

QNEWS Q DIGITAL

A Quest Publication

Issue 57

December 2024

A Note From the President

More than half our membership attended in person or via Zoom this fall's business meeting to catch up on Quest's current financial status, hear about new initiatives, and learn more about our Spring 2025 new courses. The highlights:

- **Applause for our volunteers:** To keep Quest running smoothly takes dozens of volunteers who, when asked to stand, received a grateful round of applause for giving of their time, energy and creativity to make Quest what it is today and to work toward a future for what it could become. Of our 243 members, 43 percent are either a lead or course co-coordinator; 55 percent presented in at least one course; and 52 percent are a member of at least one committee or on Council. And there was a

shout-out to **Barbara Gelber** for keeping the presses running and all of us informed year-round about Quest activities, and to new member **Ken Sasmor** who stepped in to arrange noon-time chair meditation while CWE's program is on hiatus.

- **Our finances are healthy:** Quest treasurer **Peter Fleischman** reported that while our finances continue to be healthy, our 2024–2025 expenses will exceed our membership revenue due to a few one-time expenses, specifically our 30th anniversary celebration, adding that we are fortunate to have ample reserves to deal with this situation.

- **QCM Initiative launched:** To help first-time course creators navigate the process of bringing an idea to fruition, the Curriculum Committee has created a Quest

Course Mentor subcommittee spearheaded by **Ellie Schaffer** and me. QCM will be similar to QPALS and will also be a one-on-one mentoring program. Ellie and I are crossing the 'T's and dotting the 'I's, so look for more details before winter break.

And special thanks to our Social Committee because our business meetings would not be complete without an opportunity to mingle, nosh, and sip Prosecco. Thanks to **Gail Spitalnik** (chair), **Loren Gee**, **Lois Klein**, **Harriet Dubroff**, **Pam Gemelli** and **Marilyn Weiss**, with additional help from **Raquel Rivera**.

So let's turn our attention from turkey and stuffing to latkes and candy canes as we wind down 2024.

Donna Ramer

Spring 2025 Distinguished Guest Lecturers Announced

Arlynn Greenbaum, Estelle Selzer, Karen Levin, and Bob Reiss are pleased to announce the following roster of guest speakers for Spring semester. Please feel free to give us your suggestions for next Fall.

February 26: Neil Nyren on Publishing: The Inside Scoop From a Top Editor.

March 12: Patrick Bringley, author of *All The Beauty In The World: The Metropolitan Museum of Art and Me*.

March 26: Ruth Reichl, food critic and author of *The Paris Novel*. Kenneth Leedom/Peter Cott Memorial Speaker.

April 9: Russell Shorto, author of *Taking Manhattan*.

May 14: Jodi Kantor, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and author of *She Says*. Jan and Stuart Eisler Memorial Speaker.

CultureQuest Spring 2025

February 14: Museum of the Moving Image and Greek lunch-Astoria, Queens In-person

March 14: Metropolitan Opera House: Backstage tour In-person

March 28: Esther in the Age of Rembrandt: Jewish Museum In-person tour

April 11: To be determined

April 25: Metropolitan Opera–Salome: Final rehearsal In-person

May 2: Exploring Little Italy: A Walking Tour and In-person visit to the New Italian-American Museum

CultureQuest Committee

Madeleine Brecher: Coordinator

Linda Downs, Debbi Honorof, Dena Kerren, Sharon Katz, Lois Klein, Bob Reiss, Estelle Selzer

CultureQuest

CultureQuest Tour of the Exhibition *Elizabeth Catlett: A Black Revolutionary Artist and All That It Implies* (through January 19, 2025). On October 15th, fifteen Quest members were presented a two-hour tour of the Elizabeth Catlett (1915–2012) exhibition by **Linda Downs** that surveyed seventy-five years of her artistic production at the Brooklyn Museum. We discussed works that drew on the modern traditions of Cubism, German Expressionism, Mexican muralism, and Pop Art in order to combat racism and support the dignity of African Americans. The surprise at the end was the maquette for the monumental Ralph Ellison sculpture which is at West 150th Street and Riverside Park. Following the tour, the members had a delightful lunch in the temporary restaurant in the lobby of the museum.



**When the Power of Love
Overcomes the Love of Power,
the World Will Know Peace.**

— Jimi Hendrix

Great Plays: Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?

by Ruth Ward



On Monday, November 18th at 1:00pm Questers watched a cropped version of Edward Albee's iconic display of marital dysfunction as part of the Great Plays course. Characters George and Martha with their guests Nick and Honey negotiated reality and illusion as expressed by **John Davis, Ruth Ward, Frank Montaturo, June Jacobson**, and narrator **Bob Reiss**. In the brief discussion that followed the play, the audience considered the title, which, according to Albee, means the challenge of not being afraid of "living life without fatal illusions."

City Wandering

by Frank Montaturo

The Love for Three Oranges Prokofiev on the UWS 2024

Just up from where we live I found this arrangement on my way for a walk around The Reservoir.

I thought someone might have taken a moment to arrange the fruit purposefully... but perhaps not... the narrow "shelf" providing the requisite frame for its artful disposition. The pipes are part of the everywhere present scaffolding that has gone up around NY to allow for facade maintenance. Often, as we know, it remains up for months...in some cases for years... without any discernible structural improvement.

And yet... it does provide for shelter from the rain so that one could almost walk blocks and avoid exposure. Bologna has its lovely portici... dating in some instances to 1100... a cover for trade and socializing. Ours serve neither purpose. Nor are they graceful... though I am happy to note that recently some more creative firms have chosen to erect white ogival arches to counteract the usual banal functionality.

On my return from the park I noticed there were only two oranges remaining.



Guest Lecturer Annette Insdorf

by Karen Levin

Annette Insdorf, our Distinguished Guest Lecturer on November 6, spoke about her book, *Cinematic Overtures: How to Read Opening Scenes*. As part of her lecture, she



described how a strong opening can lead the viewer to trust the filmmaker and unlock the keys to the rest of the film.

Quest members watched several film clips that demonstrate how opening lines can engage the audience into understanding different techniques in film and what happens next. During the Q & A, other movies were mentioned and she captivated us with her history of cinema dialog including details about those films.

New Courses Spring 2025

- Across the Universe: **Marion Schultheis**
(Co-coordinator **Michael Hamburg**)
- Architecture & Design: **Sol Makon**
- Dostoevsky's Crime & Punishment: **Sheryl Harawitz**
- Timeless Writings: **Sheryl Harawitz**
- Great Directors, Producers, Actors: **Wayne Cotter**
- Women Leaders: **Lara Lopez**
- Charles Dickens' Great Expectations: **Lynnel Garabedian**
(Co-coordinator **Sandy Kessler**)
- Oral Interpretations of Poetry: **Joyce Hinote**
(Co-coordinator **Peter Dichter**)
- Wonderful Books Out Loud: Billy Budd – **Harriet Finkelstein**
- Shakespeare: Coriolanus: **Ellie Schaffer**
(Co-coordinator **Roy Clary**)

**I Really Don't Mind Getting Older,
But My Body Is Taking It Badly.**

CultureQuest Poster House Museum

by Dena Kerren

CultureQuest's event started with a memorable breakfast at the Chelsea Hotel, celebrated for its role as an unofficial artists' colony. If the walls had ears they would have heard many stories of notable artists including Bob Dylan, Dylan Thomas, Mark Twain, Leonard Cohen, Andy Warhol, Robert Mapplethorpe, Arthur Miller, Patti Smith, and Janis Joplin. The hotel was famous for its culture which attracted artists and dilettantes of the day. We were treated to a short tour of the hotel before we joined our tour just across the street at the Poster House Museum, where we viewed the collection of "Lester Beall and A New American Identity."

Lester Beall almost single-handedly launched the Modern movement in American design on what he referred to as "thrusts and counter thrusts" that forced the viewer's eye to move in a specific way across the page. These layouts quickly caught the attention of designers in Europe, reinforcing his reputation as the preeminent American graphic modernist.

Lester Beall's graphics took a decidedly patriotic turn in the 1940s when the New Deal, a series of federal programs, was to spearhead economic recovery. When the Rural Electrification Administration (REA) helped to build energy infrastructure in rural areas, Lester Beall was enlisted to create a series of posters which provided new and effective visual communication for its time.

This exhibit can be viewed through February 23rd.



Who's Doing What

To take their minds off EDD (election depression disorder), **Judy** and **Pete Weis** have gone to a lot of theater, etc.: *Iolanthe* (Ridgewood G&S), *The Baker's Wife* (Village Light Opera Group), *The Devil's Disciple* (Theater Row, with lots of Questers), Amore Opera concert/fundraiser, *The Light and the Dark* (59 E 59), and *The Play that Goes Wrong*. Some serious, some funny; all focus the mind on the plot rather than the state of the country.

• • •

Debbi Honorof attended a performance of the hot new Broadway show "Romeo + Juliet" at Circle in the Square Theater. Her daughter-in-law works on the sound crew. Debbi went with her DIL's parents, who were visiting from Macon, GA and they had fabulous house seats. The show was very current, innovative and a lot of fun, but the script stayed true to the original. It was definitely a younger audience!



Nina Sanders recently visited her daughter, Maia Henry, at Haverford College, where she majors in Urban Planning/Architecture. She will be spending

the Spring semester in Berlin! They had a wonderful day together.

• • •

Dena Kerren and **Roy Clary** visited the Norman Rockwell Museum exhibition exploring the art, satire, and cultural impact of Mad Magazine covering seven decades.



• • •

Arlynn Greenbaum and a friend spent a fun Thanksgiving week at beautiful Club Med Turks & Caicos.



Reputation Is What Others Think About You. What's Far More Important Is Character, Because That Is What You Think About Yourself.

— Billie Jean King

If You Boil A Funny Bone It Becomes A Laughing Stock. That's Humerus.

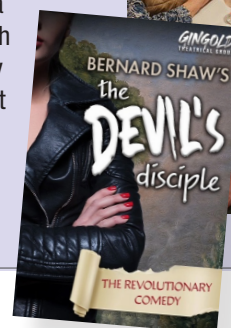
Quest at The Devil's Disciple by Michael Wellner

Thanks to the good efforts of **Susan Keohane** and **Yona Rogosin**, who have a connection with David Staller and the Gingold Theatrical Group, some seventy Quest members (a record, we believe, for any Quest event other than our end-of-semester lunches!) gathered on a surprisingly warm Sunday afternoon, November 10th, to see a wonderful production of George Bernard Shaw's famous play, *The Devil's Disciple*, at a small, 90-seat, off-Broadway theater on the Theater Row on West 42nd Street. (Our seventy Questers nearly filled the entire theater!)

The show was very well received (all of us loved it), and was superbly well acted (by an all-female cast). But the highlight may well have been an after-the-show "talkback" hosted by David Staller, and attended by many of the Questers at the show.

Before the show, some forty of us gathered for a delicious pre-theater lunch at a lovely restaurant, Bocca di Bacco, just two and a half blocks from the theater, on 9th Avenue between 44th and 45th streets. In addition to perfect brunch food, many enjoyed a delightful glass of wine or cocktail, which helped to make the day that much more enjoyable!

The whole afternoon was such a success that plans are already afoot for our next theater outing. Stay tuned — and watch your email box!



Grand Central Terminal: Manhattan's Architectural Jewel A CultureQuest Adventure

by Madeleine Brecher

Many Questers on our tour of Grand Central Terminal were surprised to learn it is inaccurate to refer to this gem as Grand Central Station. We discovered from our exceptional guide, Beth Goffe of BoweryBoys Walking History Tours, that it is so much more than just a train station, and that is so true. This majestic Beaux-Arts beauty is richly adorned in marble while the ornamented façade is topped by the Glory of Commerce, a sculpture that depicts Mercury, Hercules, and Minerva overlooking the city from a high perch facing busy 42nd Street. The world's largest Tiffany-stained glass clock is at their feet. Painted constellations arch above the iconic main concourse, its vaulted ceilings a magnificent sight.

Beth had us enthralled with the terminal's long history that includes multiple incarnations, a notable crash, and a major restoration. The original structure was built by Cornelius Vanderbilt. It was completed in 1871. There were serious threats of demolition in the 1950s and 70s but fortunately, it was saved. The restoration in the late 90s brought national attention to the importance of preserving so many of the architectural elements such as the breathtaking ceiling fixtures throughout the complex.

Once the main waiting room of Grand Central Terminal, Vanderbilt Hall is a spectacular setting for public and private events. Today, it was dressed for the season with a pop-up holiday market. There once was a movie theater in the complex where folks could pass time waiting for their train to depart. There is even a public tennis court on the 4th floor available for hourly rental. Did you know that just outside the Oyster Bar, there is a corner-to-corner Whispering Gallery? I could go on and on; just one more story: Grand Central's Hidden Bar. One of the most iconic swanky, classy, ritzy bars looks like it came from 1920s Prohibition New York. The story involves a wealthy tycoon John W. Campbell who once leased the space from the Vanderbilts themselves. The Campbell Apartment was Mr. Campbell's office and site of his intimate salon concerts. It became a bar during Prohibition. The Campbell Bar today is open to the public with a reservation. Most visitors and/or locals do not know anything about this wonderful Speakeasy when they pass through Grand Central Terminal.

Talk about lifelong learning! This Quest event was a remarkable educational experience right in our own backyard!



Robert Hartmann

Founder, Quest Lifelong Learning
(courtesy of Downtown Express)

During the summer of 1995, **Bob Hartmann** joined with a group of seniors, most in their 60s and 70s, to form a new peer learning organization to study and learn together. Thus, Quest was formed with about 90 members and was welcomed as part of the Center For Worker Education (CWE), a division of CCNY located at 25 Broadway in downtown Manhattan. Study topics ranged from Shakespeare to Sondheim musicals, from famous women spies to the history of the Middle East. Quest now boasts 240 members.

Hartmann has served twice as Quest president and as a board member for four years. He has established a perpetually-endowed scholarship for the tuition of a

CWE undergrad student, which has enabled many graduates to move up the economic ladder while contributing to a more productive society.



New Member

Quest welcomes a new member this month. Look for their red lanyards, indicating a new member, at 25 Broadway, greet our new members, make them welcome, and include them in our wonderful Quest.



Pierre Thomas

Creative Corner

SENIOR BLUES®

by Betty Farber

Promenading on a summer's day
Sunny and breezy, I'm taking an airing.
Stopped by a lady, well-dressed and gray
Who says, "I like what you are wearing.
From where I stand, I can easily see
That you are a senior just like me."
I smile and am happy to agree...
On the city sidewalk, under a tree,
She continues the conversation,
"Now I'm on youtube where you can see
That I could be called a singing sensation.
Watch when you have a moment free.
I wrote the music and words to this song
And I'll sing it for you right this minute
If you have the time, it won't take long
And I'll put my best performance in it."
I do not move; I do not stir.
Standing in my brand new shoes
I hear the poet and composer
Sing a song called "Senior Blues."

There are people who believe that life
In Gotham City is never sweet,
Just sad and gritty and filled with strife.
But oh the magic you might meet
On any New York City street!

**Unconsciously,
Native English Speakers
Say Adjectives
Preceding Nouns
In A Specific Order:
Opinion, Size, Age, Shape,
Color, Origin, Material,
And Purpose.
It's Why Saying
"Old Green Metal Chairs"
Sounds Normal,
But "Metal Green Old Chairs"
Sounds Weird.**

– *The Elements of Eloquence:
How to Turn the Perfect
English Phrase*
by Mark Forsyth

Exploring Innovative Art in Chelsea Galleries

by Hedy Shulman

On a bright and pleasant Autumn morning, Culture Quest took a group of curious members on a multi-faceted tour of galleries in Chelsea. Led by Efren Olivares, an experienced museum guide and arts educator, we visited seven galleries that featured paintings, sculptures, photography, and mosaics that are among the most popular shows currently being exhibited in the city.

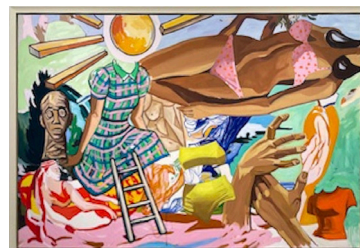
The artists were domestic and international and include a very diverse array of artwork. Jiro Takamatsu is considered one of the most important postwar Japanese artists. He uses photography, sculpture, painting, and performance to investigate the material conditions of art. The work we saw was called shadow paintings of "emptiness itself" which were very subtle yet striking.

Miya Ando, also Japanese but lives in New York, and her exhibition is called Blue Sky Codex. Ando portrays clouds in endless shapes and forms and shifts of coloration of the sky. There are countless variations that are soothing and familiar.

Beverly McIver is a contemporary American artist known mostly for her self-portraits and chronicles her life struggle with her African-American identity. She also is known for painting people who surround her in everyday life in a very honest, no-frills manner.

The last exhibition we saw at Gladstone Gallery where David Salle's work was shown. Entitled "New Pastorals" the works depict exploding figures that are unconnected with glaring colors and tinges of AI. The paintings are very unrepresentative and are a bit shocking at first.

The tour was very diverse and provided an opportunity to experience some of the most popular art currently being shown in the city.



Q News Staff

A Quest Publication

Editor-in-Chief

Barbara Gelber

Consulting Editors

Michael Wellner

Gale Spitalnik

Editor Emerita

Carolyn McGuire

Graphic Design

Robbii

25 Broadway
New York, NY 10004
212.925.6625 x229
questlifelong.org

Articles submitted to QNews
may be edited by the Staff.
The Editor-in-Chief is the final arbiter
of the publication's contents.

Q

**You Should
Sit In Nature for
20 Minutes A Day...
Unless You're Busy.
Then You Should Sit
For An Hour.**

— Zen Saying

**Maine Is
The US State Closest
To Africa.**

**December is:
National Fruitcake Month
Bingo Month
Safe Toys & Gifts Month
Write a Friend Month**

Halloween Came Early to Quest

by Donna Ramer

We're still haunted by October 30th's standing-room only event as members were entertained with original spooky stories and an eerie monologue, and serenaded by the Peter Dichter Trio singing "The Music of the Night," accompanied by Social Committee member Lauren Gee on keyboard. Thanks to our creative Social Committee: **Gale Spitalnik** (chair), **Harriet Dubroff**, **Lauren Gee**, **Pam Gemelli**, **Lois Klein**, and **Marilyn Weiss**.

