

## ART TRAVEL LOG: DIARY FROM FRANCE

## Part I: Chateau de Balleroy

by Elaine Adams



Balloons behind the Chateau preparing for ascension.

On September 3 Peter and I left our home in Pasadena for a six-week excursion through France and Italy. In an attempt to share our art adventures with our fellow California Art Club members, this article is written as the first of a three-part series.

After a twelve-hour flight, we arrived at the Charles de Gaul Airport on September 4. While in baggage claim and awaiting our cavalcade of luggage, we spotted CAC artist **Glenna Hartmann** with her husband, **Albert**. We knew that they would be joining us in Normandy, but we had no idea that they were on the very same flight and seated only ten rows ahead of us. We excitedly embraced and talked about how fortunate we were to be among twenty-two artists (plus several spouses) for eight days at **Chateau de Balleroy**. This sumptuous invitation came as a collaborative endeavor between **Mr. Stephen Doherty**, Editor of *American Artist Magazine* and **Mr. Christopher "Kip" Forbes**, Vice-Chairman of *Forbes Magazine*.

According to our instructions, the following morning we returned to the airport arrival terminal where we were met by a chartered bus to Balleroy. Aboard were **Sara and Stephen Doherty** along with **Barbara Spohn**, the group's travel agent from **Specialty Tours**. Also on the bus

were **Margaret and Preston Trombly**. Margaret is the Director of the **Forbes Magazine Collection**. A special treat was the inclusion of **Ronald Pisano**, the eminent art historian and expert on **William Merritt Chase** (1849-1916). The rest of the passengers were, of course, the invited artists. The four-hour ride was ample time for all of us to become acquainted with each other.

Upon first sight of the chateau we all realized instantly what laid ahead — a week of decadent luxury. The imposing 17th century architecture was designed by one of France's most important architects, **François Mansart** (1598-1666). Mansart is recognized as having been highly instrumental in the development of the French Baroque or the Louis XIVth style of architecture. The Norman village of Balleroy, located near Bayeux, Caen, and World War II's famed Omaha Beach, is unique as it was entirely designed by the sole architect, Mansart. As 1998 will mark the 400th anniversary of the architect's birth, it was decided that a selection of the forthcoming paintings would be exhibited at the Forbes Gallery in New York as commemoration.

When we arrived, the staff quickly took everyone's luggage up to their individual rooms. Each of the thirty bedrooms was referred to by a dignified name such as "Normande," "Orléans," "Les Roses" and "Henri II." Our room was located on the third floor and was known as the "Princess" room. The brass identification plate on the door proclaimed "Mr. and Mrs. Adams" as its occupants. Recent guests of the Princess room

included the **King of Greece** and the **King of Romania**. While these Kings may have had their boxes of traveling crown jewels delivered to their rooms by way of footmen, we had Peter's several boxes of painting boards of varying sizes delivered via Federal Express. With the addition of these boxes, we now had a grand total of thirteen pieces of traveling paraphernalia to tote all over France and Italy.

Lunch was waiting for us in the main dining room. Standing in the vestibule to welcome us to his family chateau was Christopher Forbes, who graciously asked that we call him "Kip." Several artists were already familiar with each other, either by reputation or through a similar event held the previous year at the **Forbes Ranch** in Wyoming. Invited artists to the chateau were, **Clyde Aspevig, Carol Guzman Aspevig, Christopher Blossom, Daisy Craddock, T. Allen Lawson, Michael French, David Montgomery, Fran Dodd, Jason Gaillard, Mary Helsaple, Thomas S. Buechner, Joseph McGurl, Ross Merrill, Tom Pressly, Paul Rickert, Joseph Skrapits, Curt Walters, and Sharon Weilbaecher**. The California Art Club was well represented by artists, **Marcia Burt, Gil Dellinger, Glenna Hartmann**, and of course, **Peter**.

There was a mix of emotions, a combination of exhilaration, anxiety and fear. The artists had one week to get over jet-lag, become familiar with their new surroundings and Norman customs, and to paint their finest works. Artists were encouraged to paint on the chateau grounds and in the village. In addition



*Artists, Jason Gaillard, T. Allen Lawson and Glenna Hartmann with her pastel painting of the Chateau's dovecote tower.*

excursions were made to nearby towns, Rouen, St. Malo and Mont Saint Michel. An all day trip was made to Monet's home, the artists' Mecca, in Giverny. As a result of one of these trips, I discovered that our co-host, Stephen Doherty, is not only an exceptional magazine editor, but also a very fine artist. No wonder *American Artist* is so complete with knowledgeable and intelligent art information.

The chateau is filled with exquisite art and furniture mostly dating from the pre-French Revolution and Empire eras. The most lavish of rooms is the "Waterloo Suite." The Waterloo Suite displays historical art and artifacts pertaining to Napoleon I and the Duke of Wellington, including grand scale portraits of both generals. However, the suite's most significant claim to fame is the fact that **Elizabeth Taylor** had slept there.

Particularly welcoming (and surprising) to the artists was the display of paintings by an ances-

tral member of the Balleroy lineage, the son of the fourth Marquis de Balleroy, **Count Albert de Balleroy (1828-1873)**. In his day, Albert exhibited regularly at the **Salon** and for seven years shared a studio with **Edouard Manet (1832-1883)**. His forte as an artist was sport paintings, including dogs, horses, wild game of all sorts, and general hunting scenes. His paintings could be seen throughout the chateau's salons, halls, and dining room. A few of us were permitted to enter the newly uncovered Balleroy art studio that was located in one of the towers. Peter and I, along with the brilliant (and fun) historian, Ronald Pisano, played art archaeologists as we uncovered and analyzed dozens of forgotten drawings and paintings by the Count.

In the Victorian "smoking room" is a collection of intriguing paintings hung in the traditional salon style. Most captivating, however, is the por-

trait propped up on a freestanding display easel of the artist, Count Albert de Balleroy painted by the celebrated French artist, **Paul Baudry** (1828-1886). In the "salon d'honneur" are Royal portraits painted by **Juste d'Egmont** (b.1601), a pupil of **Rubens** and a co-founder of the **French Academy**. On the mantel over the dining room fireplace sits a life-size terracotta bust of **Malcolm S. Forbes**, forever smiling at his guests. The dining room has a pair of portraits facing each other from across the room. Their appearance is rather mysterious as both gentlemen are depicted wearing peculiar black scarves loosely wrapped around their necks. **Monsieur George Lenoir**, the chateau's charming manager explained that the two gentlemen were brothers of the

Balleroy Marquisate and that the black scarves signified that they were beheaded during the French Revolution. After learning that, the paintings went beyond mysterious and directly into eerie.

The chateau is further decorated with clever balloon motifs that can be found on some furniture, fabrics and fine china. Ballooning plays an instrumental role in life at Balleroy and is of great interest to the Forbes family. Just five years after the avid balloonist Malcolm S. Forbes purchased the chateau for Forbes Inc., he had the grounds designated as a site for international balloon festivals which are held each June. The event draws 70,000 balloon enthusiasts and celebrates the anniversary of the opening of the world's first **Balloon Museum**, which just

happens to be housed at the Chateau de Balleroy. With all this talk and testimony of ballooning surrounding the Forbes family and the mystique of Balleroy, many artists decided that when in Balleroy, do as the *Balleroyans* do.

Our host, Kip Forbes, generously provided balloon rides for us twice a day in either the mornings or the early evenings, weather permitting. While Peter was off painting, I decided to take one of the sunset flights. On this occasion two balloons ascended at the same time. I was in a balloon with artist, **Daisy Craddock**, and **Alice Merrill** (Mrs. Ross Merrill). At the helm was **Guy**, our pilot or *Montgolfier*, a title given to professional balloonists in honor of the inventor **Joseph Montgolfier** who with his brother, **Jacques**, built and ascended in the first practical balloon in 1783. From several hundred feet above, the views of the chateau, the Norman villages and the agricultural farm patterns was a glorious experience for artists and laymen alike. The sensation of flying in a balloon is a combination of gentle floatation, serene silence and, surprisingly, an overall feeling of security. However, one is constantly reminded of one's mortality as one moves about in the basket and hears the creaking of the straws rubbing together, echoing life's fragility. Since steering a balloon is impossible, landings are rather precarious. Nevertheless, it's a mode of travel worth experiencing.

The artists were provided with three meals each day, all served in the elegant main dining room. Dinners were quite lavishly prepared by the resident chef, **Madame Langlois**, and accompanied with more than ample amounts of exquisite wines. It

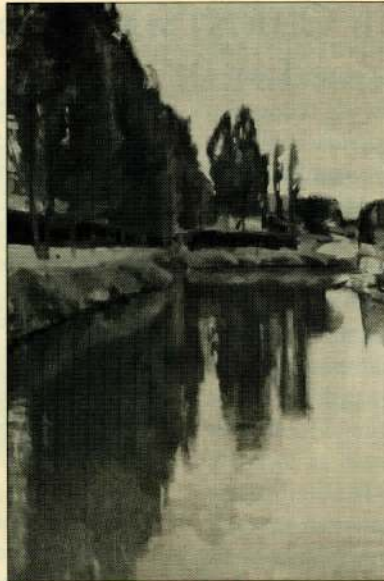


*Joseph McGurl, T. Allen Lawson, Christopher Blossom and Thomas S. Buechner conversing in the drawing room. Painting of Louis Phillippe, Duc d'Orléans in the background.*

was quite the rigueur to dress for dinner, and the artists did so with tasteful results. We also had after dinner entertainment. On two subsequent evenings we enjoyed slide presentations held in the vestibule. On one evening we viewed works by each of the guest artists. The next evening Ronald Pisano gave an inspirational lecture and slide presentation on William Merrit Chase.

After dinner those who still had some energy would gather for conversation in the drawing room. We would sit beneath an important painting of *Louis Philippe, Duc d'Orléans* portrayed as a child, who later served as **King Louis of France** from 1830 to 1848. Another significant painting in the room is a portrait of a young countess by **Franz Xaver Winterhalter** (1806-1873) the noted painter of Europe's royals. Here, we would discuss the events of the day and share our philosophies on art. On one such occasion I had the opportunity to speak with Ross Merrill. Mr. Merrill is not only a fine painter, but he also holds the distinction of being Chief of Conservation at the **National Gallery of Art** in Washington, D.C. As all of us were keenly aware (and excited) over the upcoming exhibition on **Thomas Moran** (1837-1926) at the National Art Gallery, I took full advantage of interviewing Mr. Merrill with the intentions of publishing his responses for our *CAC Newsletter* readers.

Mr. Merrill explained, "Moran's 'Holy Grail' was **J.M.W. Turner** (1775-1851). Although there is really no comparison in technique to Turner, there is a use of imagery, particularly in the sublime that suggests



Marcia Burt  
*Poplar Reflections; Normandy, France*  
30" x 20" Acrylic

a Turner influence. Moran did not seem to do many *modelos* for his larger paintings, rather, he relied heavily on photos. We know this because we kept finding black and white photos of his paintings, particularly the larger works. However, the photos did not always match the paintings. Often the photos themselves were manipulated with India ink and Chinese white. This was a mystery. Fortunately, the mystery was solved when another artist, who knew Moran, described later in his life the method that Moran used to create his compositions. Apparently, Moran would work up a charcoal drawing on a full size canvas. He would then photograph that drawing and print the photo. Then by using India ink and Chinese white he would directly paint on top of the photo, thereby creating his ideal composition. Moran would then wash the charcoal off his canvas, and by using his manipulated

photo as reference, paint his subject. On site, Moran made drawings in graphite pencil with color notes and would heighten with white gouache. He used whatever paper was handy, including hotel stationery."

In answering what was one of the most complex problems in cleaning and restoring Moran's paintings, Mr. Merrill replied, "Moran often built up texture with the intention of putting a glaze over it, for example, on rocks. The glazes can be easily damaged during the cleaning process. Most Moran paintings have been cleaned at least once. Conservators have found this problematic." Mr. Merrill

regaled, "Art conservator, **Perry Huston** of Fort Worth, Texas commented, 'There are two types of Morans, those with glazes, and those which have been cleaned'."

By the end of the week each of the invited artists had produced a dozen or so works that were put on display in the staff's dining hall. The entire staff of twenty were invited to see paintings of their environment. **Madame Annick Lair**, the chateau's gracious assistant manager, expressed how the staff were particularly moved by the works, as they have a great fondness for the chateau and the sustenance it provides for the village. The exhibition's overall effect was most impressive, a complete and varying analysis of life at the Chateau de Balleroy.

*An exhibition of these paintings will be on display at the Forbes Gallery, located on 5th Avenue in New York City. Opening night reception is planned for April 23, 1998.*

ART TRAVEL LOG: DIARY FROM FRANCE

## Part II: Paris and Barbizon

by Elaine Adams

**O**n September 3 Peter and I left our home in Pasadena for a six-week excursion through France and Italy. In an attempt to share our art adventures with our fellow California Art Club members, this article is written as the second of a three-part series.

Spending eight glorious days at the Forbes' Chateau de Balleroy with twenty-two stimulating artists was a sheer rhapsodic experience. However, as in all fantasies, it was now time to wake up and return to the real world. We bade our reluctant goodbyes to the enchanted setting and boarded the chartered bus back to Paris. We departed the quaint Norman village at four-thirty in the morning, which may be an appropriate hour for the local farmers, but certainly not for the now luxury-spoiled artists. The many pairs of drowsy eyes transformed the touring bus into a sleeper car.

The bus arrived at the Charles de Gaul Airport at eight-thirty a.m. and dropped off those who had scheduled flights returning to the U.S. However, several of the artists had decided to extend



William A. Bouguereau  
*Birth of Venus*, 1879  
 Collection: Musée d'Orsay

118" x 85 3/4"  
 oil/canvas

their stay in France. Peter and I made an impulsive decision to visit Paris for six days. A group of us arranged to meet the following afternoon in front of the **Musée d'Orsay**. We agreed to begin with lunch at a local café and then a visit through the museum.

**T**HE MUSÉE D'ORSAY HOUSES AN ARRAY OF collections spanning the years from 1848 (the 2nd Republic) to World War I, and includes a variety of art disciplines. On the ground floor are architectural plans of several important Parisian buildings. Most intriguing was to experience walking over the city of Paris. This sensation was achieved by a detailed model of the city encased under a plexiglass floor. In the same vicinity were fine sculptural works by **Carpeaux** and **Barye**, as well as paintings by **Ingres**, **Delacroix**, **Millet**, **Corot**, **Courbet**, **Moreau**, and **Fantin-Latour**. Also on the ground floor were works in pastel, and paintings from the schools of *Plein-Air*, *Realism* and *Orientalism*. An additional treat were original *Craftsmen* furniture pieces designed by **William Morris** and **Frank Lloyd Wright**.

The middle level of the d'Orsay has examples of Naturalist and Symbolist paintings, as well as works by **Boldini** and **Bonnard** and paintings by American, **Mary Cassatt**. Also on display are *Art Nouveau* furniture pieces and ceramics, as well as glassware by **Gallé**. On the upper level are paintings from the **Impressionist** and **Post-Impressionist** schools. A real treat was seeing the impressive *Birth of Venus* by **William Adolphe Bouguereau**. There are very few artists, if any, who have ever excelled to as high a level of fine draughtsmanship, graceful composition, and beautiful rendering of skin tones as Bouguereau did.

Upon exiting, we stopped in the museum bookstore where we discovered difficult-to-find art books, including **Dr. Gerald Ackerman's** *American Orientalism*. There was so much to see at the Musée d'Orsay that we made the difficult decision to forfeit visiting the **Louvre** (as we had seen its collections on previous trips) in exchange for a second day at d'Orsay. What is particularly fascinating about the d'Orsay is its focus on the mid to late-nineteenth century. The extensive variety of artistic

styles created during that specific era positively proves that it was truly the age of artistic enlightenment.

A visual treat of architectural proportions, perspectives and pure artistry is the Paris opera theatre, **Le Palais Garnier**. It was built on the orders of **Napoleon III** as part of the great nineteenth century Parisian reconstruction project. The design of the theatre for the Paris Opera Company was put to a competition and won by **Charles Garnier**. At the time Garnier was a 35-year old unknown architect.

The Palais Garnier was inaugurated in 1875, after fifteen years of construction. Its interior is a successful collaboration of fine architecture, sculpture and painting. Multi-colored marble staircases flow in fascinating directions and mingle with great works of sculpture. Peter was so intrigued by the shapes, lines, and amber glow, that he asked for special permission to do paintings of the interior. Permission was granted, and he spent three days painting within the premises.

The grand foyer's ceiling murals, painted by **Paul Baudry** (1828-1886), depict themes from the history of music. At the very top of the opera house on the highest pinnacle of the roof stands a bronze sculpture of **Apollo**, the God of music. In both his hands he grasps a golden lyre, extending it directly toward the heavens. When the sun shines on Apollo and strikes the lyre, it is as if the God himself comes to life.

**A**FTER VIEWING SO MANY INSPIRATIONAL works by the historic French artists, we decided to investigate the works of the contemporary Parisian artists. We began our search in the vicinity around the **Sacré-Coeur Basilica** in Montmartre. This area is a famous breeding ground for tourist art, nevertheless, amusing to visit. The atmosphere of this hilltop village is set back in a time warp reminiscent of Hollywood's 1950's version of the Parisian art scene.

The "artistes" are still typically seen wearing berets, neckerchiefs, mustaches and goatees. There were very few female artists, but those that were present were generally spirited gypsy types. Their painting styles ranged from bad examples of *Surrealism*, to sloppy *Abstract Expressionism*, but



Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux

This is the main figure of the famous *Le Danse*, which graces the outside of the Palais Garnier, and is displayed in variations and in many stages of completion at the Musée d'Orsay.

they mostly excelled in cliché Parisian street scenes. A great deal of their energy is spent in trying to muster up some on-the-spot portrait commissions. One offered to do my portrait for five francs, that's less than one American dollar. I wasn't sure whether that was a compliment or insult. These artists *negotiable* prices were anywhere from ten to one-hundred francs (\$1.80 – \$17) per painting. However, the real art is in the study of these characters who have learned to live the life of true Bohemians.

WHEN WE WALKED DOWN THE HILL FROM Montmartre, we unwittingly came across the famous **Moulin Rouge**. I remembered reading from Dr. Gerald Ackerman's *Catalogue Raisonné* on Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824-1904) that Gérôme's home and studio were directly across the street from the Moulin Rouge on the Boulevard de Clichy. There it was, the famous three-story building with the atelier on the top floor encased in northern skylights. I also remembered reading that the building had become an apartment complex with a chapel on the ground floor. Lo, there it was, a Catholic Chapel located on the floor where Gérôme used to create his sculptures.

We tried the door, but it was locked. We looked about the building for a plaque of some sort to prove this was the home of the great nineteenth century master, but there was none. Suddenly, the front door opened. A man and woman were exiting. I quickly asked, "*Est-ce que la maison de l'artiste Gérôme?*" The gentleman responded, "*Oui.*" We explained that we are Americans and that Peter is an artist who greatly admires the works of Gérôme. The gentleman asked, "*Connaissez-vous Docteur Gerald Ackerman?*" We lit up with excitement and enthusiastically explained that not only do we have the honor of knowing him, but that he has lectured for our art club. With that, the gentleman opened the door and allowed us to enter the vestibule.

ALTHOUGH WE COULD NOT GO BEYOND THIS point, it was worth our persistence to just enter. The vestibule is modest, but one is immediately confronted by a unique staircase entirely designed by Gérôme. The wood carved designs on the rail and the bronze serpent sculpture at the base

is all very much in the *Orientalist* flare of Gérôme. This sort of *per chance* tour is not found in any *Michelin* guide book!

The following day, we continued our quest for local contemporary artists. We discovered that the art galleries are spread throughout Paris. In an area known as the “Bastille” region, we found a number of galleries located on Rue de Charonne. There, we found a mix of scribble drawings, tonal abstractions, and primitive cartoons heightened with American vulgar slang expressions. It is ironic that these galleries, so near the area of the once famous **Bastille Prison**, exhibit art work that could have been “committed” by the criminally insane. We did discover, however, a much larger district of art galleries located near the **Picasso Museum**. The thirty or so galleries in that region were a cut above the Bastille region.

**T**HE GALERIE THADDEUS ROPAC ON RUE Debelleye had an exhibition of American contemporaries, **Julian Schnabel**, **Cindy Sherman** and **Roy Lichtenstein** (who passed away two weeks later). The overall art scene was basically a ‘70s and

‘80s New York/L.A. retrogression. Even the clientele were typically dressed entirely in black, complete with the black turtleneck sweater uniform and snooty attitude — a throwback to the Soho beatnik clique set. In some galleries there were occasional attempts at realism, including still-lives and landscapes, but not much in figurative works. Although this expansion into *realism* was refreshing and promising, it lagged decades behind the realism found in the United States.

In Paris we picked up our car from the rental agency, which was maliciously located near the *Arc de Triomphe*. As anyone knows who has experienced driving around the landmark to Napoleon’s imperial capital designed by **Chalgrin** in 1806, the “triumph” is making it out of that auto whirlpool. I must say, however, Peter drove our four-door Fiat stick-shift like a true Parisian. He had one hand on the stick, and the other on the horn, and honked and squeezed our way out.

The country drive to Versailles is peaceful and pleasant, a big difference from the hubbub of activity in Paris. We spent a full day visiting the enormous **Chateau de Versailles**. Particularly intriguing

to us was the regal indoor opera theatre that is still in use today. Next, we continued our drive toward Fontainebleau and Barbizon. We were told it would take us only thirty minutes. Unfortunately, our timing put us right in the middle of “rush” traffic, extending the drive to four hours. Actually, we didn’t mind driving slowly because we had very little rear view vision, as our collection of thirteen bags and boxes successfully filled our trunk and back seat to full capacity.

**W**E STAYED FOR A WEEK IN the small town of Avon which backs the town of Fontainebleau, only ten minutes from Barbizon. The **Chateau de Fontainebleau**, built in the



Peter Adams at the entrance to the village of Barbizon.



12th century, was a favorite Royal hunting lodge as it was surrounded by plush forests and ample wild game.

Artistically, Fontainebleau was more interesting to us than Versailles. During the reign of **François I** (1494-1547) the palace underwent tremendous transformations and expansions. To embellish these new constructions, the French King called upon the services of Italian artists, **Rosso** (1494-1540) and **Primaticcio** (1504-1570). Both artists became founders of the *First Fontainebleau School*.

Furthermore, François I brought diverse collections of art to his beloved Fontainebleau, including **Leonardo da Vinci's** *Mona Lisa*, and works by **Andrea del Sarto** and **Raphael**. These collections are now housed at the Louvre Museum and the French National Library. The expansion plans of François I continued through his son and daughter-in-law, **Henri II** (1519-1559), and **Catherine de' Medici** (1519-1589).

**L**ATER, UNDER **HENRI IV** (1553-1610) THE *Second Fontainebleau School* was founded by Flemish artist, **Ambroise Dubois** and French artists, **Toussaint Dubreuil** and **Martin Freminet**. Remodeling the chateau continued thereafter with each sovereign reign. However, after the pillage of the French Revolution, **Napoleon I** (1769-1821) found the palace completely emptied of its furnishings. In 1804 Napoleon refurnished the entire palace. He did this initially to receive the Pope, but later he made Fontainebleau into one of his favorite residences, refurbishing the small apartments for his private use and for that of his wife, **Empress Josephine** (1763-1814). However, after their divorce in 1809, he refurbished it for **Empress Marie-Louise** (1791-1847). **Louis Philippe** (1773-1850) also had his hand in restoring the chateau. Finally, under **Napoleon III** the refurnishing pro-



Monsieur G.A. Richard, the *responsable* to the museum and home of Jean François Millet.

gram was completed, and his wife, **Empress Eugénie** (1826-1920), installed new salons and a Chinese Museum. Fontainebleau is a fascinating juxtaposition of historic episodes.

Upon entering Barbizon, one encounters a road sign that reads, *Barbizon, Village des Peintres* (village of the painters). Barbizon is a small village with one main street, *Grande Rue*, which stretches out for about one mile. However, its surrounding majestic forests greatly inspired artists from the mid-19th century. The artistic philosophy and style of Barbizon continue to influence artists of today.

Just about every building on Grande Rue, now either an inn or cafe, was once the home of a famous Barbizon artist. **Théodore Rousseau's** (1812-1867) studio is located on the second story of a building connected to the village church. A few buildings past Rousseau's is the home and studio of **Jean François Millet** (1814-1875). Millet's home is now a charming museum dedicated to the artist and his contemporaries. The *responsable* of the museum, **Monsieur G.A. Richard** explained that the museum intentionally displays the works in a somewhat scattered about salon-style. This is to emphasize how the home looked during Millet's life.

**A**CROSS THE STREET FROM MILLET'S HOME was once the home of Scottish writer, **Robert Louis Stevenson** (1850-1894). Next door to Stevenson's house is the home of sculptor and painter, **Antoine Louis Barye** (1796-1875). And next door to Barye was once the home of **Narcisse Diaz de le Peña** (1807-1876). Continuing on Grande Rue is yet another building once home to **Charles Francois Daubigny** (1817-1878).

We stopped for dinner in a charming restaurant, *La Boheme*, where we sat outside. (Side note to artists: If you sit outside in France, you are sitting *en plein air*. Sound familiar?) We began to admire the lavish desserts placed in front of a pair of lovely ladies. They noticed us gawking, and invited us to join them. We asked how they could stay so trim with such enormous and creamy desserts? One of the ladies, **Sabine Ballard** responded that they don't normally indulge in such extravagances. However, as her daughter, **Camille**, had just successfully passed some rather difficult college exams, it was cause to celebrate. So, we ordered champagne and joined in on the celebration.

We somehow got onto our favorite subject, art, and discovered they had a strong interest. Sabine and Camille invited us to join them the following day at a museum opening in Barbizon for a retrospective exhibition of works by **Rosa Bonheur** (1822-1899). We happily agreed.

**T**HE FOLLOWING MORNING WE ARRIVED IN Barbizon to meet our new friends, but the Grande Rue was blocked to auto traffic. The town was packed and the sidewalk cafes had spilled onto the streets. The Ballard ladies explained that today, September 21, marked an important national annual event, *Journée du Patrimoine* (Day of Patrimony). On this day all French monuments and legacies are open free to the public. I wish we had something like this in the United States.

The Bonheur exhibition was at the **Musée de L'Auberge Ganne**. The museum was itself quite interesting as it was once an inn for artists. Since so many artists couldn't pay their bills, they would leave a painting, many done directly onto the walls.

Although I didn't find any signatures, two of the paintings looked like **Corot** landscapes

Upon entering the museum the first painting to welcome us was by **George Achille-Fould** (1862-1927) of Rosa Bonheur dressed in trousers in her studio. Those who are familiar with Bonheur will realize that this was significant as she was the first woman in France to have been given legal government permission to wear trousers. The reason for this decree was that she so frequently studied her animal subjects in slaughter houses, and dresses were not practical attire.

Bonheur made tremendous efforts in studying her subjects for both form and character. She had gone to the extent of sculpting impressive clay figures and casting them into bronze so that she could have them available as reference for her paintings. Also, on exhibit were several of her studies done on paper where she would sketch various positions and head studies of a particular animal. These were most interesting to study as they proved her excellent skills in draughtsmanship.

**T**HE BUFFALO WAS A FAVORITE SUBJECT OF Bonheur. In a portrait by **Edourd-Louis Dubufe** (1820-1883), a young Bonheur is seen (wearing a dress) with her right arm extended around the shoulders of an enormous buffalo. She and the buffalo look as though they are best of friends. In her right hand is a paintbrush, while in her left is her sketchbook. We later learned that it was actually Bonheur who painted the buffalo in Dubufe's portrait of her. This fascination for the creature may have led her to do a painting of the American Western legend, **Buffalo Bill** (now in the collection of the Buffalo Bill Historical Center in Cody, Wyoming). Incidentally, Buffalo Bill is still highly revered in France.

A powerful painting to mention is that of *L'Aigle Blessé* (The Wounded Eagle), on loan from the **Los Angeles County Museum of Art** (note: I've never seen it exhibited there). An incredible painting focussing solely on an eagle who appears to have been wounded and bleeding in the chest, perhaps by gun shot. The eagle's wings are stretched vertically as it descends toward earth. Bonheur was such



a master at recreating the power and purity of the animal world, but she also excelled in interpreting natural light. Happily, the exhibition has continued to the Dahesh Museum in New York City where it is presently on display.

After viewing the exhibition, the Ballards invited us to their lovely country home for lunch. It was a gloriously sunny day at 85 degrees Fahrenheit. Sabine had set a beautiful picnic table for us, and we lunched superbly with the addition of excellent French cheeses and wines.

**B**EFORE SUNSET, PETER DECIDED TO PAINT from a scene made famous by Millet. In the painting, *l'Angelus*, Millet portrayed a peasant and his wife stopping their work in the fields. They reverently bow their heads in prayer as the bells in the distant church sound the *Angelus*. As it so hap-

Conseulo Achille Fould  
*Rosa Bonheur in her Atelier*  
 35 7/8" x 48 7/8" oil/canvas  
 Musée des Beaux-Arts, Bordeaux

pened, that very church was just a block's distance from the Ballard home, and the farm fields still exist. Somehow Peter located a small dirt road that led into the fields. Among the rows of cabbages with the church steeple in the background, Peter searched for the spot from which Millet may have painted. Watching him stand there painting in the twilight made me contemplate the magic of Barbizon. Its light, its forests, its fields and the simple country life that lured Corot, Rosa Bonheur, and Daubigny over a century ago is still very much alive.

## ART TRAVEL LOG: DIARY FROM FRANCE

## Part III: Burgundy and Chamonix

by Elaine Adams

On September 3 Peter and I left our home in Pasadena for a six-week excursion through France and Italy. In an attempt to share our art adventures with our fellow California Art Club members, this article is written as the third of a four-part series.

After one week's indulgence in Barbizon's famous art, forests, and sunsets, we decided that we had better move on. Our new *Barbizonian* friends, the Ballards, recommended a scenic drive heading southward to Buene through the Burgundy wine country. From there we would head east to Chamonix to visit the legendary *Mont Blanc* in person.

As our car was visibly packed with thirteen bags and boxes of travel gear and art paraphernalia, we felt a simple stop for lunch wasn't possible without running the risk of losing all our belongings. We hoped to get to Buene before sunset, in time for a quick pastel painting and dinner.

Driving through the French countryside is nothing less than glorious. Miles of wide-open fields, rolling green hills roamed by herds of cows and flocks of sheep, quaint little farmhouses and villages, and rows of plush



Elaine Adams at a restaurant in Buene, sampling a bottle of the region's local resources.

vineyards. It's no wonder the Burgundy country is known as France's *Cote-d'or*, or Gold Coast. The Gold Coast certainly does provide France with agricultural riches, as well as visual opulence.

The town of Buene is located in the heart of Burgundy. Fortified in 1368, Buene was residence to the dukes of Burgundy before they moved to neighboring Dijon. We drove around the ramparted fort a few times trying to find its entrance. A modest arch, which the locals affection-

ately call their "Arc de Triomphe," marked the gateway to this medieval duchy.

Central Buene was bustling with people, mostly tourists from Germany, Holland, England, and the U.S. This was a bit more activity than we envisioned for ourselves, so we decided to find someplace more peaceful and paintable. Just a few miles outside Buene, we came across acres of vineyards, and at that time the sun had just set majestically behind them. From a far away distance we could see a beacon

of light above the horizon. We knew that the light had to come from a village church steeple. In almost every historic European village or town, the tallest building is the church.

We drove a few miles off the main road toward the light beam, which brought us to a tiny eighteenth century village by the name of "Pommard." Nestled in the midst of vineyards radiating in every direction, Pommard was a perfect location for us. Those of you who are wine connoisseurs are no doubt familiar with the Pommard label.

We booked a room in the local hotel, "Hôtel Café du Pont," where we were the only guests in the only hotel in town. The room was surprisingly comfortable for only \$40 per night. However, to reach our room it was necessary to cross the outdoor café where all the local grape pickers hung-out drinking together. With their long unkempt hair and grape stained clothing, they looked more like a band of cutthroat pirates than they did university students of viticulture. Pommard is one of the few grape growing regions that still utilize the traditional handpicking method as opposed to the modern grape picking machines.

After driving all day and settling into our room, we were anxiously looking forward to a gourmand's dinner and a good night's rest. Across the street from the hotel and located in an underground wine cavern is the "Restaurant Le Pommard." Some of the finest restaurants in the Burgundy region are hidden in historic wine caverns, and this one was a superb discovery.

While enjoying our sumptuous

dinner and bottle of local Burgundy, we engaged ourselves in conversation with the couple seated at the next table. We learned that they were from Holland and owners of a large conglomeration of insurance and finance companies. Out of

the habit of performing a nightly *bacchanalian* ritual of drinking and singing until dawn. Peter thought to make the best of it, and went out with his French easel to capture the sun rising over the vineyards. After I arose from a good night's rest I went



Félix Ziem Palais des Doges, Venise 25" x 35" oil  
Collection: Musée des Beaux-Arts, Beaune, France

curiosity we asked them about the art situation in Holland. They revealed to us that since the government became involved in supporting visual artists several years ago, the quality of art has declined. They told us of a good friend of theirs who used to paint in the traditional style, but who never received any government support until he began to work in an abstract fashion. The couple informed us that currently Holland is undergoing a huge debate over the validity of government intervention in the arts. We found this information fascinating and all too familiar.

Although I slept soundly that night, Peter did not. Apparently, our grape-picking friends were in

downstairs for breakfast. There was little evidence of last night's vinous activity, except for the occasional passed-out local.

On our second day in Burgundy, while Peter was reverently painting an interior scene of Buene's *Notre Dame Cathedral*, I decided to visit a less solemn side of Buene, their famous wine museum. The *Musée du Vin de Bourgogne*, housed in the fourteenth century palace of the *Ducs de Bourgogne* (Dukes of Burgundy), was founded in 1938 and installed in its present palace location in 1946. As wine making plays an important role in the Burgundian lifestyle, artists and artisans have utilized the grape and wine

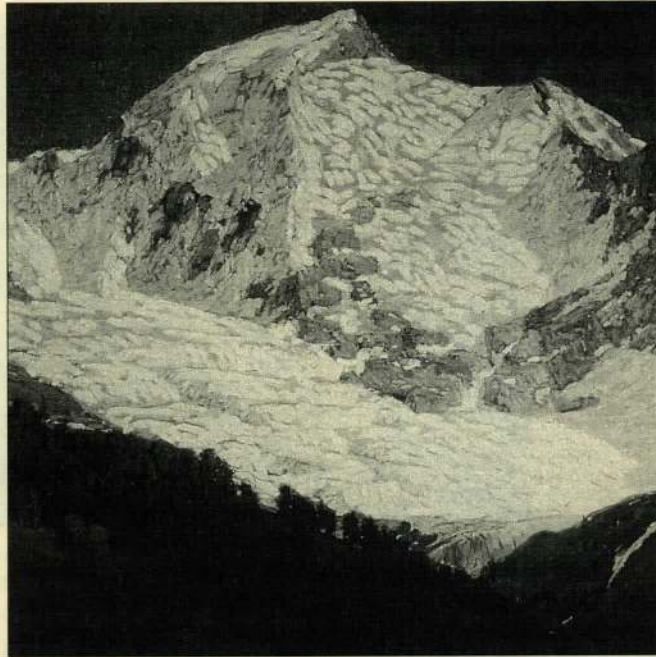
themes throughout the region's history. Of course, the museum exhibits historic wine presses and cultivating tools, but it also displays works of fine paintings, sculpture, and tapestry. Of additional interest are the wonderful examples of seventeenth and eighteenth century glazed pottery with the grape motif and scenes from the life of **Bacchus**. Also intriguing is the history of the wine bottle and its evolution from the short, round models to the tall, sleek ones we see today.

Of further sightseeing interest in Buene is the *Musée des Beaux-Arts* where they house art collections stemming from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries, including *Flemish* and *Orientalist* paintings. An important collection at the museum are works by one of the most celebrated "sons of Buene," the artist, **Félix Ziem** (1821-1911). Several examples of his drawings, sketches and paintings are featured prominently at the museum.

Ziem is an exciting artist to study. His poetic and sublime works are reminiscent of **J.M.W. Turner**. In addition, his sense of adventure and interest in Algeria, Turkey, and Egypt evokes the mystery of the British *Orientalist*, **Talbot Kelly**. Ziem's draughtsmanship is fresh and lively and full of ease, inviting the viewer to journey through

the picture. Buene's Museum of Fine Arts is a modest museum, yet its retrospective on Ziem seems fairly complete.

On our third day in Burgundy, we visited Buene's biggest attraction, their medieval hospital, "*Hôtel-Dieu*" (Hotel-God).



The Great White Peak by Edgar Payne; A View of Mt. Blanc

Founded in 1443 by **Nicolas Rolin**, Chancellor of **Philippe-le-Bon**, Duke of Burgundy, this hospital for the underprivileged was dubbed the "palace for the poor." The interior is lavishly decorated with fine wood carvings and oil paintings, including the chapel's famous polyptych painting by the fifteenth century Flemish artist, **Rogier Van der Weyden**. In the Saint Hugues Room are eleven paintings by the seventeenth century Parisian artist, **Isaac Moillon**. Nine of Moillon's paintings are dedicated to Christ's miraculous healings, and two are of St. Hugues bring-

ing two children who succumbed to the plague back to life.

A prominent exterior feature to *Hôtel-Dieu* is the geometrically-laid multicolored glazed ceramic rooftop tiles. Although this fashion of tiles is thought to have originated from central

Europe, they gradually spread throughout Burgundy to eventually become typical of the province. The overall architecture of *Hôtel-Dieu* is of the *Gothic* style and is considered to be "a jewel of medieval architecture." Amazingly, this hospital from "the dark ages" was in professional use up until 1971!

After staying four days in Pommard we realized that if we didn't get moving, we wouldn't make it in time to Italy before our six weeks were up. We were

reluctant to leave, as we had become more enamored with the region than ever expected. Our hotelier, **Marcel**, who was usually found tending his bar, gave us each a hug and asked us to return. With such an invitation, how could we refuse? The customers seated at the bar smiled and nodded, and a few of them stood-by waving at us as we drove off.

We drove into Switzerland and spent the night in Martigny. The following morning Peter painted the sunrise over the Alpine range. In the afternoon we drove to a small village set in the Alps, where we had our first glimpse of

the tip of Mont Blanc. Peter stopped to do a painting while I hiked further along the trail. Every view was breathtaking with tall pine trees and snow-capped mountains in every direction. Occasionally, the Alpine silence was broken by the ringing of the famous Swiss cows' elaborately decorated bells.

We crossed over the Swiss Border and back into France. Peter stopped the car immediately at the first full sight of the incredible Mont Blanc. However, I couldn't see the mountain. Peter pointed it out to me, but I still couldn't see it. It took a while for my eyes to adjust, and then I spotted it. I kept raising my head higher and higher, until I could see the very top. An enormous solid mass of snow set against a lucid white sky, all blended into a great blinding brilliance. What unbelievable majesty! We were in a rickety old village by the name of "Argentière." This vulnerable village set against the background of the invincible Mont Blanc was something Peter had to paint.

We drove into the town of Chamonix at the base of Mont Blanc. We found a wonderful hotel, "Hôtel Labrador," positioned on a world-class golf course in the village of Chamonix aux Prax. Room number 10 located on the first floor is the

ideal room for any artist. From our entry hall, which had ample storage space for our extensive equipment, we could see a magnificent view of the dramatically jagged peaks of *Mont Dru*. From our bedroom, we could walk



Bonaparte Crossing the Great St. Bernard Pass  
Jacques Louis David 84" x 70"

*The painting was first commissioned by the King of Spain in 1801. Later, David and his students made four copies. It depicts Napoleon en route to the Battle of Marengo (1800). The same pass was used by Hannibal as well as the Adams'.*

onto our balcony where we had a perfect view of Mont Blanc. The following morning Peter painted from our balcony, while I joined him for breakfast. This was definitely the most comfortable situation I had ever experienced while patiently waiting for him to finish a painting.

On our second day in Chamonix, Peter left at six in the

morning to catch a ride on the cable gondola up to *Aiguille du Midi* near the top of Mont Blanc. At nearly thirteen-thousand feet, even on a sunny summer day, the temperatures are often below freezing, and so I opted to stay warm in bed.

Interestingly, some people travelling on the cablecar haul their luggage with them to take a shortcut over to the Italian border.

Here in the snow, on top of France, Peter set up his pastels to do a painting of the sun rising over a panorama of Alpine peaks. As he focused on his work, he began to notice a distinctive mountain located in the far away distance, perhaps a hundred miles away. It was Switzerland's *Matterhorn*.

That afternoon we left Chamonix, and drove via the *Mont Blanc Tunnel*, an astonishing eight miles through the center of the mountain. Off we went, making our way through the Swiss Alps. Tracing Napoleon's steps toward Marengo, we crossed over the historic Saint Bernard Pass.

Much like the adamant force of *Hannibal* with his elephants crossing the Alps in the 3rd century B.C., we too were determined to get to Rome. The only difference was that unlike the Carthaginian General our reason was not for war, but for love — love of art.

ART TRAVEL LOG: DIARY FROM ITALY

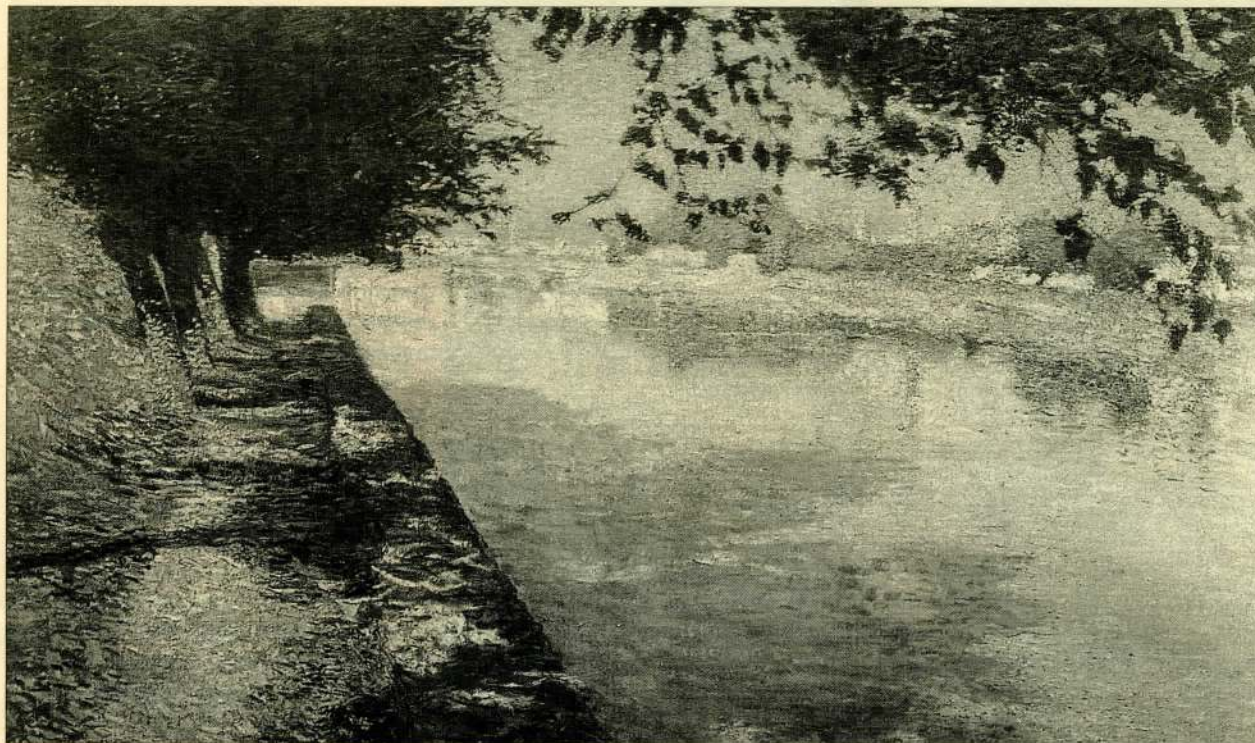
## Part IV: Ornavasso, Pietrasanta, Siena, Florence, and Rome

by Elaine Adams

**O**n September 3 Peter and I left our home in Pasadena for a six-week excursion through France and Italy. In an attempt to share our art adventures with our fellow California Art Club members, this article is written as the last of a four-part series.

What an amazing difference crossing over the Swiss border into Italy. Not only is there a climatic change from cold to pleasant, but there is a notice-

able shift in personalities. Where the Swiss are typically cool and reserved, the Italians are generally hot and animated. I was quickly thumbing my way through a copy of the *Italian Travelmate*, a phrase book that claims to list "useful words and important phrases." However, upon brief inspection, I surmised the book was written for male American tourists on the prowl and out for a "good-time." For instance, if one looks up the word "love," the book lists three examples, "I love you," "do you love me?" And, "I love this wine."



Giorgio Kienerk (1869-1948)  
(An artist of the Post-Macchiaioli movement)

*Arno River*, Florence, 1891  
Private Collection

23 1/2" x 40" oil on canvas





Albert Brenner with a copy of Michelangelo's *Moses*, at the marble yard of Cervietti Franco and Co. in Pietrasanta.

**W**ITHIN TWENTY MINUTES DRIVE INTO Italy, the landscape alters dramatically. Rather than the continuous snow-covered Alpine range, we had ahead of us a myriad of individual and tall protruding peaks veiled in mist. The panorama was reminiscent of Oriental scroll paintings, or perhaps what one would imagine to be *Shangri-la*. Peter commented that the terrain reminded him of Kwelin, China. We were both intrigued by the mysticism of the area, and agreed to further explore the locale.

Trying to locate a town or village in this area proved to be most challenging. Small roads led to dirt roads, which led to dead ends. We kept going in circles, back and forth, zigzagging, and succeeding in getting nowhere. Although there were a few small villages, none could provide overnight accom-

modations. Finally, as it began to grow dark, we spotted an illuminated church steeple. We kept our bearings focused, and were eventually led to the town of Ornavasso nestled among the peaks.

**O**RNAVASSO HAD ONLY ONE *ALBERGO* (inn), however, it was deliciously imbued with old world charm. My phrase book helped us request a room for the night, and whether *la colazione* (breakfast) came with the room. The lady innkeeper responded, "si," but proceeded to ask us, "*Matrimoniale?*" We thought she wanted to know if we were married. I thought to myself, 'how quaint. This town truly has been isolated from the rest of the world.' We immediately responded by saying, "Si, Si," and showed our passports with the same last name as proof. (Later, we learned that "*Matrimoniale*" simply refers to a double bed-size, and not to our marital status.)

In the morning Peter went off to paint while I had breakfast downstairs. A waiter heard that there were two Americans staying at the inn, and was anxious to practice his English. Nicola, poured a cup of tea for me and welcomed me with "good morning." I asked him where he had learned to speak English? He said that he had learned on the job while working in Dublin, Ireland for six months. It was interesting to hear English spoken with an Italian-Irish accent.

As the town was not listed in any of our travel guides, I asked Nicola to tell me a little bit about Ornavasso. He explained that they have a population of 2,000 citizens, most of whom are either farmers or stonemasons from the local marble yards. Apparently, the marble was produced from the mysterious mountain peaks.

**A**FTER PETER RETURNED JUBILANT FROM painting, he shared his revised travel plans with me. He said, "I've been thinking. While we're here in Italy, why don't we visit the Brenners?" Susan and Albert Brenner are good friends of ours and members of the California Art Club (Albert is a "Signature Sculptor" member). The Brenners make it a routine to reside in Italy for eight months out of the year. Albert was originally lured there on the advice of his mentor, sculptor Bruno Lucchesi.

Peter asked me if I remembered the name of the town where the Brenners were staying? I said that I thought it was something like "Santa Pietro." Peter

located a small town on the map named “San Pietro,” and found that it was near Ferrara. It sounded somewhat familiar, and so we were determined to drive there and surprise the Brenners by sundown. We packed our bags and left Ornavasso, vowing to return in the future.

After driving an entire day, we finally reached San Pietro. We knew that the Brenners were living in a town frequented by sculptors, and thus, we should see evidence of sculptural works or foundries, but found none. Obviously, we were in the wrong place. Spending the night in nearby Ferrara, we called Pam Ludwig, director of the Joan Irvine Smith Gallery in Laguna Beach, California, where Albert is represented. Pam told us that the Brenners were not in San Pietro near Ferrara, rather, they were in Pietrasanta near Carrara. We were over 250 miles off track!

**T**HE FOLLOWING DAY WE arrived in Pietrasanta located in the *Toscana* (Tuscany) region. We stopped at a public telephone and called the Brenners. Susan told us that she would meet us at the Bar Michelangelo located in the Piazza Duomo. Indeed, we had crossed over into the sculptors’ zone. In every direction one sees works of marble and bronze, as well as marble yards and bronze foundries. Michelangelo had lived in Pietrasanta for seven years, and obtained his marble from the nearby quarries of Carrara and Montaltissimo.

We sat at the cafe and ordered a cappuccino while we waited for Susan. Looking about, everyone looked like an artist. Where in most of Italy the locals dress fashionably, here, they dress comfortably — ready to chip, chisel, and drill. From a distance we spotted Susan Brenner riding on her Italian Vespa motorbike, looking very much like a native. After

excitedly embracing, we followed Susan to their villa just two miles away, where we were graciously invited to stay for a few days.

**T**HE BRENNER’S TWO-STORY VILLA WAS charming, and painted in the traditional Tuscan color of burnt sienna; a color named for the red clay found in nearby Siena. Albert showed up after a day’s work at the foundry where he was creating an exciting new series of figures. We all went out that evening for dinner at a nearby restaurant where seafood is the local specialty, as Pietrasanta is at the base of the Italian Riviera on the Tuscan Coast.

In the morning we each had separate plans, but agreed to meet at one o’clock for lunch at the sculp-



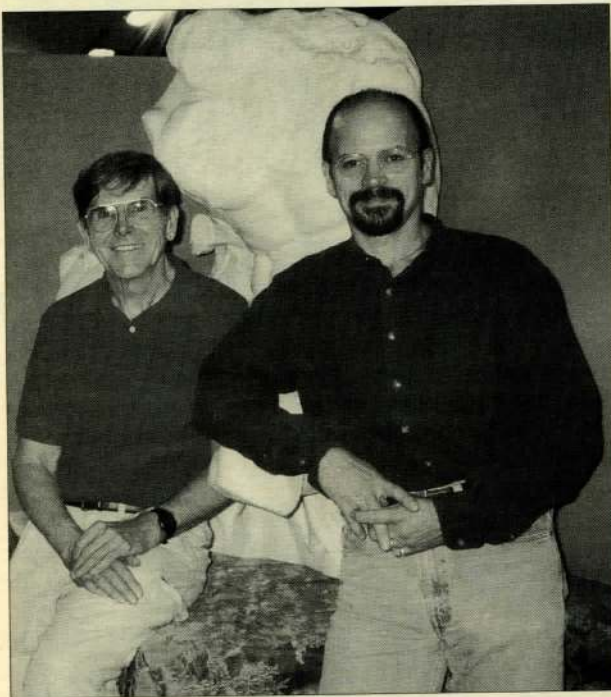
Joseph Sheppard  
*Tattooed Nude* 20" x 24" oil

tors' hangout, Bar Michelangelo. After lunch the Brenners gave us a tour of one of the more prestigious marble yards, **Cervietti Franco & Co.** We were introduced to the owner, **Franco**, who proudly showed us his establishment. On the second floor were over a thousand original historic and contemporary plaster casts. On the ground floor, several employed *artigiani* (craftsmen) were fastidiously working on numerous and grand-scale projects. We were amazed to see an exact marble replica of Michelangelo's *Moses*. Interestingly, this particular foundry owns original plaster casts officially made by the Italian State Museum of Michelangelo's *Moses*, *David*, and the *Pietà*. Also, in their midst is **Bernini's** *Apollo and Daphne*, and **Canova's** *Three Graces*. Albert explained to us that museums from around the world commission Franco to recreate these qualified masterpieces in marble for their own collections. After touring Franco's marble yard, Albert offered to give us a tour of the bronze foundry where he works on his own masterpieces.

**Fonderia d'Arte Del Chiaro Massimo** is renowned for its production of fine bronze sculpture. Here, we caught a glimpse of Albert's latest

works. Included was a new series of his contemporary version of *The Three Graces*, and a frolicsome girl and boy at play around a water pump, which actually works as a clever fountain. Albert explained the procedures involved in creating a finished work of bronze, which requires fifteen complicated steps.

After the artist has created his concept in clay, a rubber mold is made from the model. Next, a wax replica is made, which can be retouched by the artist. Once the wax model is up to satisfaction, its shape is held together by an intricate web of bamboo conduits, a process referred to as "gating the wax." The wax structure is then layered with a heat-resistant terracotta-based "jacket" called *Lotto* (pronounced lō-tō'). Next, the entire mass is put into a large kiln, which can contain up to fifty pieces at once. After the wax vaporizes and the bamboo disintegrates, a hollow form remains, and it is into this cavity that the bronze is poured and the sculpture is cast. For its finish, the piece is sandblasted and patined. With such an intense process it is a wonder that bronze sculptures are not priced higher than they are.



Gerald Ackerman, Ph.D. and Daniel Graves, Director of The Florence Academy of Art.

**WE** LEARNED THAT TWO OTHER CALIFORNIA Art Club sculptors work in Pietrasanta on an annual basis, **Elizabeth MacQueen** and **Andrea Favilli**. Unfortunately for us, we had just missed their recent visit. We discovered that Pietrasanta is not only a Mecca for sculptors, but for commercial marble as well. Slabs of marble are sent from countries from all over the world to be cut and polished in Pietrasanta. Apparently, this small town has the best equipment and expertise, making it the most economically-efficient marble yard in the world.

After our tour of the marble yards and bronze foundries, we decided that in order to complete our education, we must visit Carrara, a main source of *marmo bianco* (white marble). Following some rather narrow, twisting and winding roads, we spotted the famous mountain across a vast valley. Here, at the side of the road, Peter set up his easel and began to paint. Occasionally, we could hear a thunderous roar, similar to the rumble of an earthquake. Soon, we would see a white cloud of dust. If we focused our sights, we could see an enormous slab of marble come sliding down the side of the mountain. Looking at the great mass of white, one can see evidence of where Carrara has been cut over



Domenico Morelli (1823 -1901) *Temptation of St. Anthony*, 1878  
Collection: Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, Rome

54 5/8" × 88 1/4"

the centuries. However, those unmistakable sections of vertical slices do not deter from the mountain's sense of strength and dignity.

**T**HE FOLLOWING EVENING THE BRENNERS had arranged for us to meet the internationally-renowned artist, **Joseph Sheppard**. We made dinner reservations at the excellent **Il Baccatoio** restaurant in Pietrasanta. I decided to take advantage of the situation and to interview Mr. Sheppard for the *California Art Club Newsletter*.

Joseph Sheppard was born in 1930 in Owings Mills, Maryland, and attended the **Maryland Institute of Art** where he studied under **Jacques Maroger**. He later became an art teacher at the institute, and it was during this time that he realized there was little literature available for artists interested in studying anatomy. Thus, he decided to write his own instructive books, and eventually became the eminent author of ten anatomy and drawing books. These now famous publications have been translated into Japanese, Chinese,

German, Italian, and soon, French. Artists who wish to excel in draughtsmanship of the human figure often refer to Sheppard's *Anatomy: A Complete Guide for Artists* (published by Watson-Guption; 1975; ISBN 0-8230-0218-7).

Eventually, Sheppard moved to the Tuscany region where he initially spent ten years in Florence and then fifteen years in Pietrasanta. He has gracefully adjusted to his adopted Tuscan lifestyle. He speaks fluent Italian, and at his home in Pietrasanta, he is surrounded by one hundred olive trees which he faithfully harvests for their oil. In his model environment he enjoys the company of select artists, several who come from the U.S. seeking artistic enlightenment. Sheppard revealed to us that the favorite topic of discussion among the artists is, "how terrible the foundries and galleries are, and we basically commiserate together." A sympathetic ear is no doubt given by his devoted companion, a generic black dog paradoxically named "**Bianca**". Joseph's humor is noted for his sense of ambiguity and irony, a characteristic that finds its way into his art.

Trained as a painter in the classical sense, Sheppard's highly collected paintings often combine classic beauty and composition in unusual, but realistic situations. For example, in *Catacombs of the Cappuccini Convent* a young couple catch a private moment to engage themselves in a passionate kiss. However, their interlude is not entirely private as they are surrounded by the very bizarre, yet actually-existent, garment-clad skeletons. Another example of his dichotomous work is a painting entitled, *Tattooed Nude*. Here, he shows a classic view of a woman's back curvature. However, the seductive curves of her spine take second notice to the tattooed dragon on her back. In the last fifteen years, Sheppard has expanded his media into sculpting, and here, again he excels.

Joseph Sheppard explains his personal experiences and insights, "Being taught the techniques of the masters made it difficult for me as an artist during the 1950s. (Rather than being a classicist,) I could have probably become famous just spraying paint somewhere." While on the subject of fame (and fortune), he confessed that, "The main thing an artist wants is appreciation and acknowledgment for what he has created. The money is just so that the artist can *continue* working, unlike others who want money to *retire* from working."

We feel akin to Sheppard's philosophies. In his recently published *Catalogue of Works from 1994-1997*, he states his credo as such, "I believe that technical skill is still an important element in art. I believe that there is no object to nonobjective, minimal is less, junk sculpture is junk, and form in painting relates to the illusion of three dimensions. My art is based on a return to those standards which demand the knowledge of composition, perspective, color, three-dimensional form, draftsmanship and anatomy."

**T**HE FOLLOWING DAY, WE DROVE INTO nearby Lucca to tour the town that was colonized in the second century B.C. by the Romans as a military camp. Much later in Lucca's history, it is interesting to note that from 1805 to 1813, the town was ruled by Napoleon's sister, **Elisa Bonaparte**. Princess Elisa was admired for her wisdom and aptitude for public affairs, and she is remembered for her role in developing the town's economic prominence and in promoting the arts.

Lucca is known to have bred several notable artistic minds, including the seventeenth-century painters, **Salimbeni**, **Guido Reni**, and **Barocci**. A special treat for us was visiting the childhood home of the operatic composer, the great **Giacomo Puccini**.

**T**HE NEXT MORNING WE LAMENTABLY LEFT the charming Brenners and their inspirational surroundings. However, our roaming artistic aspirations were calling us to Siena. Driving through Tuscany's gently rolling hills tapestried with olive groves, Italian pines, and cypress trees, one becomes reminiscent of Renaissance paintings. This region is famous for its *Chianti* wine. However, wines that are worthy of sampling are Tuscany's premier red, the *brunello di Montalcino*, and its superior white wine, the *vernaccia di San Gimignano*. For those of us with an insistent sweet tooth, a special Tuscan treat is *vin santo*. This confection of sherry-like wine is served with a plateful of *cantuccini di Prato* (crispy almond cookies), upon which one nibbles after dunking into the wine.

The modern city of Siena is bustling with traffic and noise. However, if one finds one's way through the gates to the historic center, one must be prepared to leave one's modern memories behind. Siena is the epitome of Medievalism as it is steeped in Gothic art and architecture, and mysticism. Although during the thirteenth-century, neighboring Florence was burgeoning in Renaissance idealism, Siena's artistic philosophies remained dedicated to the Byzantine traditions of graceful line and subtlety of color. Several noted painters who adhered to the Siennese Gothic ideals were, **Nicola and Giovanni Pisano**, **Duccio di Buoninsegna** (c1260-1318), **Simone Martini** (c1285-1344), and **Pietro and Ambrogio Lorenzetti**. Siena's most heralded sculptor was **Jacopo della Quercia** (1371-1438).

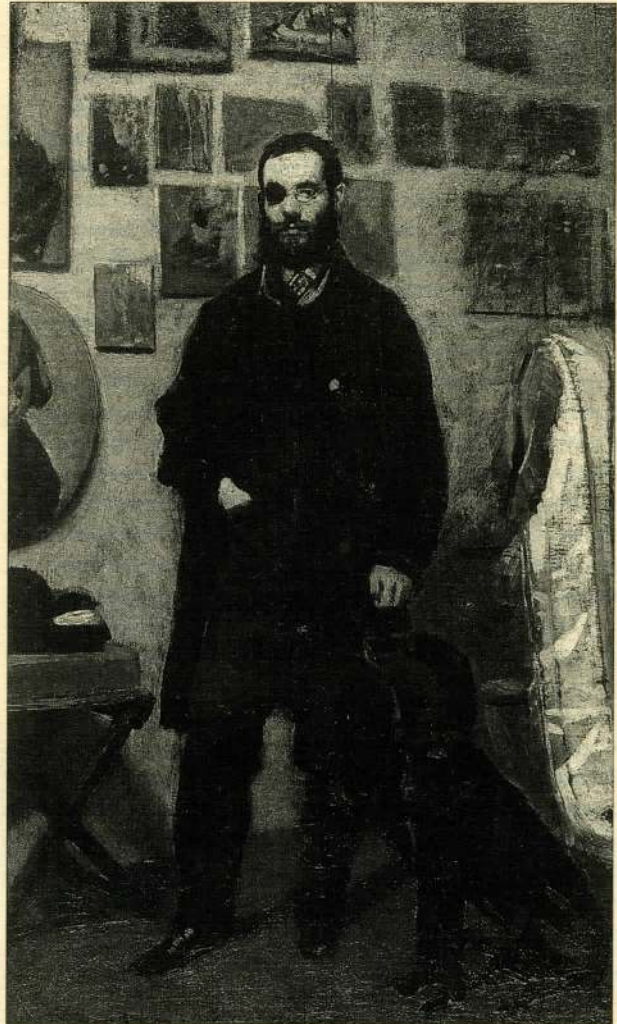
The streets of Siena are lined with palaces and patrician mansions, a reminder to the tourist that Siena was once a wealthy independent republic, before two-thirds of its population were wiped-out by the plague in 1348. Many palaces have been converted into hotels. The Brenners had recommended the **Pensione Palazzo Ravizza** as the unequivocal lodging for us. This proved to be an excellent suggestion. Staying at the Palazzo Ravizza was very much like being an invited house guest where everyone felt at ease with each other.

It was wonderful awakening each morning to the sound of church bells. The view from our large shuttered window was an ideal painting subject; typical of the pure rolling Tuscan landscape drenched in morning misty haze. All of Siena seemed magical and captivating to me. I enjoyed making myself "at home" in Siena. While Peter painted, I ventured about the town, and tried to appear as a native. On one of my strolls, a woman stopped to ask, "*Dov'è la Piazza del Campo?*" Her accent was so blatantly Brooklyn that I gave her directions in English. She was so pleased, and said, "Thank you. And your English is very good!"

ON OUR FOURTH DAY IN SIENA, WE HAD arranged a meeting in nearby Florence with Daniel Graves, Director of The Florence Academy of Art. It so happens that back in June of 1995 we received a letter from Susan Tintori, administrator for The Florence Academy of Art. Mrs. Tintori suggested that members of our club would be interested in learning about their school. When I originally received the letter, I realized that it was important to give it my undivided attention. However, the opportunity for my *undivided* attention never came. Two years and four months later, here we were at their front door in Florence answering their letter in person.

When we entered the Academy, who was there to greet us? None other than Dr. Gerald Ackerman, the eminent art historian, author of the catalogue raisonné on Jean-Léon Gérôme, and fellow Southern Californian. We excitedly embraced, and began to interrogate each other. We asked Dr. Ackerman what he was doing in Florence? He asked us what we were doing there, and if we had received his fax dated September 5 informing us that he would be in Florence? We said, "No. We left for Europe on September 3."

We explained what brought us to Europe was an invitation by *American Artist Magazine* to paint at the Forbes' Chateau de Balleroy in Normandy, France. (Interestingly, we later discovered that Stephen Doherty, Editor of *American Artist*, serves on the Advisory Council Board of The Florence Academy of Art.) Dr. Ackerman proceeded to explain that he is in his third trimester at the Academy. He clarified his initial interest in the school by stating, "As an art historian I thought it



Giovanni Boldini (1842-1931)  
*The Painter, Giuseppe Abbati*, 1865-66  
 14 3/4" x 8 5/8" oil on panel  
 Private Collection: Montecatini  
 (Ironically, two years after this portrait was painted, Abbati died of rabies after being bitten by his dog.)

was important to learn drawing skills when writing about Gérôme and Bouguereau. Seeing the artists here at work has sharpened my eyes by ten times. After the first trimester, I fell in love with drawing. Now, while at the Academy I do six hours of drawing each day." Dr. Ackerman also serves on the school's Advisory Council Board and lectures for the students. His lecture for this current term is on "How to Know and Use Classical Statuary."

Soon, we were introduced to Susan Tintori and Daniel Graves and were given a tour of the Academy. The building, which is located on the north side of the Arno River is just a short walk from the Uffizi Gallery. Once a large warehouse, the Academy building in its current transformation has been divided into sixteen art studios.

We were encouraged to speak to several students, each hailing from different parts of the world. We spoke with **Jacqueline Apel** from Geneva, Switzerland, **Maureen Hyde** from San Francisco, and a few gentlemen, one from Scotland, one from England, and one from the U.S. Some students who have graduated from the Academy are now sharing their knowledge as instructors. A bonus to the students is the special permission to draw from original works in the collection of the Uffizi Gallery's "old master drawing room". For the advanced students and alumni, the Academy organizes annual exhibitions in museums and galleries throughout the world.

Daniel Graves, who is not only Director of the Academy, but also an instructor there as well, studied anatomy and painting under Joseph Sheppard at the Maryland Art Institute. He graduated from M.A.I. Cum Laude in 1972, then moved to Florence where he studied etching and history painting with **Richard Serrin** at the **Villa Schifanoia Graduate School of Fine Art**. Graves returned to the U.S. to study with **Richard Lack** at the **Atelier Lack** in Minnesota. Lack was a student of **Ives Gammell** in Boston. Gammell advocated the nineteenth century atelier system of Jean-Léon Gérôme. In 1978 Graves returned to Florence to study under **Nerina Simi**, whose father was an actual student of Gérôme. In 1984 Daniel Graves co-founded the **Studio Cecil-Graves** in Florence (with fellow American, Charles Cecil), where he taught for eight years.

**E**VENTUALLY, IN 1991 DANIEL GRAVES founded The Florence Academy of Art. His dedicated vision for the Academy is to "provide the highest level of instruction in classical drawing and painting... (and) to turn out a select group of highly skilled Realist painters. The Academy's curriculum and method of instruction demands a return to discipline in art, to canons of beauty, and to the direct study of nature and the Old Masters as the foundation for great painting."

The three-year curriculum is modeled after the traditions of the **Beaux Arts** in Paris and other high-

level nineteenth century academies. Beginning students learn to draw from antique plaster casts, as well as from Renaissance and nineteenth century sculpture. Intermediate level students learn to paint from the cast in *grisaille* (in shades of gray), graduating to a limited palette. Next, they are taught strict painting techniques, including how to grind pigment and how to prepare the canvas.

All levels of students work together from the figure using live models seventeen hours per week. This traditional atelier method encourages beginners to learn from advanced students and to create a student-teacher relationship. The Academy is not a proponent of "quick" model poses, instead, they prefer poses that are studied from one to five weeks. As Daniel Graves revealed, "Subconsciously, the students are being taught the Greek canons on proportion, which we believe to be essential to proper artistic training. We're teaching principles, so that eventually painting will be like playing the piano (as a virtuoso). That is, they will hit the proper notes without thinking about it." Visiting the Academy was most encouraging to us. We felt the future of art to be in good hands.

**W**ITHIN WALKING DISTANCE OF THE Florence Academy of Art is the **Galleria D'Arte Mentana** where they had on exhibit a solo presentation of Joseph Sheppard's recent paintings and sculpture. In either medium, Sheppard's works are wonderfully stimulating and profound. Still within walking distance is the unique **Centro Di** art book shop located at Via Renai 20R, which was recommended by Daniel Graves. What a find! There, we spent several hours (and dollars) going through exceptional books. We were particularly interested in finding books on Italian artists of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, of which there were many exciting examples.

Some of our favorite Italian schools of painting are that of the *Symbolists*, the *Macchiaioli*, and the *Post-Macchiaioli*. The term, "macchia," has multiple meanings including, "sketch," "patch," "effect" and "rebel." It was a derogatory brand given by an art critic in 1862 to a group of artists who preferred to paint the contemporary Italian culture and landscapes *all'aperto* ("plein air" in French, or "open air" in English). This was thought to be rebellious, as during that time the academically-accepted subject was historical scene painting. After we were

done emptying our wallets on art books, the owner of the bookstore let us know that there was an exhibition of Macchiaioli paintings less than a mile away.

The exhibition, *I Macchiaioli*, had just opened at the **Galleria Pananti** located in the **Piazza Santa Croce**. On exhibit were one-hundred-fifty *all'aperto* paintings and sketches. Some of the stellar Macchiaioli artists were, **Telemaco Signorini** (1835-1901), **Silvestro Lega** (1826-1895), **Giovanni Fattori** (1825-1908), and **Giuseppe Abbati** (1836-1868). An artist particularly worth mentioning was the Neapolitan, **Domenico Morelli** (1823-1901) whose symbolistic works and painterly brush inspired the Florentines who attended the **Accademia di Belle Arti**. Also worth mentioning is the famous portrait painter, **Giovanni Boldini** (1842-1931) whose style was influenced by the Macchiaioli movement.

**T**HAT NIGHT WE RETURNED TO SIENA, and left the following morning for Rome. We had hotel reservations waiting for us at the **Hotel Teatro Di Pompeo**. But, before leaving Siena we requested our hotel concierge to telephone Rome and ask for driving directions. However, we were told that driving instructions to the hotel were too complicated to explain. It was suggested that we find a Roman taxi driver and have him lead us to the hotel.

Initially, we started off with the "taxi" plan, but as we approached closer to Rome, Peter became brave and decided that we could find the hotel ourselves. I began to focus my eyes intensely on the hundreds of tiny little streets on our map of Rome. "I found it!" I excitedly exclaimed. "There it is, Largo del Pallaro, that's the street where the hotel is. We can do it! Let's drive there ourselves!"

I was convinced it would be easy. All we had to do was follow the map closely. It was obvious. Just turn left here. Then, go straight. Next, turn right, and we're there. But, no! The left turn we should have made went one-way in the opposite direction, and we couldn't get near the street where we should have turned right. We tried coming through from the other side, but to complicate matters, some of the one-way streets would switch directions after a certain hour. We couldn't even slow down to verify our bearings. There were *polizia* everywhere signaling and waving their arms, and blowing their whis-

ties, and yelling "*Avanti!*" So, we would uselessly keep moving, not knowing where we were going.

**F**INALLY, WE WERE TRAPPED IN WHAT WE Southern Californians would consider a back alley. However, in Rome, these little niches between buildings are practically main thoroughfares. We pushed our sideview mirrors inward so that we could aerodynamically squeeze through the narrow streets. At this point, we were driving at less than one mile per hour. The natives noticed our French license plate, and would happily say "*Bonjour*" to us.

Eventually, we were completely stuck, and not going anywhere. A police officer blew his whistle and told us to continue. We shrugged our shoulders to ask, "how?" Another police officer came to see what was causing the holdup. They noticed our foreign license plate. We showed them the address to the hotel, and they literally walked us there as we followed them in our car. Largo del Pallaro wasn't a street at all, it was more like a small parking lot. (Oddly, "largo" means wide area.) But, there it was, Hotel Teatro Di Pompeo!

The hotel is actually located on the remains of the ancient theatre of **Pompey** dating back to the year 55 B.C. Many historians believe that this is the site where **Julius Caesar** was assassinated. The underground breakfast room still shows remains of the theatre's original structure.

Although difficult to find, the hotel is located in the heart of Rome's historical center. From there, we could easily walk to the magnificent **Pantheon** and **Piazza Navonna**, as well as to the ancient **Roman Forum**, and the late nineteenth century **Monument to Victor Emmanuel II**, where Peter spent a great deal of time painting.

**W**HILE AT THE PIAZZA NAVONNA, WE became absorbed in a conversation with an art reviewer from London who explained that he was mostly interested in contemporary art. We naturally told him about the **California Art Club** and our exciting new movement. As he seemed receptive, we presented him with a California Art Club **Mission San Juan Capistrano** tote bag designed by **Dan Goozéé**. For this trip, we had taken with us several CAC tote bags, T-shirts and *Newsletters* to give to those we thought would appreciate them. This tote bag happened to be our last CAC souvenir.



Just a few feet away, we noticed a pair of religious missionaries handing out literature. We heard them say, "May we leave you with a few words to remember in times of trouble... etc.?" It then occurred to us that we too were on a world-altering mission. However, our words to remember could very well be, "Repent from the evils of bad and mediocre art, and restore the artistic virtues of classical-traditionalism! And, may we leave you with a tote bag or T-shirt?"

## NOTES:

*How to apply (or to receive brochures) to The Florence Academy of Art:*

Send five slides or photographs of recent drawing or paintings to:

The Florence Academy of Art  
Via delle Casine, 21 R  
50122 Florence, Italy

Telephone: 39-55-245444

Facsimile: 39-55-2343701

Include, name, address, telephone, facsimile, age, education and CAC referral. Also, indicate which trimester you wish to study, (fall, winter, spring) and planned length of study.

After acceptance:

Full time tuition per trimester is \$1,850.

Part time tuition per trimester is \$1,350.

**SIDE NOTE:** If you go to Florence to visit the Academy, have lunch at the neighborhood trattoria **La Maremmana**. We lunched their together with Dr. Ackerman, Mr. Graves, and Mrs. Tintori. Order the antipasto. It's a great selection of local delicacies!

## CAC News

**89TH ANNUAL CALIFORNIA ART CLUB  
GOLD MEDAL EXHIBITION & SALE**

This year the exhibition will be on view for six weeks at the prestigious Luckman Fine Arts Complex located on the campus of California State University, Los Angeles. Detailed information has been sent to all eligible members.

Gold Medal Chairman: **Donald Hildreth**

Exhibition Consultant: **Patricia Woodlin, Ph.D.**

Luckman Executive Director: **Clifford Harper, Ph.D.**

*Entry Forms & Slides Due:* June 5

*Deliver Art Work:* July 7

*Judging:* July 8

*Installation:* July 9 & 10

*Exhibition Dates:* July 11 - August 29, 1998

*(Exhibition closed from July 26 - August 3, 1998)*

*Reception:* July 18, 1998; 5:00 - 8:00 PM

**CAC HISTORICAL PAINTINGS ON AUCTION**

John Moran Auctioneers, Inc. will be auctioning 250 California and American paintings from 1880-1940. Many feature historical members of the California Art Club.

June 16, 1998

Pasadena Civic Center

*Preview:* 12:00 NOON

*Auction:* 7:00 PM

Catalog available on May 10, 1998 for \$10.

*Information:* 626/793-1833

**"PLEIN AIR EVENT 1998"**

Participating art groups include artists from the California Art Club, Plein Air Painters of America, Oil Painters of America, and Carmel Art Association.

*Prizes:* First \$3,000; Second \$1,500; Third \$500  
One of the top three paintings will be honored as the poster image for next year's event.

*Event Dates:* May 14 - 17, 1998

*Reception for Artists:* May 15; at the Carmel Art Association facility.

*Exhibit & Awards Ceremony:* May 16; at the Sunset Center

*For more information:* 408/642-2503