary exhibition have been shown in museums throughout the country and were part of Masters of Light, our unprecedented and hugely successful European Tour exhibition that was shown in Paris, Krakow and Madrid in 2005-2006.

Simply put, the very best exhibition of California Impressionism ever mounted is currently at The Irvine Museum and you should not miss the opportunity to experience these beautiful and important works of our very own California Impressionism.

—Jean Stern, Executive Director
California Impressionism
Selections from The Irvine Museum

One of The Irvine Museum’s most popular and successful traveling exhibitions, *California Impressionism*, was inaugurated in 2010 when it was displayed at the Haggin Museum, in Stockton, California, and continued to the Boca Raton Museum in Florida, the Monterey Museum of Art, the Portland Art Museum, the Whatcom County Museum in Bellingham, Washington, and the Bakersfield Museum of Art.

Many of our most popular paintings are displayed in this exhibition, *Making Port*, by Armin C. Hansen (1886–1957), shows a tugboat in heavy seas, valiantly going out to help guide a schooner safely into port. The scene is bathed in cold and dreary color and the composition is precariously perched on a series of oblique and angular lines. Seen as a whole, this magnificent painting shows a graphic view of the rigor and peril of seafaring life.

One of the most popular paintings in this show is *La Jolla Shores*, painted in the early 1920s by Alfred R. Mitchell (1888–1972). The scene shows the community of La Jolla, just north of San Diego, as it looked long before the rampant development that characterize the area today. Mitchell was one of San Diego’s most important painters and most popular art teachers.

Generally taken to be the most important of California’s Impressionists painters, Guy Rose (1867–1925) is represented by *Laguna Eucalyptus*, painted about 1916. One of the very few artists of this period to have been born and raised in California, Rose adopted a French Impressionist approach to painting. For eight years, between 1904 and 1912, Rose and his wife Ethel lived in the small village of Giverny and were friends and neighbors of Claude Monet.

*Southern California Coast*, by George Gardner Symons (1861–1930) shows the coast at Laguna Beach near today’s community of Rockledge. Symons became quite famous for his paintings of snow covered hills and valleys in Massachusetts and New Hampshire but also loved to paint in southern California. A close friend of William Wendt (1865–1946), whose work is also represented in this exhibition, Symons built a studio-home in Laguna Beach and became an active member of the local art community.

*Exhibition continues through Thursday, January 9, 2014*
Chief Curator From Iwate Museum in Japan Visits The Irvine Museum

Over the summer, The Irvine Museum honored a request to replace lost and damaged books as the result of the terrible Tōhoku earthquake and subsequent tsunamis that devastated areas of Japan in 2011. With the assistance of Mihoko Yamagata, a resident of San Juan Capistrano, eleven sets of some of our most popular art books were shipped to the Iwate Museum of Art in Japan. These books in turn were distributed by the Iwate Museum to eleven libraries that were most seriously affected by the disaster.

It was our great pleasure to receive as visitors to our museum the Chief Curator of the Iwate Museum, Takako Yoshida, who expressed her kind gratitude for our gesture of goodwill. Also present were Mihoko Yamagata and Shige Higashi, editor of Cultural News in Los Angeles. The honored visitors were given a tour of our current exhibition California Impressionism: Selections from The Irvine Museum.

Upcoming Exhibit

Our next exhibition will be California Scene Paintings, which will open on Saturday, January 18, 2014, and continue through Thursday, May 8, 2014.

In a special exhibition organized by Guest Curator Gordon T. McClelland, the museum will display a wonderful selection of California paintings created between 1930 and 1960, featuring important works by Lee Blair, Rex Brandt, Phil Dike, Hardie Gramatky, Clarence Hinkle, Emil Kosa Jr., Vernon J. Morse, Millard Sheets, Milford Zornes, and many others. This remarkable assemblage of works will comprise both oil paintings and watercolors, and will include works loaned from several private collections.

The exhibition is accompanied by California Scene Paintings, a fully illustrated, 216 page book by Gordon T. McClelland and Austin D. McClelland, which will be available in our bookstore.
In the twenty years since The Irvine Museum was founded, in 1993, our education program has been the most meaningful and rewarding of all of our endeavors. Thousands of school children have passed through our doors to learn about California’s art history and our state’s vast environmental beauty. They are able to explore nature and step into the past through the eyes of such notable landscape painters as Granville Redmond, Edgar Payne, Anna Hills, William Wendt, Marion Wachtel and many others.

Through the generosity of our patrons and philanthropic groups, such as the Historical Collections Council of California, we will continue to provide bus transportation for school fieldtrips at no cost to the schools. This is a vital service that we offer to participating schools, without which, many children would not have the opportunity to visit The Irvine Museum. We know that we have hit the mark when we receive their thank you letters…

Thank You Irvine Museum!

“I liked the museum because I never get to see real life art.” Edwin
“This experience made me feel better about my life.” Daniel
“The paintings are amazing. I hope I can come three days a week.” Juan
“I had so much fun. I love all of your art. It meant a lot to us.” Destiny
“Art inspires me to be creative and use my imagination.” Valerie
“This experience made me feel that art could change people’s lives. This was the best field trip I ever went in my life.” Maria
“Thank you for the best day of my life.” Steve
“Thank you for paying for the bus and for hearing us when we spoke to you guys.” Estrella
“I feel like I was in the painting. The one I like was the ocean one because I like how the ocean makes me feel relax. I don’t really get to go to the ocean so I like to look at paintings of the beautiful ocean. I only went to the ocean about 3 times.” Ruby

As part of our twenty year celebration, The Irvine Museum is displaying some of the artwork that the visiting children send to us along with their thank you letters. This “Kid Work” display will run through the end of the year. Be sure not to miss it.

—Dora James, Curator of Education
October 3, 2013 Gala Opening of California Impressionism: Selections from The Irvine Museum

November 8, 2013 20th Anniversary Dinner Honoring Major Supporters of The Irvine Museum

Left to right

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The Palette is a publication of The Irvine Museum. The Museum is open Tuesday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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