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*Images available on request*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## ***Desirée Holman: Sophont in Action***

May 10 to July 20, 2014

**OPENING RECEPTION:** Saturday, May 10, 6–8 p.m. (Free); Members Preview 5–6 p.m.

**LIVE PERFORMANCE:** Saturday, June 28, 7–9:30 p.m. (ticket info TBA)

**ARTIST TALK:** Thursday, July 10, 7–8:30 p.m. (\$10 General / \$5 Members)

NAPA, Calif., April 8, 2014—di Rosa announces *Sophont in Action*, a solo exhibition featuring new work by noted contemporary artist Desirée Holman. Through a range of media, Holman explores the overlap of New Age mysticism and science fiction and the iconography associated with these two realms—including aliens, auras, and time travelers—to investigate the possibility of truth in fantasy. The exhibition will also include a live, site-specific performance on June 28 featuring residents of Napa and Sonoma counties.

Based in Oakland, Holman investigates themes of identity, social transgression, and alternative realities across multiple mediums, often over a two- to three-year project period. *Sophont in Action* will be the Bay Area premiere of Holman's latest body of work, which emerges from the artist's longstanding interest in the communal uses of technology for creative, spiritual, and social fulfillment. Science fiction author Poul Anderson first used the term *sophont* to describe an intelligent being capable of reasoning and introspection. The word is also associated with the Buddhist term "sentient being"—those with the ability to feel or perceive. Similarly, *Sophont in Action* prompts viewers to consider possibilities beyond one's sensory limits.

"The scope of Holman's artistic practice takes root in the space between fantasy and reality, questioning what games of make believe can tell us about our behaviors in the 'real' world," said curator Amy Owen. "Technology, the internet, and various social media platforms have infiltrated almost every aspect of our daily lives, radically altering the ways we relate to the world and to each other. On many levels these outlets have become a playground to act out aspects of our daily personas we might otherwise leave veiled."

di Rosa's Northern California landscape and regional focus also provides an enriching context for the work. Said Owen, "*Sophont in Action* examines the utopian ideals shared between hippie counterculture and technology—the ironic bedfellows of the Bay Area."

For the exhibition Holman presents a range of sculptural works, such as kinetic "time travel" headpieces and costumes, which intentionally borrow from sci-fi imagery found in books and film while referencing modern-day innovations, such as Google Glass. The



Desirée Holman, *Psionics 10*, 2013.  
Courtesy of the artist and Jessica Silverman Gallery.

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common aesthetics of science fiction and mysticism are further explored in Holman's paintings and drawings based on aura camera photographs and digital starscapes from real and fabricated astronomy documents. The works are animated in a gradual, nearly imperceptible movement through a multichannel video installation accompanied by a haunting soundscape composed by former Dirty Projectors member Angel Deradoorian.

Holman's performance at di Rosa casts 40 participants of all ages from the local community as sophonts to channel a utopian future. The performance's choreography draws inspiration from science fiction films, spiritual dance forms, yoga asanas, and human formations. Those interested in participating can find full details at <http://ow.ly/voJyv>.

Desirée Holman: *Sophont in Action* opens with a free public reception on May 10 from 6–8 p.m. and will remain on view in di Rosa's Gatehouse Gallery through July 20, 2014.

**Desirée Holman** was awarded the SFMOMA SECA award in 2008 and the Artadia: The Fund for Art and Dialogue award in 2007. Previous solo exhibitions of her work include the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles and the Berkeley Art Museum's MATRIX program. Holman holds a master's degree from the University of California, Berkeley. She resides in Oakland and is represented by Jessica Silverman Gallery in San Francisco.

**ABOUT DI ROSA:** Located on 217 acres in the Carneros region of Napa Valley, di Rosa houses the foremost collection of contemporary Bay Area art, with nearly 2,000 works by 800 artists. A wide range of styles, media, and subject matter provide an overview of the creative energy and freedom to experiment that characterize this region of California. For more information, hours, and tour schedules, visit [www.diRosaArt.org](http://www.diRosaArt.org).

For image requests or to schedule an interview, contact public relations manager Stephanie King: [stephanie@dirosaart.org](mailto:stephanie@dirosaart.org) or 707-226-5991 x34.

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