

Folio

The publication of the Pasadena Arts Council

ART SPACE OASIS

Sturt Haaga Gallery of Art Opens at Descanso Gardens in September

When David Brown arrived as the new Executive Director at Descanso Gardens in September 2005, he did so with 30 years of experience in marketing and design and higher education, but not a stick of knowledge about horticulture. He also arrived with three years as a premed student, inspiring a love of science but also a healthy respect for its challenges as a field of study, and a lifelong connection to the outdoors. He brought what he calls a beginner's mind to the place.

A rare and special place it is. Located fifteen miles from downtown Los Angeles (and only six miles from downtown Pasadena) but worlds apart from any



urban setting, Descanso Gardens has for decades been a place of refuge for locals and a delight to visitors. The 150-acre botanical garden is nestled into a natural bowl in the San Rafael Hills and features a large and important collection of roses and irises, a Japanese garden and section for native plants, a lilac garden and bird observation station. The oak and camellia forest, situated on 20 acres, is believed to be North America's largest collection of camellias, with 35,000 tree-sized plants growing under the canopy of 150-year-old coast live oaks.

And amid all that natural beauty a refuge of another kind is taking shape—a contemporary art gallery that will incorporate the former Boddy House garage and expand it in a remarkable and very garden-like way. The Sturt Haaga

Gallery of Art at Descanso Gardens is the gift of Heather Sturt Haaga and Paul Haaga, Jr., residents of La Cañada Flintridge and generous philanthropists. Together with a grant provided in 2007 for preliminary gallery research, the Haagas' recent gift will now fund the complete construction of the gallery. It is the largest gift ever received by the Descanso Gardens Guild.

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From the editor

FRAME/FRAGMENTS

I had the most remarkable experience the other day at the Huntington Library. A friend and I had raced over to catch one of the final days of *Three Fragments of a Lost Tale*, the remarkable John Frame exhibition in the Boone Gallery. Frame is a much-lauded, California-based sculptor, photographer and filmmaker, although sculptor hardly captures it. The carved pieces in this show—arresting, poignant, sometimes puzzling sculptures—seem to inhabit an H.G. Wellsian world of clocks, gears, gizmos and globes that is somehow both of a time past but also timeless. Each character is meticulously carved to be fully articulated, with moveable limbs, fingers, jaws and eyes, and in addition to each allegorical scene in the exhibition, Frame has shot a short stop-motion animated film. It's all part of a larger project called *The Tale of the Crippled Boy*, an ongoing exploration of what Frame calls "a world apart."

John Frame was on scene in the Boone Gallery that day, and we chatted about the work and the rather extraordinary fact that the *Three Fragments* show constitutes the first show at the Huntington by a living artist. Frame, a lanky and altogether good-natured sort, joked about being actually, well, living. I asked him if there was one person at the Huntington who was responsible for this pivotal decision to show a living artist, and he simply pointed to the big words on the gallery's lobby wall: MaryLou and George Boone.



They championed my work from the beginning, Frame said. This show is absolutely a direct result of George and MaryLou's unwavering support.

Bravo to the Huntington for crossing the living-artist rubicon, and for doing so with a show such as this. It wasn't easy to understand what you were looking at, it took some head time, some of the sculptures are a bit weird and gloomy. And it took the vision of MaryLou and the late George Boone to see in John Frame an artist of singular grace and, some twelve years ago, to have made the major gift to the Huntington which resulted in the Boone Gallery itself.

The Gallery was originally Henry Huntington's garage, designed in 1911 by Myron Hunt and Elmer Grey, restored, renovated and reopened in 2000. Car places into art spaces, just like the new Sturt Haaga Gallery up at Descanso (see cover story)—now there's a good trend for automotively besotted Los Angeles.

The John Frame show has closed, sorry to say, but do this one thing—visit www.johnframesculpture.com and watch the 12-minute animated film. Some small part of you will be transformed, I promise.

-Terry LeMoncheck

Below: Mr. R. in the Portico, 16 x 16 x 4 in.; wood, fabric, glass eyes, and found objects over stainless steel armature. Photo by John Frame.





continued from page 1

Brown, who was president of Art Center College of Design from 1985 to 1999, had done a number of consulting projects with nonprofits and had a special interest in organizational planning and performance assessment, often involving strategic plans. He considered that

Architect's Statement

Sturt Haaga Gallery of Art at Descanso Gardens will be an expansion, rehabilitation and adaptive re-use of the current garage for the historic Boddy House into a museum-quality suite of gallery spaces. FFP will preserve the exterior's historical character while creating two interior skylit galleries. A new, 1,300-square-foot skylit gallery will be nestled into the adjacent hillside, and an outdoor room will accommodate sculpture and events. Two Green Murals planted green-screen structures on the gallery addition, as well as vertical gardens and an accessible roof garden, will create a seamless relationship between the buildings and landscape. In keeping with Descanso's mission, natural and low-voltage lighting, along with sustainable building materials and water conservation, contribute to a sustainable suite of galleries.

-Frederick Fisher and Partners

his contribution could be to give the Gardens a specific direction, a long-term idea of what it could be—discovering its identity and forging ahead. However, a long-term plan seemed the last thing that Descanso Gardens needed, because in the fall of 2005, the place had a lot of immediate basic care needs.

The first step for me is always to find the collective mosaic of people's ideas for the future of a place, says Brown. We spent three or four months talking about what we really wanted to see happen at Descanso Gardens, and that meant everyone on the staff, the garden and maintenance people, horticulturists, mechanics, trustees and staff, and at the end of the process we wound up with a wish list. It turned out that the collective wishes grouped themselves into three buckets. The first bucket was sustainable practice. Everybody here was itching to have the garden not only be a natural system but present to the public as a natural and responsible and sustainable system.

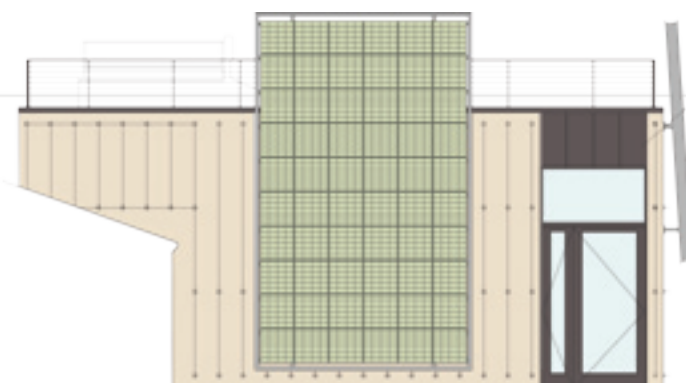
The second category was take better care of what we have. At the time, the historic Boddy House, the home built in 1938 by Descanso founder E. Manchester Boddy, was being used as offices and storage and sorely in need



of a make-over. Other facilities were not in good shape, the landscape was tired and becoming drained of natural resources. The third bucket was wouldn't it be great if.

Brown and his team put all the bucket ideas into order of priority, and the item that popped to the very top of the take better care list was the Boddy house and surrounding area. Inspired architecturally by Chicago's Farnsworth House (designed by the great Mies van der Rohe) Brown's idea was to build a gallery to both accommodate existing Descanso artists but also allow additional programming.

For years, local Descanso artists have exhibited their work in the Boddy House and, when it was renovated as the 2007 Pasadena Showcase House of Design, the artists moved to temporary



GALLERY (B)
WALL HEIGHT:
8'-0" AVERAGE

ENTRY/VESTIBULE

GALLERY (A)
WALL HEIGHT:
8'-0" AVERAGE

headquarters in the adjacent space that once served as a garage. Now, that garage will be transformed into a modern, sustainably sensitive 2,800 sq. ft. facility for exhibiting art that also preserves the historical character of the exterior. The new art gallery has been designed by Frederick Fisher and Partners, a firm with a portfolio full of innovative work for academic and cultural institutions including the Erburu Gallery at The Huntington, The Williamson Gallery at the Art Center College of Design and the Annenberg Information Science and Technology Center at Caltech.

The designers' plans envision two galleries in the former garage and a 1,000 square-foot additional gallery that will be tucked into the hillside adjacent to the existing structure. Offering an invitation to ascend the rock-work stairway that leads up to Hope's Garden, this new gallery showcases a green element that is actually green: vertical gardens and an accessible roof garden. Both the renovated portion and new gallery will feature sustainable design materials and technologies capturing the sustainable practice collective wish.

And wouldn't it be great if wish? Paul and I think Descanso Gardens is a jewel in L.A.'s crown, says Heather Haaga. We like to support places poised for greatness and we know that is where Descanso is right now. We also like to fund projects that will inspire enthusiasm and financial support

on the part of others. This new gallery promises to be such a project. Heather joined the Descanso Gardens Guild board of trustees in 2006 and currently serves as board chair.

The Sturt Haaga Gallery will be the first publicly accessible, museum-type exhibition space for art in La Cañada Flintridge, and will open in September of this year with *Closely Observed*, an exhibition of the arresting botanical photographs of Andrea Baldeck. This will be our gallery's mission, notes David Brown, to help the public appreciate nature through the eyes and hearts of visual artists.

Descanso Gardens is open daily except for Christmas. Hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (last entry is 4:30 p.m.). There is ample free parking. Learn more at www.descansogardens.org.

Artist's Statement

The botanical world, while mute, speaks beguilingly to the eye. It tells of physical beauty cunningly arranged to seduce the pollinators, adaptations to climate and geography, strategies for survival, and exuberant fecundity. Life spans of plants vary from months to centuries. Evanescent or everlasting, the denizens of this kingdom astound with their variety, ubiquity, and elegance in engineering, moments of wonder in this cycle of birth, growth and decline, captured by the camera, arrest the eye and compel us to appreciate anew the richness and complexity of this world just beyond the window.

-Andrea Baldeck

Above left to right:
Andrea Baldeck: Passionflower;
Page 4: Wilted Roses;
Page 5: Garlic Scapes



DESCANSO GARDENS GALLERY
06002 00
LA CAÑADA FLINTRIDGE, CA 91011
25 AUG 2010

Last year, the Art Center community—students, faculty, staff, trustees and alumni—came together to envision its future. The result of this shared vision is the Art Center Strategic Plan, a five-year strategy that will position the College to shape and define culture, encourage relevance and social responsibility in art and design, prepare graduates for leadership in an increasingly pluralistic society, and advance learning, research and making at Art Center to the highest level.

President Lorne Buchman arrived at Art Center in October 2009, after a period of turbulence and transition, and he observes that the institution was hungry for momentum and healing, and that the development of this plan was in some ways a deliberate act to pull people together. We also wanted to ask the great questions for the purpose of providing great art and design education for our students. That was our design brief.

Initially the planning was focused on process, without getting bogged down in the specifics of wording. However, the result was a new mission statement which was, according to Buchman, utterly boring and boring is not in Art Center's vocabulary. Buchman, a multifaceted administrator, academic and Shakespearean scholar who also quotes Brecht and Chekhov, said that he wanted a mission statement in which the wind could blow a little through the words.

It is often said that the only effective mission statements are those which can be remembered and repeated by everyone at an institution. Art Center's new mission statement fulfills that challenge; the newly minted mission statement, with plenty of breathing room:

LEARN TO CREATE. INFLUENCE CHANGE. It is, according to the strategic plan language, part call to action, part promise, part opportunity.

The plan is built on three pillars that are intended to elevate all aspects of the College. The following descriptions of these pillars are drawn from the Art Center website:

The Conservatory Spirit

Art Center's reputation is built on the intensity of its degree programs, all of which depend upon the rigor and focus necessary to prepare students for professional excellence and leadership. This approach has been, and will continue to be, a central defining characteristic of an Art Center education. Conservatory—a term typically reserved for training in the performing arts, but wholly applicable to this College—means the offering of a dedicated place for talented students to grow and thrive, an intense and practical career preparation under the guidance of an expert and professional faculty, a curriculum of project-based learning, and a focus on social and environmental challenges providing a depth of purpose to educational offerings.

CREATE TO UNDERSTAND



Convening Diverse Communities & Disciplines

Diversity of human enterprise, experience and identity are viewed as essential elements of great learning, and the plan calls for policies and practices in support of these beliefs, drawing strength from connecting individuals and communities, disciplines and practices, professional and critical discourse, history and theory, craft and science, technology and culture, industry and education. Convening new dialogues is central to the curriculum, the structures needed to support the community the College hopes to form, the outreach it hopes to generate, the environment it hopes to sustain, the access it hopes to ensure for all deserving students, and the individuals it hopes to recruit as professionals and volunteers.

Art Center recognizes that open and inclusive conversation must inform its identity as an engaged heterogeneous community based on respect and collegiality, communication and transparency, and sustainability and stewardship.

New Spaces for Learning

Art Center must provide the most advanced learning environment possible through innovative, flexible and effective development of both physical and virtual spaces. The plan calls for the design of new facilities and the application of sustainable practices that will support an expansion of the College with leading-edge technologies and new modes of practice. The College seeks to deepen student engagement in making and intellectual study, provide meaningful co-curricular experiences that support broad learning outcomes, stimulate reflection and spontaneous dialogue, foster social and civic responsibilities, and encourage life-long learning. It will initiate new pedagogical models through the use of technology that supports its goals for access and affordability and ensures that it enrolls and retains the most talented and diverse student body possible. And Art Center will create innovative live/work environments for its students, to aid in recruitment of both international and younger students.

Visiting Art Center

Originally founded in downtown Los Angeles in 1930, Art Center established itself in Pasadena in 1976 and has called the city home for 35 years. Located in the hills above the Rose Bowl, the iconic steel-and-glass building at the Hillside Campus was designed by Craig Ellwood Associates and has been recognized as a local historic monument.

Art Center offers a community tour program, inviting social, civic and cultural organizations as well as the general public. Community tours are offered in cooperation with the San Marino League, a volunteer and philanthropic organization, whose members raise funds and serve as docents for Art Center.

Reservations must be made in advance with tours scheduled on select Wednesday or Friday mornings. Tours can accommodate up to 20 people and visitors are welcome to have lunch in the Art Center caf . Please contact Anna Macaulay at 626.396.2205 or anna.macaulay@artcenter.edu to make a reservation.

Specifics of the plan are laid out in a five-year business plan, which calls for an enrollment growth strategy; the purchase of new property to accommodate growth and current academic needs; a comprehensive remodel of the hillside Ellwood building and expansion of the South Campus; and development of student housing. Notable consideration is paid to new financial strategies which include increased philanthropy and reorganization of unused operating contingency, operating surplus and reserves; the launch of a major fundraising campaign, and strategic investment in infrastructure and personnel.

Today's students are hyperattentive, according to Lorne Buchman, and he says there is a need to connect deep thinkers to these hyperattentive minds. Knowledge is now distributed and accessed in very different ways. He continues, Accountability and assessment are also creating pressures; Congress is looking harder at nonprofits. The new Strategic Plan, he says, addresses these new normals in specific and decisive ways. Designers are moving from creating objects to systems thinking. Here at Art Center we need to educate citizens of the planet. Create, he says, so you will understand.



Southwest Chamber Music To Present World Premiere of *Ten Freedom Summers* as 25th Anniversary Celebration

Southwest Chamber Music and adventurous composer **Wadada Leo Smith** have joined forces to create *Ten Freedom Summers*, a three-evening composition, recording and national performance tour of an important new work, inspired by the Civil Rights Movement from 1954 to 1964. The composition will be in suite form and will reflect the spiritual condition and attitude surrounding many incidents that changed American social history.

When Wadada Leo Smith responded to my request for a new composition for the 25th anniversary of Southwest Chamber Music, I anticipated discussing a work from 15 to 20 minutes," says Jeff von der Schmidt, Artistic Director of Southwest Chamber Music. **"You can imagine my surprise when Wadada revealed the vision of his three-**

evening *Ten Freedom Summers* project for Southwest and his Golden Quartet. My idea for a new piece had given him the inspiration to create this now vast canvas.

The trajectory of the three-part concert experience is impressive and unfolds names and places from a time of pain, defiance, and courage—Emmett Till, Rosa Parks, Medgar Evers, the Little Rock Nine and others. Smith will divide the players into three ensemble groups: members of the Golden Quartet of trumpet, piano, double bass and drums; one Southwest group of two violins, viola, cello and double bass; and a third Southwest group of flute, clarinet, harp and percussion. Von der Schmidt will conduct and coordinate these three separate ensembles.

The world premiere performances are scheduled for **October 28, 29 and 30, 2011, at the REDCAT Theater in Walt Disney Concert Hall.** Southwest Chamber Music will develop and implement an outreach program for educational and community events in Southern California that will engage new audiences through its established Project MUSE in-school concerts and through engagement of the major African-American churches, the NAACP and other civil rights organizations.

The composer, who was born in and grew up in segregated Mississippi, says he experienced the conditions which made it imperative for an activist movement for equality. It was in that same environment that I had my first dreams of becoming a composer and performer, and in composing *Ten Freedom Summers* I have fulfilled one of my major dreams.

Learn more about *Ten Freedom Summers* at www.swmusic.org.

PASADENA ARTS COUNCIL'S ADVOCACY IN ACTION

Advocacy means different things to different people. And while the arts are alive and well in Pasadena, it has been observed that the arts are in some ways victims of their own success, not in need of powerful allies in government chambers—or, worse, not absolutely essential in the lives of all citizens.

Advocacy is also one of the three components in the PAC mission of facilitating, empowering and advocating for the arts. Earlier this year, the PAC Board of Trustees began the process of outlining and clarifying its role as an advocate for the arts in Pasadena, starting with square-one definitions and provocative conversations around the board table. After an invigorating several-month process chaired by Trustee Peter Knell, eight guiding Principles emerged as a roadmap for board and staff, and points of reference for the arts community and the public at large to see PAC's advocacy in its organizational context.

These Principles will be accessible on the Pasadena Arts Council website, and the public is encouraged to contact PAC with concerns pertaining to the arts in the region.

Introduction

In order to fulfill its mission of advocating for the arts in the greater Pasadena area, the Pasadena Arts Council follows these guiding Principles. We define the arts as inclusive of visual arts, performing arts, architecture, literary arts and any interdisciplinary or emergent art form. We define advocacy as reaching out to a broad sector of the public as well as to individual elected officials and government staff.

Principles

- We support artists at all stages of their careers.
- We support funding for the arts.
- We support maintaining strong arts institutions of all sizes and the emergence of new arts institutions.
- We support arts education.
- We support artistic freedom.
- We support building relationships with other arts communities.
- We support the preservation of our historic art and the creation of art that future generations will consider their historic art.
- We support strengthening ties between the arts and other communities and institutions such as education, science, social justice, etc.

www.pasadenaartscouncil.org

Also learn more at www.artsforla.org. Arts for LA is the regional advocacy organization working to increase support for arts & culture and arts education in Los Angeles County.

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