

# art & antiques

## Sleeping Giants

ARTISTS ART HISTORY LEFT BEHIND

ANTIQUES MIX WITH CONTEMPORARY ART  
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COLLECTORS GO BACK TO SCHOOL  
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SEPTEMBER 2007

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ArtandAntiquesmag.com

A CURTCO MEDIA PUBLICATION





# Arts Enrichment

The best in continuing education for the serious collector. BY SALLIE BRADY

Catherine Yass, "Lock (open)," 2006, lifochrome transparency, lightbox.

**T**alk about education reform: There was a time when a sabbatical, a trust fund or both were necessary to be able to make a serious study of your collecting category. Not any more. Auction houses, museums and collecting clubs now offer traditional ways with an exciting variety of educational opportunities that cater to a wider range of students—the busy executive, the peripatetic traveler, the art-business professional, the niche collector. “We’re trying to be very client-led,” says Lyn Calzia, program manager for Sotheby’s Institute of Art in London, referring to its new approach to continuing

education. “Our traditional audience has changed, and we continuously monitor the people taking our courses. People want serious content as well as flexibility.”

This fall, just in time for that scholarly urge we all get to buy and fill fresh notebooks, entities from Sotheby’s London to the Metropolitan Museum of Art are not only debuting new course offerings but making news with first-time programs, state-of-the-art facilities and a more customized approach to teaching.

So maybe you’re ready to take the plunge and go for your master’s in art; enroll in

an evening postwar and contemporary photography workshop at Christie’s; get serious about applying for next year’s prestigious Attingham Summer School in England; or merely commit to the 15-minute lunchtime lectures on Frida Kahlo and Richard Serra at The Hammer in Los Angeles. No matter which, it’s time to hit the books.

## Start by Commuting

Blame it on a lack of funds for advertising and marketing, but the unsung asset of your local museum is likely to be its lecture and



**Anthony Downey, Program Director of the M.A. in Contemporary Art program at Sotheby's Institute of Art-London, discusses Yass' work with a student.**

continuing education program. Throughout the year, watch for curatorial talks and guest speakers that coincide with an exhibition or highlight some part of the permanent collection. Most museums do not require students to be members, but membership does have its advantages. In competitive arenas like New York, where courses at the Metropolitan Museum of Art taught by favorites such as Rosamond Bernier or her son, Olivier Bernier, sell out before word even reaches the public, membership can help secure a ticket. In October, look for the Metropolitan's renovated "campus," the re-opening of the state-of-the-art Ruth and Harold D. Uris Center for Education, which will host the museum's 20,000-plus annual educational programs.

## Join a Club

Chat with museum curators and start searching on the Internet and you'll find there's a club for your collecting category. Many of these have international reputations and strong alliances with museums and attract the crème de la crème of specialists who speak at their lectures and teach at their tutorials.

London ceramics dealer Jonathan Horne, of Sampson & Horne Antiques, a 40-year veteran of the trade, says he values his U.S. speaking engagements, which this year will include a lecture on English pottery at Greenwich's Bruce Museum (Oct. 15) and a talk on Delftware at Charlotte's Mint Museum of Art (Oct. 28). "If I can expound my knowledge to people, that builds their confidence in me," says Horne, who might spend six to eight weeks preparing a talk. "It's scholarship, the nitty-gritty."

Horne's sponsor at The Mint is one of the country's most active and perhaps least-known academically minded clubs, the Delhom Service League, a group of 100 ceramics appreciators that was formed 40 years ago when Mellany



Delhom donated her world-class collection to the museum. Today, the league offers comprehensive classes, including a mandatory year-long orientation for new members on the basics of ceramics-making. The group travels around the world to study ceramics in their "roving classroom" and sponsors an annual Potters Market Invitational with 40 local potters (Sept. 8).

## The unsung asset of your local museum is likely to be its lecture and continuing education program.

"Studying contemporary pottery-making the way that we do aids us in our understanding of Meissen, Sèvres, Chelsea, Italian, Spanish and the Asian potteries," says Elsy V. Stockin, president of the league. "We do research, we publish and when we travel, we all want to look at the same things." And the cost? "You can attend the group for free, unless you want to join and that's \$25."

## Study Abroad

For some disciplines, travel is essential. Want to study the decorative arts? "Christie's Paris has a big, big emphasis in their

programs, as well as London," says Véronique Chagnon-Burke, director of studies for Christie's Education, "while in New York we only deal with modern and contemporary art." This fall, with the market in China rising, Christie's London is introducing a contemporary Chinese art course and Sotheby's London is launching its first 20th-century design course.

Both auction houses also offer a more comprehensive roster of short courses in their European capitals, say, the three-day course "Understanding Jewelry" at Christie's London in February 2008 (\$850) or evening lectures with wine (about \$300 for a series), for which you can register at the last minute—a bonus for art-loving travelers.

Overseas, you'll be able to experience art and antiques in incomparable settings. Since 1952, the Attingham Summer School has allowed two dozen Americans a year to join its esteemed ranks in an annual three-week study of the paintings, furniture, silver, textiles, ceramics and sculpture of Britain's great country houses. While most participants are museum professionals and preservationists, "we have had some serious collectors," says Elizabeth De Rosa, administrator of the American Friends of Attingham Summer School. "It's a very competitive entry process that requires two letters of recommendation," she explains. "In my experience, most serious collectors have relationships with museum curators



# Scott Prior



Sand Crab Hunters, 24"x30" (Detail)

[www.priorityart.com](http://www.priorityart.com)

who can then recommend them."

The rigorous school schedule, which begins at 8:30 a.m. and may end with an evening lecture, includes about 25 country houses, and lessons from Britain's top scholars. "The professionals who are your fellow classmates are what make this so enriching," says De Rosa. "You can walk into a country house, and one will start talking about the Chinese porcelain and another will know about the gardens." Inclusive of meals and dorm accommodations, the fee is \$4,880. Attingham also offers a themed summer Study Week in Britain.

## Take a Course While at the Fairs

For almost two years now, Sotheby's has been quietly offering courses to coincide

connoisseurship and are equally intense, meeting almost daily. The non-degree programs are typically half the cost of the roughly \$40,000 master's program. The students tend to be professionals from the art world, entrepreneurs who want to open galleries or collectors, says Christie's Chagnon-Burke. "They learn how to sharpen their eye and understand the role of the auction house in the market."

New York interior designer Amy Lau, who co-founded the fair Design Miami and heads its vetting committee, says her Sotheby's degree has proved invaluable. "I really do use my education every day. I have situations where I have to say: 'Is that really a Carlo Mollino table?' Or I might have a client with an important painting who

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"I left with a big database of experts, I can identify any wood just by sight and I know how to fact-check the auction house catalogue histories."

—Amy Lau, co-founder of Design Miami, on her completion of Sotheby's American Fine & Decorative Arts program

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with the world's major fairs. Groups of 20 to 40 "students," a.k.a. top collectors, attend panel discussions, meet with curators and study artists' work with Art Basel Miami Beach, Art Basel, the Gulf Art Fair or Olympia Summer Fair as their classrooms. This fall, a three-day course at Frieze will be offered in English and Russian. "They've been a great success," says Lyn Calzia, program manager for Sotheby's Institute of Art in London. "The more you learn, the more you want to buy, and the networking cannot be equaled."

## Benefit from a Year-Long Program

When you first think about continuing education in the arts, it's probably an M.A. that comes to mind. While both auction houses offer master's programs (those that do have academic requirements that might include taking the GREs), they also have non-degree certificates that emphasize

needs to have it looked at under black light and wants a proper frame. I know where to go."

Lau recalls that her year-long American Fine & Decorative Arts program was rigorous: "I had to write two dissertations in a year and we traveled all over the United States meeting with curators, museum heads." But it was worth it. "I left with a big database of experts, I can identify any wood just by sight and I know how to fact-check the auction house catalogue histories."

## Get a Private Tutor

It could be the ultimate crash course, say, for a prospective buyer who wants a two-hour tutorial in Francis Bacon before heading to the salesroom with a paddle or the ultimate indulgence, a customized six-month curriculum studying the white-hot topics of contemporary art and the art-business world. The latest trend in arts-learning is an education tailored to your wants, needs and your schedule. "These tend to be corporate clients, says Sotheby's Calzia, "but we can tailor-make anything—provided the specialists we need are available." Prices upon request. ☐