

THE OBSERVER
April 19, 2021

NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear members,

Thank you again for your participation in the Town Halls. The Advisory Board members who led these small group conversations have provided more detailed reports, a summary of which is included in the following pages. We will continue to develop ideas to address the expressed interest in some in-person activities in the Fall, if not study groups, to maintain social connection in the three-dimensional world. Your ideas are appreciated and a survey will be sent out to the members as one way to gather feedback. Additionally, you are always welcome to write to me or your Advisory Board member contact, or meet informally during Director's Office hours, as soon as tomorrow! Please drop in [here](#): between 11 and noon.

We have our final Fridays@3 talk this week, April 23 at 3PM with Queens College President Frank Wu, introduced by The Graduate Center President, Robin Garrell. Please join us and invite your friends and family for this event. Registration is required at this [link](#).

As the semester winds down, we will be in touch soon about summer and fall registration. The summer session will start on June 1 and fall term on September 10.

See you soon,
Mariel

Our office contact information:
engagement@gc.cuny.edu
212-817-2474

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND EVENTS

Member Connect Town Halls: A Rousing Success

195 LP² members turned out on April 9 for the Board's new initiative, small group meetings led by the 16 Board members (12 elected and 3 Committee Chairs plus the Board Chair Emeritus), to provide an opportunity to meet informally, hear members' concerns and suggestions and answer questions about Board projects. A make-up session for those with conflicts on April 9 and some who had to cancel at the last minute, is scheduled for Monday, April 26. Invitations coming soon.

Two topics dominated the discussions: returning to in-person study groups and other activities and the loss of opportunities to meet and talk, informally, with others.

In-Person Study Groups: Despite a strong desire to meet together in person, there is no consensus about returning to in-person activities this Fall. Although some are willing to take a risk if all participants are vaccinated, others are concerned about using public transportation, ventilation, social distancing procedures and other safety precautions, as well as the problem of excluding members who, for health reasons, would not be able to participate in in-person activities until the pandemic is over or herd immunity is achieved.

Our return to in-person programs is, of course, dependent upon the CUNY and GC "Reactivation Plan," which will not be final until the Summer. Given the GC's constraints – priority is given to students who have lost a year of progress toward their degrees, a limited number of classrooms available, and a vertical campus marked by limited elevator capacity due to the pandemic – it is unlikely that we will return to in-person study groups in the Fall.

Many suggestions were made for alternatives to a total life on Zoom. The Director and Board will be exploring member responses to a variety of other options for modified programs in a **survey** that will be distributed in May.

Seeing Friends - Maintaining Community: Although LP² is primarily a learning organization, the sense of community, an opportunity to meet with

friends and make new friends is one of the characteristics that distinguishes LP² among life-long learning programs. Although participation in Zoom study groups has been remarkably high, there are signs of Zoom fatigue and increasing calls to meet informally – in parks, perhaps in small groups in members’ homes. Pour at Four has scheduled an outdoor gathering (without “pour” because of NYC park regulations) in Madison Square Park this Wednesday, April 21st– SEE ANNOUNCEMENT WITH DETAILS BELOW. Susan Rubens, chair of Pour at Four, plans to organize similar get-togethers in other areas of the city.

A plan to encourage members to organize get-togethers in zip code areas is under discussion. Information will be coming soon, but success will depend upon members volunteering to organize these gatherings.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI): This topic evoked a wide range of reactions in the Town Halls. There was general agreement that improving our understanding of issues around diversity, equity and inclusion is a thorny, long-term process of education, sensitivity, and politics. Board members shared information about the initiatives that are on-going in relation to LP²'s DEI strategic goal. One of the newest initiatives is an anticipated series of workshops focused on strengthening our culture as a community that is welcoming and comfortable for all. A pilot workshop will be held in late April, and if successful, expanded, first to Fall coordinators, followed by the membership at large over time.

Continuing the Town Halls: Members were enthusiastic about continuing Town Halls into the future. This will certainly be a topic high on the Board’s agenda, with the next town hall likely to be scheduled in October.

FINALLY, WE CAN MEET IN PERSON! Pour at 4 is OUTDOORS!

Date: Wednesday, April 21st

Time: 4-ish

Location: Madison Square Park. We will meet at the fountain, which is at the southern end of the park.

Note: We always cancel in case of rain.

Our first LP² outdoor gathering will be held at Madison Square Park, which has several bus/train options along with many LP² neighbors. For those of

you who are unable to make a Wednesday afternoon, future meetings will be held on different weekdays in different neighborhoods.

And save the date for the next Outdoors at 4 meeting, which will take place in **Brooklyn, Friday, May 14th at 4:30PM near the Borough Hall Subway Stop. (Subway: 2,3,4,5&R)**. Myriam Bucatinsky will be your guide for a walk, drinks and or dinner. For details, contact Myriam at mbucatinsky@gc.cuny.edu.

Susan Rubens continues to look for more outdoor neighborhood meeting locations. Do you know a spot with outdoor seating? Maybe you would be willing to be the host. Choose your day and location. Let Susan know and keep sending her suggestions at srubens@gc.cuny.edu.

BREAK ACTIVITIES

More *Shtisel* with Jenny Ross and Susie Herman, Wednesdays from 2PM to 3PM.: May 12, 19, and 26.

Season 3 is now streaming on Netflix, Jenny and Susie invite you to join them in discussion of this wonderful show during the first break. We will discuss the whole season (9 episodes this time) in three sessions, if you would like to join us, please send an e-mail to Jenny at jross3@gc.cuny.edu and you will receive a Zoom invite before the first session.

REMINDERS

Call for Break Activities before and after Summer Semester

The Community Building Initiative is seeking volunteers to lead activities during the next two breaks. The first break is from May 17th to May 28th and the second break is from July 13th to September 3rd. Your break activity can meet once, twice or multiple times. Whether it's a book or movie discussion, a current events discussion, a travel adventure or art presentation or something else, your colleagues will appreciate your efforts. We also invite all current and past coordinators to offer a one session encore presentation selected from a prior study group. Tech help is available to set up and assist you in running the Zoom session. You'll

receive a Zoom link to send to participants. Contact Jane Case Einbender at jeinbender@gc.cuny.edu to propose your activity

Fridays @3

Diversity and Democracy: What Would You Have Done During WWII? Frank H. Wu, President, Queens College, CUNY This Friday, April 23

Professor Frank H. Wu, our distinguished Fridays @3 speaker, is the American-born son of Chinese immigrants and the recently named president of Queens College, The City University of New York (CUNY).

President Wu is the author of ***Yellow: Race in America Beyond Black and White***, and co-author of ***Race, Rights and Reparation: Law and the Japanese American Internment***, which received the single greatest grant from the Civil Liberties Public Education Fund. [Register here.](#)

The Art and Science of Leading A Discussion Workshop Wednesday, April 21 from 4-5:15PM

You are invited to attend **The Art and Science of Leading A Discussion Workshop**. RSVP to Linda Anstendig at lanstendig@gc.cuny.edu. A Zoom invitation will be sent on the day of the workshop.

Open Call for *Voices Online* Submissions Deadline: May 31, 2021

Voices Online presents the written and photographic work of our members. The deadline for our upcoming issue is May 31. For a copy of the guidelines for submissions send an e-mail to Charles Troob at lp2voicesonline@gmail.com.

If you are interested in being a judge of the submissions, please contact the editors as follows:

Prose—Mary Houts at mhouts@gc.cuny.edu and Eric Roper at eroper@gc.cuny.edu

Poetry—Irene Sax at isax@gc.cuny.edu and Mark Fischweicher at mfishwords@gmail.com

Photography—Jerry Vogel at gvoegel@gc.cuny.edu

Help Wanted! - Fridays@3

The Fridays@3 Committee needs your help to increase attendance at this program!! Today, the GC office will send you an email invitation with the link for our last speaker. Please forward the email to your friends, family, book club, neighbors, and anyone you think might be interested in the topic. And make sure you come too.

ONLINE ART SHOW

From: Jim Gould

Title: A Curious Deer in A Snowstorm



Jim says: On a snowy morn in North Salem, I walked to the window to view to view the birds at the feeder and startled this deer that was nibbling seed tossed to the ground by its feathered friends. I grabbed my cell phone and took this shot from a range of about 8 feet. Since then, one

to four deer come twice each day, vying with squirrels and birds for a snack.

Attention Water Colorists, Sculptors, Block Printers, Photographers, Painters, Collagists and Needleworkers! Contact cmillsom@gc.cuny.edu with a title and brief statement about how or where or why you made it, and your work will appear in the Online Art Show.

MEMBER FORUM

From Nancy Small: A video view of the New York art scene

**Away from the Easel: Jackson Pollock's *Mural*
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum,
On view until September 19, 2021**

Mural. Jackson Pollock
<https://youtu.be/qY9leqZUMIk>

In 1943, Jackson Pollock (1912-1956), received his first-ever commission from Peggy Guggenheim (1898-1979), art collector, socialite and niece of Solomon R. Guggenheim. She wanted Pollock to paint a monumental mural in the entry hall of her East 61st Street townhouse. Luckily, Marcel Duchamp made a very practical suggestion ... paint it on canvas so that it can be moved. When art critic Clement Greenberg (1909-1994), saw the 8-foot by 20-foot *Mural*, he wrote: "I took one look at it and I thought, 'Now that's great art,' and I knew Jackson was the greatest painter this country had produced."

Mural is the largest work Pollock ever created, and is considered a breakthrough for the Abstract Expressionist, marking his definitive shift from Surrealism to his signature style of "action painting" Many of Pollock's early works were influenced by his mentor and friend, Thomas Hart Benton (1889-1975), and the energetic rhythms of figurative Regionalism. Other influences include the Native American art he saw growing-up in Cody, Wyoming and the surrealist technique of automatism. Pollock said that, as he was painting *Mural*, he had had a vision: "It was a stampede...[of] every animal in the American West, cows

and horses and antelopes and buffaloes. Everything is charging across that goddamn surface.” There is some suggestion of figuration within *Mural*, but its overall impact is that of abstraction.

Guggenheim eventually moved to Venice, and in 1951 she offered *Mural* to Yale University. But, when Yale refused to pay to move the painting to New Haven, she offered it to the University of Iowa. It hung in the University’s Stanley Museum of Art until a major flood destroyed the museum and caused severe damage to most of the collection.

As the museum was being reconstructed, the painting was sent to the Getty Museum in Los Angeles for extensive research and conservation. The video documents the complete history of Jackson Pollock’s *Mural*.

Painting the Holocaust: Remembering Alfred Kantor and his Sketchbook.

Tomorrow, April 20 at 4PM, **Zuzana Justman** will participate in a Museum of Jewish Heritage Zoom panel discussion about the artist Alfred Kantor: *Painting the Holocaust: Remembering Alfred Kantor and his Sketchbook*. She will speak about filming him for her documentary *Terezin Diary* and show excerpts from the film. [Register here.](#)

ONGOING LP² EVENTS

All Things Covid, hosted by Barry Levine and Steve Kalinsky, will be held every three weeks until the end of the semester (absent a need for an earlier update). The next session is Friday, April 30 at 3PM.

The Women’s Group meets at 3:45PM on Thursdays. Contact Arlyne LeSchack at aleschack@gc.cuny.edu.

The Men’s Group meets at 3:45PM on Wednesdays. Contact Jay Fleishman at efleishman@gc.cuny.edu.

Stitch Away Stress meets at 4PM Tuesdays. Members share skills and enjoy the meditative benefits of handwork. Contact Michelle Harris at mharris@gc.cuny.edu.

CUNY EVENTS

For upcoming CUNY events, click here: <https://gc.cuny.edu/All-GC-Events/Calendar> and across the University, click here: <https://events.cuny.edu/>

Observer Submissions Send items for the next week's Observer to Susan Rauch at srauch@gc.cuny.edu by 5PM on Friday. Send Online Art Show entries and suggestions for virtual tours to Carol Millsom at cmillsom@gc.cuny.edu.

Member Forum If you have something to share with the LP² community, *e.g.*, a photo, an article, a book or a web site that you've discovered that you think would be interesting to members, send it to Susan at srauch@gc.cuny.edu for inclusion in the Member Forum.

