



Las Guias Newsletter

May 20, 2024

Dewayne Matthews

Thanks for reading my first newsletter since I assumed the role of Coordinator of Las Guias Education!

Shelley has split the Education Coordinator position into two jobs: one dealing with Las Guias and the other dealing with education programs open to all Guild members. That position is held by Anita Hicks.

While my title is Coordinator of Las Guias Education, my responsibilities include everything to do with Las Guias. The education component of Las Guias includes new exhibit walk-throughs, training of new guides, the Fall tune-up, and continuing education, But I'll also oversee scheduling, performance reviews, docent exchanges and other issues that may arise affecting Las Guias.

I'm looking forward to working with all of you this year! I plan to send out a newsletter monthly, including this summer. Let me know if there are any questions or issues you'd like me to address. You can always reach me at dewamatt@outlook.com or around the Heard.

Thanks to Linda! The first item of business must be to thank Linda for her incredible service as Education Coordinator. Fortunately, she is not disappearing—in addition to her guiding duties, she has agreed to continue as chair of the new exhibit walkthrough committee, along with Jerry Cowdrey and me as members.

Scheduling. As you all know by now, Jackie Stubbs has graciously stepped in to follow Jack Brock as scheduler. Jack helped Jackie get up to speed by working with her on the summer schedule, but Jackie will take it from here. Allow me to add my kudos to Jack for valiant service in an often thankless role. Like Linda, Jack is not disappearing and will continue to guide and perform other service to the Guild and Las Guias. Thanks Jack, and thanks Jackie!

We're exploring ways to streamline scheduling, including through the use of technology. Dan Dolan and the technology team have been helping this effort, and we think certain approaches show real promise. In particular, it looks like we could implement a much simpler and faster way to find and schedule subs as early as this fall. We have nothing to announce, but wanted to give you a heads-up that we may try to test some new approaches to scheduling as early as this summer. Stay tuned!

Tours in Languages other than English. As you saw in Shelley's message as incoming President, she has appointed Gladys Matthews to develop a process for offering foreign-language tours. Shelley has made it clear that offering foreign-language

tours, especially in Spanish, is a priority of the Heard leadership. The demand is certainly there—just this Saturday, we had a private tour of around 40 people from Puerto Rico, most of whom wanted a tour in Spanish. Gladys and I shared a Home tour for the group while DeLisa Brown-Gur took care of the English speakers. It was a lot of fun, but it also reminded me of how much is involved, especially with specialized terminology, in offering a good tour in another language. I was stumped (pardon the pun) when a visitor asked what the hogan was constructed of. I answered with *madera* (wood), but that wasn't quite right—the word I couldn't find was *truncos* for logs. I've been looking for Spanish equivalents for words like *slip*, *to fire* and *burnish* related to pottery (*alfarería*). So much to learn!

At any rate, Gladys will appoint a committee to work with her on figuring out the best way to make tours in other languages a reality. If any of you are interested in working with her on this project, or exploring the possibility of becoming a foreign-language guide, please contact her at linguamerica@gmail.com.

"Think Pottery." I know you've all seen the announcement of the upcoming session on pottery by Jim Szabo. While the session will be of interest to all Guild members, I expect lots of guides to attend because this is a marvelous opportunity to get authoritative answers to all our questions about how pottery is made, including Maria's black-on-black. There is still a fair amount of confusion about reduction firing, and I trust Jim to clear it up for us as well as share many other insights on pottery making!

The session is on Thursday, June 20th at 10:00am in the Monte Vista Room.

Email Communication. By now, you've seen several emails from Shelley, Jack, and others reminding us of the proper procedure for sending emails to fellow guides. The bottom line is to not use the lasquias@heardguild.org address for anything other than finding a sub. As Jack reminded us, the right way to request a sub is to send the email to yourself, but then add the lasquias@heard.org address in the bcc address field. This is a bit cumbersome, but it serves an important purpose. This way, when people reply to the message, the reply doesn't go to everyone.

I would like to know if there is any interest among the guides in sharing information that may be of interest—interesting articles on Native art and history, current issues affecting Native peoples, and announcements. From time to time, my class (class of 2022) does share information like this via our personal emails, and I enjoy it. But many others find receiving too many emails bothersome. What about sharing information among the guides? (Send it to me, and not the group! 😊)

Training and Education. As I mentioned, Shelley has appointed Anita to develop education opportunities for Guild members. We need, however, to think about the kind of continuing education and training guides would benefit from. This includes refresher walk-throughs on all exhibits (including Home) for guides who are returning from time off, training and practice for school and Highlight tours, and sessions discussing issues

that arise on tours, such as talking about sensitive issues, dealing with difficult visitors, and shifting interpretations of history.

I have nothing to announce on this front, but please share any ideas you have about the kind of continuing education and training you think guides would benefit from. Thanks!

A Book Recommendation. *All the Beauty in the World: The Metropolitan Museum of Art and Me* by Patrick Bringley.

Bringley worked for 10 years as a guard at the Met in New York and wrote this memoir of his experiences. It's a great book on the inner workings of museums and the people who make them tick, but it's also one of the best books on the power of art that I've ever read.

Dewayne Matthews

dewamatt@outlook.com

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Art & Sole

Walkthrough Notes

Dewayne Matthews

These notes reflect my own ideas and understandings and not those of the Heard Museum or Guild. Please let me know immediately of any errors or misconceptions you see, plus any corrections, suggestions, additional information or insights you can share.

Charles King is recognized as one of the leading experts in the world on the subject of Native pottery – indeed, it is hard to come up with another name that rises to his level. What makes him perhaps unique, however, are his deep and long-standing relationships with contemporary Native potters here in the Southwest.

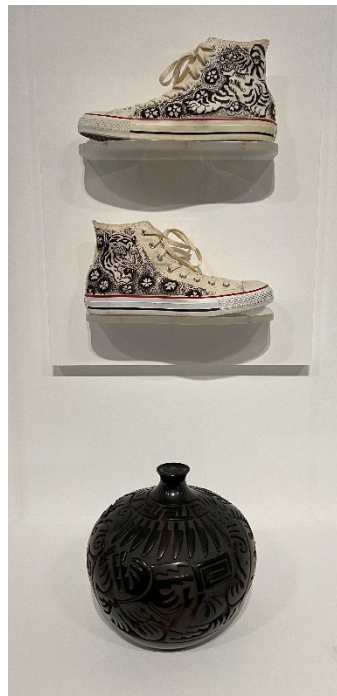
These relationships are what led to this exhibition. Susan Folwell was the first to paint a pair of Converse Chuck Taylor High Top All Star sneakers for King, which led to him asking other artists he knew, especially potters, to do the same. The result is this remarkable and unique collection, which King recently donated to the Heard.

To exhibit the collection, the Heard made the (inspired) decision to combine them with works of art created by the same artists. The conversations between the sneakers and artwork provide fascinating insights into the artist's artistic visions and visual language.



In this pairing by the husband-and-wife team of Lisa Holt and Harlan Reano (Cochiti and Santo Domingo/Kewa), the three figures inspired by traditional Cochiti figurines seem ready to jump in the shoes and take off running. Holt and Reano said they made the figures after seeing three Cochiti children posing as superheroes. The designs by Reano on both the figures and the shoes clearly speak the same visual language.

In addition to Lisa Holt and Harlan Reano and Susan Folwell, Art & Sole includes many of the top figures in contemporary Native pottery, including Jennifer Tafoya, Dan Namingha, Jason Garcia, Rose Simpson, Virgil Ortiz, and Tammy Garcia and her sister Autumn Borts-Medlock, and Virgil Ortiz. Tammy Garcia's sneakers depict tigers in intricate lines, while Borts-Medlock's piece is in the form of a parrot. Parrots harken back to Chaco, but they still play a significant role in traditional Tewa ceremonies.



The exhibit also includes artist in media other than pottery including Jared Da, Terri Greves, Duane Koyawena, and these works by Jicarilla Apache/Jemez artist Philip L.Y. Vigil.



This painting by Marla Allison, titled *Dragonfly and Moonlight* and from Allison's series *Queens in Metallic*, was selected in part to be what visitors see when leaving *Maria and Modernism*. The shoes are titled *Sunday Shoes* because Allison says Sundays are when Charles King makes the rounds at shows to check in with artists. The tops of the shoes appear a light tan color, but in fact are painted with a UV-sensitive paint that glows bright blue in sunlight. The blue sky makes it clear that the black and white forms represent mesas.



Some artists represented in the collection also have works on display elsewhere in the Museum. This includes Rose Simpson, who transformed her sneakers into something resembling traditional moccasins.



Simpson's moccasin/sneakers are paired with an early fabric and pottery piece inspired by her grandmother which shows the connections between people, families, and generations.

Indeed, *Art & Sole* may be considered an excellent overview of the incredible range of contemporary Native art, as well as an introduction to many of the top artists active today.

Harry Fonseca: Transformations

Of Nisenan (Maidu) heritage, along with Hawaiian and Portuguese, Fonseca belonged to the Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians, a federally-recognized tribe whose reservation is east of Sacramento in Northern California. Born in 1946, he lived for a time in San Francisco before moving to Santa Fe. Fonseca died in 1996 at the age of 60.

As is the case for many artists, Fonseca used his art to explore questions of identity, including his indigenous culture and sexuality. In 1979, Fonseca began the series of paintings that he is best-known for—those of Coyote. In many Native cultures, including the Maidu, Coyote is a sacred figure. A trickster, Coyote also represents transformation and teaches lessons about human nature. Fonseca used Coyote to illustrate the many forms that identify as a indigenous individual can take. Fonseca's Coyote often wears leather jackets and high-top sneakers, and can appear as a dancer, sharing a tender moment on a bar stool, with a feather headdress, draped in an American flag, or even as a Pueblo Koshare. He can appear in San Francisco's Mission District or at the "Heard Show."



Fonseca's character Rose is almost as well-known as Coyote. Often depicted as Coyote's companion, Fonseca said Rose was based on his aunt, who demonstrated a kind of "rez glamour" that resonates with many.

But Fonseca's art went far beyond Coyote and Rose. Fonseca was a dancer, including of traditional Maidu ceremonial dances like the coyote and deer dance. The four dance drawings in the exhibition amply demonstrate Fonseca's artistic ability by depicting Coyote in a range of postures and movements.



Fonseca's love of dance is ability to portray its grace and movement is evident in the piece *Roxie—The Black Swan*.



Transformations is an apt title for an exhibition of Harry Fonseca's art. His work was diverse in subject and style, and touched on subjects like Native history, Maidu spirituality, and gay/queer identity. Despite its seriousness and technical mastery, there is a lightness and humor to much of his work which helps explain its lasting appeal.

"The task of the painter is honesty. The quest for self-exploration is one he is yet to exhaust."
– Harry Fonseca