

INTRO INTO “THE SCHOOL OF PARIS” AND “THE MAKING OF THE MODERN”

Shemer Art Center
5005 E Camelback Rd
Phoenix, AZ 85018



March 19, 2015
6pm
\$5 donation

Presentation by
Jeralynn Benoit

Several years ago, PBS presented, *Paris, The Luminous Years* which explored the unique moment in Paris from 1905 to 1929 in the world of art. The city of Paris was a major catalyst for artists in nearly every artistic discipline. These were pivotal years for our contemporary culture, when an international group including Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse, Marc Chagall, Igor Stravinsky, Ernest Hemingway, Jean Cocteau, Gertrude Stein, Vaslav Nijinsky and Aaron Copland, among numerous others, revolutionized the direction of the modern arts. In the early decades of the twentieth century, a storm of modernism swept through the art worlds of the West, displacing centuries of tradition in the visual arts, music, literature, dance, theater and beyond. The epicenter of this storm was Paris, France. My digital presentation is my version of the story.

The importance of a particular place in artistic creation is fascinating. At this time period, Paris was the magnet; the impetus and the transforming force that attracted the finest talents of the era, molding the lives and work of two remarkable generations.

Why Paris? For avant-garde painters and sculptors, Paris provided crucial access to daring art dealers who were ready to show, buy and sell their work. For young American authors and poets, their radically innovative literature — often rejected by major American publishers — was embraced and published in Paris by equally young, American publishers with small, independent presses. For composers, choreographers and dancers, it was the visionary impresario Serge Diaghilev, director of the Ballets Russes, whose famous phrase "Astonish me" could lead to a commission of a score or a new ballet.

This presentation gives some background on why breakthroughs like Picasso's radical "Les Femmes d'Alger" that initiated Cubism and Stravinsky's violent "The Rite of Spring" that pioneered modern music, could only happen in the international, passionate atmosphere of early twentieth century Paris.