

Program: Art & Neuroscience

Speaker: Shirley M. Mueller, MD, Guest Curator, Newfields

Attendance: 75

Guests: Christina Bodurow, Louise Kinney, Scott Sever, Susan Smithburn, Cyrus Behrosyn

Scribe: Russell Judd

Editor: Bonnie Carter

Our speaker today was Shirley Mueller, a retired neurologist and psychiatrist who was in practice at Indiana University for 24 years. Since retirement she has been involved with the arts.

She related an interesting statistic: "Between 2002 and 2012 the museums and art galleries in the United States have seen a 30% drop numbers of visitors." Naturally the (Indianapolis Museum of Art) Newfields and other museums are concerned and seek other ways to improve interest, numbers of visitors and their financial position. Fortunately Newfields has the grounds where they are able to make beautiful gardens for use in all four seasons. Museums in large cities often are hemmed in by other buildings and don't have this option. Using more video equipment and iPad stations is possible but sometimes these tools are too expensive.

Dr. Mueller was asked by Newfields to put together an art exhibit using neuropsychology to help visitors connect with art to see and feel the similarity of human emotion across time.

The exhibit took place at Newfield's Lilly House, from May to October in 2017 and was named "Elegance from the East, New Insights in Old Porcelain." The art objects were arranged in six categories in six rooms or galleries:

Gallery 1 - beautiful, rather small objects that had been used to decorate rooms in houses

Insight - the beauty stimulates our pleasure center

Gallery 2- various porcelain objects were collected by a lady who was homesick and rather sad because of moving away to a different country. She was able to keep herself busy and alleviate her pain.

Insight - identifying with her pain and creating her own antidepressant

Gallery 3 - miscommunication - some art sent to China to be made into porcelain was water damaged on the trip and appeared different to the Chinese when they arrived. The Chinese made the porcelain with the damaged area included.

Insight - things look different to people who have different knowledge

Gallery 4 - a beautiful porcelain object of art.

Insight - an exciting new finding

Gallery5 -the Dutch send a large number of prints to China hoping the porcelain copies might be sold later and would make a fortune. It didn't work out that way though, because many things changed before they could be sold.

Vol. 99 No. 2

January 15, 2017

Page 3

Insight - the prospect of gaining what we desire is more stimulating than possession

Gallery 6 -tea, coffee, wine - cups, dishes and pitchers used in social occasions

Insight - people like to get together; we benefit physically and mentally from gathering

This new neuropsychological method of stimulating interest in art is a fascinating idea. How to communicate these feelings and circumstances from the past to today's visitors is a challenge.



Dr. Shirley Mueller