

IMAGINE MORE



See article, page 2

As we continue celebrating the 75th anniversary of the Santa Barbara Museum of Art, it is fitting we devote this issue of the campaign newsletter to Wright Ludington (1900-1992), who for two-thirds of our history contributed his time, expertise and funds toward building SBMA. Pictured above are seven works from different parts of the world that represent the scope and breadth of the art Ludington left to this community.

We are also delighted to report (see page 4) that work is well underway on our renovation project. Hazardous materials have been removed, along with old walls, ceilings and our entire downstairs warren of offices and storage vaults, as we bring our building up to modern seismic codes, install new climate-control systems and reconfigure our galleries to display more art and improve the visitor experience.

We are committed to keeping the Museum open during construction, not only to showcase art from our collection – an exhibition of British art follows on the heels of art from the Indian subcontinent – but to offer lectures, music and family events as well as to continue all our education programs.

But we can't do any of this without your help. Donors like Wright Ludington have given Santa Barbara a remarkable asset. It is up to all of us to dig deep and make a gift to help repair, restore and revitalize the treasure we have inherited. Please let us hear from you.

John C. Bishop, Jr.,
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The Right Builders for the Job

If picking an architect was the first crucial decision in the Museum renovation project (see previous Newsletter), picking the General Contractor to carry out the work was the second. "We needed someone with the right experience and expertise, who was familiar with Santa Barbara, and who was flexible enough to manage a complex construction project over a number of years while keeping the Museum open," noted Board Chair John Bishop. "Diani Building Corp. met all our requirements, plus they are great people to work with."

Diani (DBC) is a family company founded in 1949 with headquarters in Santa Maria. Ninety percent of their work is in the tri-county (Santa Barbara, Ventura, San Luis Obispo) area and the SBMA project represents about 20% of their current workload. Structural concrete is their specialty, and they have built launch facilities for the Department of Defense at both Vandenberg Air Force Base and Cape Canaveral.

Mike Diani, DBC's president, considers the SBMA project "fantastic, one that plays to our strengths," and not just because of the concrete required for the seismic reinforcement. "Our personnel excel at upfront planning and solving problems before we get to them. This is not an easy build, not a cookie-cutter job. We love doing out-of-the-box projects."

A recent example of comparable work well done is the Santa Barbara Bowl, which involved seismic upgrades, a new structural concrete stage, restrooms, dressing rooms, hillside reinforcement, a hillside overlook area and much more. It was done in eight phases over a 12-year period with no interruptions to the performance schedule and received a Historic Restoration Award from Santa Barbara Beautiful.

The Atascadero City Hall is another historic structure that received a seismic upgrade from DBC, after it had been damaged by an earthquake in 2003. Locally, DBC oversaw the modernization and expansion of Santa Barbara City College's Drama-Music Complex five years ago; and they just recently completed the Faculty Club renovations and a Guest Hall addition at UCSB.

The exciting work now begun to rebuild, update and reconfigure our Museum is in good hands.

Our Donors

The name "Wright Ludington" is synonymous with the history of the Santa Barbara Museum of Art. He was on the committee that founded the Museum in 1941 and remained involved for the next 50 years, serving a term as president, recruiting a director and ultimately giving more than 400 pieces of art that form the basis of SBMA's collections of Classical, Asian and Modern Art, prints, drawings, paintings and sculpture.

Art was in the Ludington blood at least as far back as Wright's grandfather, Charles Henry Ludington, a fellow of the National Academy and patron of the Metropolitan Museum in New York. Charles died when Wright was 10 and merited an obituary in *American Art News*, which noted – ironically, given what was to follow – that he was "not a collector or connoisseur of note."

Wright's father, also named Charles Henry, moved the family in 1901 to Philadelphia where he became vice-president of Curtis Publishing Co., publisher of the immensely successful *Saturday Evening Post*. In 1923 Charles purchased an important collection of Chinese sculpture and ceramics for the Philadelphia Museum of Art that still fills a gallery there, setting another example for Wright.

After attending Groton and Thacher, Wright dropped out of Yale to study art. When his mother died of tuberculosis in 1922, Wright embarked on the Grand Tour of Europe with his Thacher classmate Lockwood De Forest Jr., soaking in art, above all the classical ruins of Rome. A substantial inheritance from his mother also allowed Wright to begin buying art – including Derain, Braque, Picasso.

Three years before Charles Ludington died in 1927, he bought the Val Verde estate in Montecito. When Wright inherited it he engaged his friend De Forest to landscape it and populated the grounds with the classical statues he was acquiring. Then in 1941, when the new museum was conceived, Wright donated funds to convert the old Post Office lobby into a sculpture court displaying Greek and Roman statues as a memorial to his father.

Commenting in 1965 on the appropriateness of this gallery, Ludington said, "It is well to keep in mind the unusual parallel between California and the Mediterranean.



In this 1984 photo, Wright Ludington stands next to his most important acquisition, the *Lansdowne Hermes*, whose pose follows the tradition established by Polykleitos in his *Doryphoros* a century earlier. This work was recently restored by the Getty Conservation Lab and is currently on display at the Getty Center.



Hindu sculptors of the 11th century went beyond the *contrapposto* of Western art with *tribhanga*, the "three-bends" pose: the head and legs point in one direction, while the trunk goes the opposite way. Both positions describe an 'S' curve, but the Indian version is more graceful and sensual. This fragmentary example was given to the SBMA by Wright Ludington in 1968 and was featured in the recent *Puja and Piety* exhibition.

Balarama as the Eighth Avatar of Vishnu and Elder Brother of Krishna, India, Madhya Pradesh, 11c., Sandstone

The Latin background of both, as well as the climate and vegetation, all add to the similarities. A view from the hills over the channel to the islands also is similar to Mediterranean views, and better than most."

Other than their high quality, there is little common thread to the 403 Ludington pieces the SBMA boasts. There is ancient art, notably a Cycladic figurine from 2600 BCE and a Mesopotamian Head of Gudea from 2120 BCE. There are drawings by Salvador Dali, Henri Matisse, Egon Schiele, and Edgar Degas. There are 20th-century paintings well known to SBMA visitors by Matisse, Henri Rousseau, Wilfredo Lam, Odilon Redon, Georges Rouault, and less commonly seen early Renaissance gold-background religious works.

Ludington collected a wide range of fine Chinese art, from large wooden statues of bodhisattvas to exquisite celadon bowls; also, a Japanese folding screen by Sosetsu. There is a small but select group of Egyptian sculpture and a much larger group of Near Eastern bronzes. There are major pieces of modern French sculpture by Gaston Lachaise, Antoine Bourdelle and Aristide Maillol. And prints by Picasso, Toulouse-Lautrec, and George Bellows.

Time spent in London during World War II led Ludington to purchase works by English modernists that contribute significantly to the current SBMA exhibition, "British Art from Whistler to World War II."

Ludington claimed he never intended to form a "collection." "I simply bought a little here and a little there...always for my own enjoyment." But when it comes to Greek and Roman art, he certainly achieved a "collection," as evidenced by the loan exhibition from SBMA currently at the Getty Center.

When Wright Ludington died in 1992 some works were sold at Sotheby's – including *The Red Beach* by Matisse that now hangs in The Courtauld Gallery in London – but the bulk of his remaining works came to the SBMA.

As the SBMA embarks on a renovation for the next 75 years, it is only appropriate that the beating heart of the building will still be known as the Ludington Court.

From the Permanent Collection



The Doryphoros on display at the Getty Center in Los Angeles.
Roman, 1-200 CE, Gift of Wright S. Ludington.

a revelation: its pose and its proportions aimed at, and achieved, a naturalism and perfection never before seen in sculpture of the human body. The Doryphoros ("Spear-Bearer") embodied what is "classic" about the Classical Era and became the most copied work of Greek art in Roman times.

That it was widely copied is a good thing, for without the later marble versions from Rome we wouldn't know what the Doryphoros looked like: the original bronze was lost – presumably melted down for reuse, probably for weapons, like so many Greek bronzes.

What is so distinctive about the Santa Barbara torso, and how do we even know what it is based on?

If you look closely, you see that the right hip is raised and the right shoulder lowered, compressing the figure's right side. The opposite occurs on the relaxed left side. A line through the shoulders points up to the right; a line through the hips points down. In the full-scale example pictured below (another Roman copy), you see the same opposing lines. You can also see that a line between the ankles would point up, while a line between the knees points down. This creates balance and tension all at once.

The figure stands on his taut right leg, while his left is loose; his bent left arm grips the (missing) spear, while his right hangs relaxed. The artist eschews the horizontal, building motion into his figure. At the same time, every movement, every tension is countered, creating a balance. The standing figure is poised between rest and motion. There is equilibrium in everything – the perfect harmony sought by Greek philosophy.

This pose, called contrapposto, has been used so frequently ever since, we're not likely to ask who first made it famous. His name was Polykleitos of Argos, and along with Phidias of Parthenon fame, he was the most famous sculptor of Classical Greece.

The Doryphoros is known for more than his pose. Polykleitos devised a mathematical formula for the proportions of a perfect

“Later I found in Rome the large torso of a young man, a Roman copy of a famous Polykleitos athlete.” And with this find, Wright Ludington brought to Santa Barbara an example of arguably the most influential statue of the Classical Era.

To a modern viewer, this male torso is likely to elicit a “ho-hum,” it looks so commonplace. However, when the statue it was copied from was first seen in Greece around 440 BCE, it was

human body, and the Doryphoros was his exemplar. His writing is largely lost, leaving scholars to speculate along the lines of, “the little finger squared equals the hand” and so on. The full figure, it is often observed, is exactly seven times the height of the head. [A fragment of the ‘Canon,’ the name given to the treatise and also to the original statue, goes: “Perfection comes about little by little through many numbers.”]

This focus on the human body is, of course, a defining characteristic of Greek humanism. Sophocles wrote, “The world is full of wonders, but nothing is more wonderful than man.” Polykleitos here has sculpted the ideal man, which may be why the Doryphoros looks realistic in all its parts but doesn't exactly look like anyone you know. By making the statue stand 6'6", the sculptor may be acknowledging that he is not portraying a Greek from the neighborhood, but something that stands for an Achilles from literature or a great athlete or even a god.

There are five fairly complete Roman copies in marble – one in Naples excavated from Pompeii and examples in the Vatican and the Uffizi – but the best preserved is much closer, in the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. There are many more partial copies, including heads as well as torsos. The Ludington torso in Santa Barbara gives full evidence of the balance and tension of the figure's pose as well as the muscle tone and hardness of the figure, other marks of Polykleitos's work.

According to Getty curator Jens Daehner, “The fragmentary Doryphoros in Santa Barbara stands out from the majority of marble replicas, including some of the best-known examples, for its anatomical subtleties, such as the asymmetries in the lower rib cage which help convey the impact the contrapposto stance has on every part of the body. It is among the Santa Barbara Museum's most powerful sculptures.”



The Doryphoros influenced centuries of statues that followed, not least Michelangelo's *David*.

The Doryphoros, Roman, 120-50 BCE, Pentelic Marble, Collection of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. The John R. Van Derlip Fund and Gift of funds from many other generous donors.



THE CAMPAIGN

SANTA BARBARA MUSEUM OF ART

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Number 5

Cover artwork from left: All SBMA, Gift of Wright S. Ludington
Peplophoros, 1st c. CE. Marble.
Wifredo Lam, *The Casting of the Spell*, 1947. Oil on burlap.
Graham Sutherland, *Horned Tree Form*, 1946. Wax crayon, ink,
pencil and gouache.
Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, *The Jockey*, 1899. Color lithograph
on paper.
Head of Gudea, Ruler of Lagash, ca. 2120 BCE, Diorite.
Henri Matisse, *Pont Saint-Michel*, ca. 1901. Oil on canvas.
Bodhisattva of Compassion, Guanyin. Chinese, Jin
dynasty (1115-1234). Wood with polychrome.

Below: Museum Trustees get a look at McCormick Gallery.



If you would like more information about
SBMA's capital campaign or want to know
how you can contribute, please call or email
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Stripped and Ready to Go!

As construction and tree protection fencing goes up around Library Park and scaffolding rises for roof removal on the McCormick Wing, the outside world will have visible evidence the Museum renovation is in full swing.

Meanwhile, the last six months have seen the team from Diani and other specialists conduct the time-consuming, sometimes tedious but essential work of preparing the Museum infrastructure for its renovation.

Helical piles – essentially large steel screws – were driven into the hard clay soil under the Museum and tested (*see photo, left*). Around a hundred of these will anchor the building against seismic movement and be attached to the new footings that will support the new concrete walls.

All partition walls and doors were removed from the first-floor areas that housed the library, offices and storage; and all plaster and dry-wall has been stripped from the remaining structural walls, exposing the brick used to construct the original Post Office building back in 1912. Shotcrete walls will be poured alongside the brick to bring the building up to seismic code requirements.

To prepare to install the new roof, gallery ceilings were removed – no loss, as they were sub-code, too. (Interestingly, removing the ceilings exposed skylights in the old roof – all of which had been covered because it turned out the light they admitted was harmful to the art.) The presence of asbestos in a sprayed-on acoustical coating and lead in decorative tiles required an elaborate abatement procedure of sealing off and monitoring the air in the rooms as they were stripped down. The final area requiring abatement, the wood shop ceiling, was only completed the last week of July.

Parts of the Museum, the McCormick Gallery especially, have been laid bare. The vision of what the new Museum will look like can now be put in place.