

# IMAGINE MORE



THE CAMPAIGN  
SANTA BARBARA  
MUSEUM OF ART

Welcome to *Imagine More*, the bimonthly newsletter of the Santa Barbara Museum of Art's capital campaign. Each issue will be designed to share with you, as a friend of the Museum, how our proposed renovations will heighten the experience for all who visit us while ensuring the safety of our art and our visitors. We will also explore some of the programs and people (past and present) who have made our Museum the truly special treasure that it is.

As you learn more about our capital campaign, I believe you will understand why the Museum Board felt it important—indeed essential—that major upgrades be made to the structure, operating systems and layout of the Museum. Of course, these changes can only be accomplished with your support. We have received a remarkable gift from prior generations of Santa Barbarans; a gift of culture, history and beauty. It is now up to us to carry this gift forward to those who follow.

Larry Feinberg,  
Robert and Mercedes Eichholz Director

## New Walls For An Old Structure

You didn't need the hit summer movie *San Andreas* to be reminded of the earthquake danger in California—or the strict building codes we live with as a result. So when leaks and obsolescence forced SBMA to rebuild the roof and HVAC system of its 100-year-old main building, there was no such thing as an easy fix.

The unreinforced brick walls of the old Federal Post Office building survived one earthquake in 1925 but can't pass muster today. Even worse, the 1941 McCormick Wing is missing a fourth wall: its three sides were tacked onto the Post Office, saving money and space at the expense of structural integrity.

The addition of a fourth wall for McCormick—a 12"-thick steel-reinforced concrete sheet that will sit 4" off the existing wall—is among the first items to be addressed during our upcoming renovations. To reinforce existing walls, a rebar cage will be anchored onto each wall and high-strength concrete will be shot into and over the rebar creating a new wall inside the old. Where walls are pierced by arches, a new network of columns and beams will be needed; and more steel beams will be used to support the mezzanine-level floor being added to the McCormick Wing.

Although the timing of the seismic reinforcement was triggered by the pressing need for a new roof and new HVAC system, a building that protects its visitors and the valuable art it holds is a priority in itself. As Director of Facilities and Installations John Coplin notes, "We're doing what's required, but it's also the prudent thing to do."

Pending final permitting by the City, the first stage of renovations is expected to begin in late October or November.



## Our Donors, Past and Present

**In 1963, when she was 88 years old, Katharine Dexter McCormick signed a fourth codicil to her will, determining where her art collection would go, "taking into consideration the inherent qualities of the pictures themselves and the relationship of their respective subjects to my own associations with places and people."**

A charming Berthe Morisot pastel from 1874 that had been intended for the Boston Museum of Fine Arts would now be given to SBMA. Even more important, the Museum would receive three major paintings by Claude Monet that had been purchased from the leading Impressionist dealer in Paris, Paul Durand-Ruel, by her husband, Stanley McCormick, between 1896 and 1904. These Monets, plus an Alfred Sisley, also included in her bequest, grace the far wall of the Ridley-Tree Gallery and form the heart of SBMA's extraordinary 19th-century French painting collection.

When Antoinette "Toni" Amorteguy moved to Santa Barbara in 1975 her love of art and the Museum's need for volunteer help immediately connected her to SBMA. In short order, she set up and began running an art rental gallery in the building the Museum had just bought next door on State Street. Forty years later, Toni remains an active Museum Member and is proud to be an early supporter of the Imagine More capital campaign.

"I could see that the needs of the Museum are very important," she says. "This campaign is not one of those 'let's-build-a-bigger-building' crusades. The improvements address a real need: they will make everything work better, add space and improve circulation. You can't have a museum with holes in the walls!"

Toni has taken advantage of the SBMA travel program, most recently on a trip to New Orleans with the late, much-beloved photography curator Karen Sinsheimer. She has been involved in three of the curatorial support groups and regularly attends Art Talks and other lectures. "The Museum is a community: it is important socially for people my age and at the same time it has wonderful educational programs for schoolchildren and even troubled youths," notes Toni.

"Our Museum is a jewel—everyone says that. It has incredible art for a museum its size. It attracts tourists as well as locals; artists came to study *Botticelli, Titian & Beyond: Masterpieces of Italian Painting from Glasgow Museums*. It is so important to preserve this jewel, and I am happy to be part of the effort."

Thanks, Toni.



## From the Permanent Collection

We are embarking upon this renovation because, primarily, it is our responsibility to protect and preserve our permanent collection. Many significant treasures are entrusted to our care, including the painting above.

Berthe Morisot was the only female artist in the first three Impressionist exhibitions in Paris, an innovator in style and technique and a close friend of Manet, Monet, Renoir, Degas, and Cassatt. Yet, when she died in 1895 at the age of 54, the death certificate listed her as “without any profession.” Self-effacing in a man’s world, her best works are quiet reveries that don’t shout, but linger.

One of the important early works by Morisot, *View of Paris from the Trocadero*, which she painted around the age of 30, entered the SBMA collection in 1974. Although unusual in her oeuvre for its extreme perspective and landscape subject, it presages themes and qualities that were consistent throughout her career and set her art apart from her male colleagues.

Most obviously, her painting is small (18” x 32”), appearing even smaller because of the diminutive size of the figures in the foreground, two women and a child. Morisot’s figure paintings—the bulk of her work—rarely include men.

Black is famously absent from the art of Monet, Renoir, et al., but Morisot uses it in the style of Manet, who was her early mentor and the brother of her husband-to-be. Her paintings are out-of-focus, clearer from a distance. And there is never a narrative; the pictorial aspects are all.

Finally, there is the little girl with her back turned to us, a pose that appears time and again in Morisot’s paintings. This device adds spatial and psychological depth. We are left to wonder at the object of the child’s gaze and her response to it.



When paired with *Young Girl with a Dog*, on loan from the Armand Hammer Foundation, painted 15 years later, *View from the Trocadero* makes SBMA one of the few American museums that can display the range and brilliance of France’s greatest female Impressionist.

In addition to art from its permanent collection, SBMA has brought exhibitions of great paintings from around the country to the Central Coast. Among the highlights from the last decade:

*Renaissance to Rococo: Masterpieces from the Collection of the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art*

*Delacroix to Monet: Masterpieces of 19th-Century Painting from the Walters Art Museum*

*Picasso and Braque: The Cubist Experiment, 1910–12*

*Van Gogh to Munch: European Masterworks from the Armand Hammer and Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundations*

*Delacroix and the Matter of Finish*

*Botticelli, Titian & Beyond: Masterpieces of Italian Painting from Glasgow Museums*



Top left: Berthe Morisot, *View of Paris from the Trocadero*, 1871–73. Oil on canvas. SBMA, Gift of Mrs. Hugh N. Kirkland.

Inset left: Berthe Morisot, *Young Girl with a Dog (Jeune fille au chien)*, ca. 1887. Oil on canvas. The Armand Hammer Foundation.

Right: Eugène Delacroix, *Winter: Juno and Aeolus* (detail), 1856. Oil on canvas. SBMA, Museum Purchase, Ludington Antiquities Fund and Ludington Deaccessioning Fund.

Opposite: Claude Monet, *Villas in Bordighera* (detail), 1884. Oil on canvas. SBMA, Bequest of Katharine Dexter McCormick in memory of her husband, Stanley McCormick.



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If you would like more information about SBMA's capital campaign or want to know how you can contribute, please call or email Ron Dufault, Capital Campaign Director, 805-884-6468 or [rdufault@sbma.net](mailto:rdufault@sbma.net). He will be glad to hear from you.

[campaign.sbma.net](http://campaign.sbma.net)

## Improving Education

**Behind the scenes, or more exactly, below the scenes, a small room near the Museum Cafe called the Family Resource Center (FRC) provides an entry point for schoolchildren and visitors of any age who may be new to the art museum experience.**

"Don't touch," is typically the rule in museum galleries, but here guests can make their own art. The Education Department continually updates the activities and objects, introducing the art upstairs and offering an interactive component to a Museum visit.

Wall displays add an educational focus—recently, for instance, illustrating linear perspective in the context of the *Botticelli, Titian & Beyond: Masterpieces of Italian Painting from Glasgow Museums* exhibition. Displays have also taught the mechanics of framing and how to read wall labels. Family guides and scavenger hunts also make a family visit much more fun.

The only problem is that the FRC is on a different floor from the real art. An important part of the Museum renovation plan is to move this room to the main floor, adjoining the galleries it is introducing. The renovation will add climate control and nearby security, allowing the inclusion of actual pieces from the permanent collection.

There are plans to occasionally station bilingual teacher-trainees from California State University, Channel Islands in the room and, not unimportantly, change the name from FRC, with its social-services overtone, to something befitting its new location, like Family Gallery Space. In these ways, the vital education mission of SBMA will grow even stronger.