Five members of the Book Club sat silently in the dark auditorium at Campbell Hall on the UCSB campus to listen to a captivating lecture by Reza Aslan, author of our December book selection "Zealot, the Historical Life of Jesus of Nazareth." The lecture gave us a brief insight into the author's thought processes and historical research which brought him to the conclusion that there were only three verifiable "historical facts" associated with Jesus. These facts are:

1. Jesus was a Jew,
2. Jesus preached to the Second Temple Jews, and
3. Jesus was crucified.

He states that everything else we learn from writers living long after Jesus’ death, none of whom knew him personally nor heard him preach personally.

We left Santa Barbara eager to delve into the book and evaluate the author’s conclusions for ourselves. We met again on December 3rd to a lively and diverse discussion. Everyone had read the critics’ reviews of the book and agreed on many of the aspects of both their positive and negative opinions. There was a consensus that the book's format was easier to read than most historical texts. All agreed that first century Palestine as presented by the author’s historical research was ready for all kinds of changes in the society. The zealots were promulgating a stronger nationalism among the Jewish tribes and Jesus was a part of that group—a zealot with a small z. There was an attempt to try and remove the Roman occupation. There was a definite problem with the Temple Priests, to whom Jesus had addressed himself. The punishment for organizing and working against the existing government (Roman and Pharisees) was considered sedition and crucifixion was the Roman method of dealing with those who dared. There was a divergence of opinion about Jesus the man and Jesus the Christ. The author tries to point out that the religious part came from the four Gospels, in which the various writers tried to manipulate the historical facts. For example, he states that Jesus was born in Nazareth and not in Bethlehem. The reason for using Bethlehem was to establish that Jesus descended from King David, thus placing him in the line of succession to be named King of the Jews. The author has many other examples pointing out the differences between the religious texts and the verifiable facts.

This was a most interesting look into the time when Jesus is presumed to have been alive. There is much to learn about both the historical time and the way the actions of Jesus led to the beginnings and spread of a new religion. Reading and discussing this book led us to more questions about what was actually occurring historically and what was not, and it motivated all of us to learn more!

Recommended Readings:
“"The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth”", Thomas Jefferson
“"End of Faith"", Sam Harris
“"Constantine’s Sword"", James Carroll
“"Early Judaism”", Martin Jaffee,
“"The Jewish Jesus”", Peter Schafer
“"The Jewish Gospels”", Daniel Boyarin.

Our current read:


“WWII was the most destructive war in history and caused the greatest dislocation of cultural artifacts. Hundreds of thousands of items remain missing. The main burden fell to a few hundred men and women, curators and archivists, artists and art historians from 13 nations. Their task was to save and preserve what they could of Europe's great art, and they were called the Monuments Men.”

(Publishers Weekly)
Check out what Congress is proposing to honor these men: http://www.latimes.com/nation/nationnow/la-na-nn-monuments-men-20131209,0,4792276.story#axzz2nXTPmq2S

Who knows, we may want to all see the movie to be released in February 2014.

Trailer: http://entertainment.tempo.com.ph/2013/12/latest-monuments-men-trailer/#.Uq2IOrCA3IU

OLLI Road Trips December 5, 2013

“From Italy to Spain”!

What a wonderful day was December 5th! to share company with some of the greatest artists and sculptures of the past six hundred years. Where did all this happen? At the Norton Simon museum, accompanied by art historian docent Ann, OLLI travelers walked among six millenniums of European art to gain the essence of the masters behind the masterpieces. We explored Early Renaissance to Baroque from Italy and Spain through the most extensive collection of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist in Southern California. We concluded in the company of Modern and Contemporary Art of Picasso, Matisse,

Treasure Hunters and Author

Learn More About Book Club:

- We choose one book per month based on member’s recommendation or if there is a specific course subject being offered we wish to know more about.

- We meet for 1 ½ hours – Currently we are juggling our schedule to meet the needs of the members class schedule and we meet on campus after class.

- Membership – there are 12 current members. If you wish more information or want to become a member, please contact Arlene Miro, yolromol1@verizon.net

- Want to start a club with a different venue: Mystery Writers, Current Events? The PLA team will be happy to get you started. Contact Pat O’Neil, jpoineill@roadrunner.com

Diego Rivera, “The Flower vendor (Girl with Lilies)” (1941) and a sneak-preview of Goya's Don Pedro, Duque de Osuna, on loan from The Frick Collection, New York.

So many of our favorites were included but it was also fascinating that little or lesser known artists gained new appreciation as well. And to end our visit, a walk was taken in the gardens among Rodin statues, feeling the tranquility of the ponds and the landscape in the cool, crisp sunshine. It was a wonderful day to be with friends and treasures!
PLA Day Trips

The plan is to have at least 5 day trips in Ventura County, during April, May, June, October and November. Members can drive their own car or carpool. The time involvement is usually two hours with a docent led tour. Planning for these trips will begin in January, so if anyone has suggestions, please e-mail me:

Arlene Miro: yodrmom1@verizon.net

Wanted OLLI Instructors

Do you know of someone who would like to teach at OLLI? Do you know of someone who would be a good instructor, someone who has the expertise in areas of our membership’s vast interests: geology, water, history, science, medicine; someone who has a passion and knowledge of a subject that could bring great insight to our program by providing a course of that passion? They may be part of academia or part of the great world of business or government. If you know of someone, please contact Nick Fuentes, Director, Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI), nickolas.fuentes@csuci.edu

Upcoming Road Trips

GRIFFITH OBSERVATORY – March 7, 2014

Hosted by Jerry Clifford

MISSION: Griffith Observatory inspires everyone to observe, ponder, and understand the sky.

Pack a brown bag dinner or dine at Wolfgang Pucks café until 9 p.m. for an exciting afternoon and evening amid the wonders of Griffith Observatory. Enjoy the “Centered in the Universe” show at 5:15 p.m. followed at 7 p.m. on the lawn with a dozen docents and telescopes for the nighttime observation of the heavens.

We will also have access to the large outdoor telescope that is the hallmark of the observatory.

The cost is $55 and reservations begin January 6th 2014 by calling (805) 437-8583. Clearly leave your name and phone number. Someone will return your call within a day with your trip confirmation and reservation number.

LA SCIENCE MUSEUM~SILK ROAD EXPEDITION
April 5, 2014

This is a chance to experience the Silk Road as it was 1,000 years ago -- oasis cities, night markets, camel caravans, spice merchants and ancient science tools devised by sailors and scholars.