

CHS students get a taste of Claremont art history

The Claremont Museum of Art's new Project ARTstART program gave more than 25 Claremont High School students a chance to experience Claremont art history at the Huntington Library on November 30.

Entitled *The House That Sam Built: Sam Maloof and Art in the Pomona Valley 1945-1985*, the latest exhibit at the Huntington Library showcases the furniture works of Mr. Maloof along with paintings of Karl Benjamin and Millard Sheets, ceramics by Harry McIntosh and Paul Soldner, sculptures by Aldo Casanova and many more works by artists who were predominately connected to Claremont. The exhibition is scheduled to run through January 30, 2012.

"A lot of people don't realize that it's Claremont artists that are being featured so this is a good thing to tell Claremonters about," said Catherine McIntosh, secretary of the Claremont Museum of Art board of directors whose father is featured in the exhibit. "Rather than raise money for a museum, we decided as the board of directors that the best way to serve the community is provide art education. We've made that our cornerstone and part of that is the field trip that brought the Claremont students to the Library."

Project ARTstART is a program designed to take CHS students and expose them to different experiences in art during the first semester of the school year. In turn, the students then design lessons and plan field trips for elementary age children to give them similar exposure to locally produced art during the 2nd semester. Sycamore Elementary School is currently the pilot school involved in the program.

ARTstART director Rich Keely said one of the unique as-

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COURIER photos/Steven Felschundneff
Scripps College Professor Emeritus Aldo Casanova introduces a group of Claremont High School students to the work of Sam Maloof last Wednesday at the Huntington Library in San Marino. The students toured the exhibit *The House that Sam Built: Sam Maloof and Art in the Pomona Valley 1945-1985* as part of the Claremont Museum of Art's ARTstART program.

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pects of the program is how the high school students play the role of both student and teacher.

"They've been learning about the art in Claremont by visiting the museum at Pomona College, the Ruth Chandler Williamson Gallery at Scripps College and now the Huntington Library," Mr. Keely explained. "This then enables them to plan field trips for elementary school students and teach them lessons about the very artists and exhibitions they themselves visited."

The Huntington Library visit included a talk from Mr. Casanova himself as he talked about his sculpting career and the friendships he's had with other Claremont artists. Students were then led on docent tours to view the various items on display and also sit in one of Mr. Maloof's chairs.

Mr. Casanova's *Torso Sardinian* is featured in the exhibit. The inspiration for the abstract piece came when the sculptor was on an island and saw that the rock formations there were similar to the human torso.

"I'm honored to be in this show," the 82-year-old Mr. Casanova said. "And I'm incredibly happy to have this in the collection because it connects me from the east and west coasts."

CHS students took photos and made sketches of the items that caught their attention to provide inspiration for their own art in the future. The ceramics items caught the eye of 10th grader Natalie Albarez.

"I like the plates—there was a red vase pot that was nice and I also liked the ones that had the bright colors," said Natalie, who is currently enrolled in ceramics. "Just looking at the different pieces, there's ideas that I can take and use in my own stuff that will allow me to be more creative."

For ARTstART student advisory board member Sage Overoye, the exhibit was an eye-opener.

"It's been really interesting because before I was in this group, I had no idea that Claremont was a center for the arts," she said. "I've had the chance to meet major artists like James Hueter, Karl Benjamin and Aldo Casanova. I've also learned how much the friendships between the artists re-



COURIER photo/Steven Felschundneff
Renowned artist Aldo Casanova introduces a group of CHS students to the exhibit *The House That Sam Built* at the Huntington Library in San Marino. Mr. Casanova's sculptures are part of the exhibit.

ally inspired their art."

Sage's new awareness of Claremont's rich art history is a prime example of why Mr. Keely believes the ARTstART program is important. He is hopeful the program will grow with more student participation in the future.

"ARTstART is focused on helping elementary students

and families learn about the great cultural offerings in Claremont," Mr. Keely said. "As we increase the access for high school students, we can think about how the elementary students can also access it. We would love to work with other schools in the future as our money permits."

—Landus Rigby