
Building

a

Different

Model

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di Rosa



Selections from the
di Rosa Collection

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Editor: Lindsey Westbrook
Printer: Solstice Press, Oakland
Images: Courtesy of the artists and
di Rosa Center for Contemporary Art

*Building a Different Model: Selections from the
di Rosa Collection* is curated by Dan Nadel.
Support is provided by di Rosa's Patrons Circle.

March 9-December 29, 2019

A Note from the Director

The job of a contemporary arts center is, in great part, to be responsive to the times, to generate new ideas, and to bring fresh perspectives to established modes of thought. With this in mind, we are pleased to present di Rosa's lineup of exhibitions and public programs through 2019 and into 2020.

Drawing from our permanent collection, Brooklyn-based independent curator Dan Nadel has installed a powerful show in Gallery 1 exploring notions of transformation and repair, coming at a cultural moment when both are called for. Noted in the *New York Times* for positing alternate paradigms for recent art history, Nadel acknowledges and embraces the art of Northern California as a parallel universe reveling in idiosyncratic experimentation—a counterpoint to the more rigid canon of Abstract Expressionism, Minimalism, and Conceptualism born of the East Coast.

We are especially pleased to dedicate all of Gallery 2 for the coming year to the first major West Coast retrospective in nearly forty years of Bay Area artist Viola Frey. Revealing her enormous and impactful output, the show is sure to surprise, featuring rarely seen monumental sculptures along with more intimate works in an astonishing range of mediums, all manifesting a perspective on feminism underscoring unshakable independence through creative expression.

Viola Frey: Center Stage launches a trilogy of solo exhibitions dedicated to women artists whose stories of determination, persistence, and extraordinary talent warrant a new look, and a reevaluation of their contributions to art history. The first institutional retrospective of Jean Conner, including new work, will open in 2020, followed by an exhibition of the under-examined but remarkable Deborah Remington.

di Rosa's 2019 exhibition program amps up our quest to make art and artists an essential part of the human experience.

Robert Sain
Executive Director

William Allan
Update for the Model of Rome, 1992



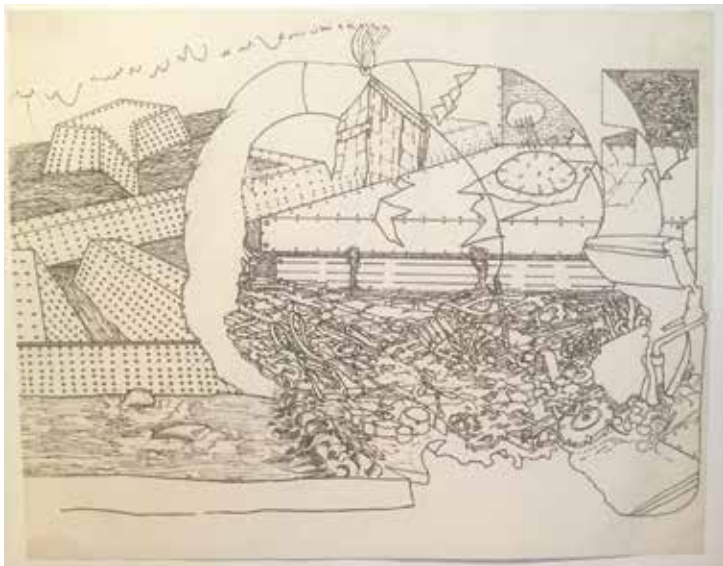
Building a Different Model: Selections from the di Rosa Collection

Dan Nadel

No image better encapsulates this dive into the di Rosa collection than William Allan's *Update for the Model of Rome* (1992). We can take this painting, with its invented structure and form, as an allegory for the exhibited version of the collection itself: it is an expansive gathering of linked containers of consciousness founded upon generative visions of transformation and repair through art. There are numerous and often intersecting roads and neighborhoods in this Rome, which reflect the incredible plurality of ideas at work in postwar Northern California painting and sculpture. The baseline for much of this activity was the California School of Fine Arts (now the San Francisco Art Institute) in the late 1940s and throughout the 1950s, where many of these ideas were formed and many of these artists were trained. In fact, several of them subsequently maintained active teaching lives, further connecting them as faculty colleagues. The primary link among these disparate sensibilities is the ethos of finding an artistic voice through making art, and in making art, finding a way to live and pass on one's experience.

Though quite different in their practices, William T. Wiley, William Geis, William Allan, Robert Hudson, and Robert Nelson (that last the one non-CSFA/SFAI alum) all shared a sense of making art as a kind of personal revelation and transformation, whether through entirely new forms, reclaimed parts, or poetic narratives. All of them taught in the region as well, and are documented in Gunvor Nelson and Dorothy Wiley's 1971 film *Five Artists: BillBobBillBob*. Unlike any other cinematic portrait before or since, this film captures the seemingly dissolved barrier between art and life that so defined the work of these artists and their colleagues. The dissolution of that barrier was also a decidedly white and male privilege, a fact made clear by the entirely female commentary that floats in from offscreen; of particular note is Judy Raffael's (now North) trenchant criticism of "the guys." As part of the film, all five artists collaborated on a group of drawings, often working on sheets simultaneously, finishing one another's forms and ideas as only they could, having

William Allan, Robert Hudson, William Geis, Robert Nelson, and William T. Wiley
Collaborative Drawing #1 from BillBobBillBob, ca. 1970-71



Carlos Villa
Third Coat, 1983



Bruce Conner
MEXICO COLLAGE, 1962
© Conner Family Trust, San Francisco, and
Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



Peter Saul
Master Room (Hide a Bed), 1961



been exploring overlapping languages for more than a decade. And while these artists are the focus of the film, they were very much connected to former classmates, for instance K. Lee Manuel, who sought to expand art into the arena of garments, or Carlos Villa, who combined his CSFA/SFAI background with a deep dive into his Filipino heritage: "I started trying to recuperate some things. And not to do a Filipino art but to do an art of my own. To do a visual kind of excavation of things to bring me closer to my own root—whatever that root was, being Filipino American."¹

Perhaps we might call the Berkeley Gallery in San Francisco—a co-op that existed from 1965 to 1972 and included artists Robert Bechtle, Alvin Light, Bruce Conner, and Manuel Neri, among others—an identifiable building in this Rome. It was the home of the now-renowned *Slant Step* exhibition of 1966. *Repair Show*, curated by William Allan in 1969, inaugurated the gallery's then-new third space on Brannan Street, purchased by gallery manager Marian Parmenter and her husband, Jim Wintersteen, in what was then a warehouse district. The restoration of the building (its "repair") was a group effort, and so the show commemorated the same. But many of the participating artists, including Hudson, Geis, Robert Arneson, Peter Saul, and H. C. Westermann (the last two very involved in attempting to understand the world, if not fix it, through cataclysmic imagery), made their work a commentary on the idea of repair more generally, whether of soul, country, or civilization.

This notion of healing the spirit through art also emerges in the work of Norman Stieglmeyer, a longtime teacher at SFAI who sought to identify a school in this expanded Rome that "can be described as 'Visionary'—defined here as 'inspired revelation.' The term, Visionary, could also be defined as a 'Meta-Reality'—going above and beyond, or a higher reality than that which we ordinarily perceive with a dualistic, self-oriented consciousness."² Stieglmeyer's mystical outlook, if not his Joan Miró-meets-Clyfford-Still aesthetic, was shared by Gage Taylor, whose hyperrealistic Edenic visions found mass appeal on posters and calendars in the 1960s and 1970s, precisely the moment the back-to-the-land movement reached its peak in California.

Land, as seen in *Five Artists: BillBobBillBillBob* and experienced in this very museum, was always central to these artists. Another neighborhood, albeit one of ill-fitting buildings, could be established around this idea. It would encompass the work of Paul Kos, who sought to modify the earth, and did so here at di Rosa; Franklin Williams, who abstracted ecstatic gardens in his intricate, color-centric fabric works; William Theophilus Brown, whose lavishly painted scenes mythologized and eroticized the

Norman Stieglmeyer
Disappearing Void of the Sunrise Eyeball, 1966



James Melchert
Ghost Jar with Butterflies, 1964



landscape; and Joan Brown and Gordon Cook, who cultivated private obsessions through observing the nearby Sacramento Delta. Just next door is a medium-agnostic cul-de-sac encompassing Oliver Lee Jackson's figures summoning fire and spirits, Sandra Shannonhouse's vision of body lines and structures from the inside out, Irene Pijoan's encaustic bust, and Nathan Oliveira's disconcertingly sexy fantasia.

Head on down the road, and you'll encounter a neighborhood that stretches from the University of California at Berkeley's ceramic studio, and its founding figure, Peter Voulkos, up to Davis and Robert Arneson's renderings of bodies and objects—highly personal, often inscrutable—in clay. Here we find artists who rigorously upended the material orthodoxies that circumscribed what could and could not be done with ceramics. Richard Shaw and Ron Nagle's sculptures demand, and reward, a sustained gaze, while Diane Flyr's apply a feminist twist to a supposedly "domestic" (that is, feminine) craft.

James Melchert's *Ghost Jar with Butterflies* (1964) offers a funny and grotesque tribute to his colleagues. It began with a playful caricature of Peter Voulkos in clay by Nathan Oliveira. It sat on top of the kiln for months as a kiln god. When it fell and broke, Melchert pieced it together and made a press mold, which he put to use in a series of works featuring his mentor's broken visage. Melchert's approach to his *Ghost Jar with Butterflies* encapsulates so much of what makes this Rome unlike any other. It is held together through links of pedagogy, respect for serious art regardless of aesthetic differences, and a playful but rigorous approach to repair and revitalization. Finally, there is the aspiration to evoke a person through thinking about what they have done, built, made. This collection of so many different points of view, mediums, and histories is linked by precisely this spirit of generosity, imagination, and seamless mapping of art onto life and life onto art.

Notes

1. Oral history interview with Carlos Villa, 1995, conducted by Paul Karlstrom for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, <https://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/interviews/oral-history-interview-carlos-villa-5561#transcript>.
2. Norman Stieglmeyer, "Visionary Art," 1980, unpublished essay, di Rosa archive.

Works in the Exhibition

All works are from the di Rosa Collection unless otherwise noted.

William Allan

Tentative Assault on Mt. Fear, 1971

Acrylic on canvas
74 × 111 ½ in.

Update for the Model of Rome, 1992

Oil on canvas
70 × 87 in.

William Allan and William T. Wiley

Indian History Repair, 1969

Ink, crayon, and watercolor on paper
88 ½ × 60 in.

Repair for Super Natural and Natural Events, 1969

Ink, crayon, and watercolor on paper
96 ½ × 60 in.

William Allan, Robert Hudson, William Geis, Robert Nelson, and William T. Wiley

Collaborative Drawing #1 from BillBobBillBillBob, ca. 1970–71

Ink on paper
19 × 24 in.
Gift of William Allan

Collaborative Drawing #2 from BillBobBillBillBob, ca. 1970–71

Ink on paper
24 × 19 in.
Gift of William Allan

Collaborative Drawing #3 from BillBobBillBillBob, ca. 1970–71

Ink on paper
19 × 24 in.
Gift of William Allan

Collaborative Drawing #4 from BillBobBillBillBob, ca.

1970–71
Ink on paper
19 × 24 in.
Gift of William Allan

Collaborative Drawing #5 from BillBobBillBillBob, ca.

1970–71
Ink on paper
24 × 19 in.
Gift of William Allan

Collaborative Drawing #6 from BillBobBillBillBob, ca.

1970–71
Ink on paper
19 × 24 in.
Gift of William Allan

Collaborative Drawing #7 from BillBobBillBillBob, ca.

1970–71
Ink on paper
24 × 19 in.
Gift of William Allan

Collaborative Drawing #8 from BillBobBillBillBob, ca.

1970–71
Ink on paper
19 × 24 in.
Gift of William Allan

Collaborative Drawing #9 from BillBobBillBillBob, ca.

1970–71
Ink on paper
19 × 24 in.
Gift of William Allan

Collaborative Drawing #10 from BillBobBillBillBob, ca.

1970–71
Ink on paper
19 × 24 in.
Gift of William Allan

Collaborative Drawing #11 from BillBobBillBillBob, ca.

1970–71
Ink on paper
19 × 24 in.
Gift of William Allan

Collaborative Drawing #12 from BillBobBillBillBob, ca.

1970–71
Ink on paper
19 × 24 in.
Gift of William Allan

William Allan, Robert Hudson, William Geis, Robert Nelson, and William T. Wiley

Collaborative Drawing #1-12 from BillBobBillBillBob, ca.

1970–71
Ink on paper
19 × 24 in.
Gift of William Allan

Terry Allen

Beautiful Waitress, 1970
Glass, sand, lead, coins, found figurine, and salt
7 ¾ × 16 ⅝ × 10 in.

Asia Minor, 1988

Preserved bat, lead, and mixed media
28 ¾ × 48 ½ × 6 ¼ in.

Robert Arneson

Six Pack, 1964
Glazed ceramic
10 × 9 ¼ × 6 ½ in.

Robert Arneson and Roy De Forest

A West Texas Interlude, 1969
Glazed ceramic
14 ½ × 10 × 10 in.

Robert Bechtle

Smilin' Through, 1969
Oil on canvas
53 × 55 in.

Gene Beery

It's Only a Painting, 1970
Oil on canvas
18 ¾ × 20 ½ in.

Joan Brown

Chinese Statues Guarding a Delta Landscape, 1969
Oil on canvas
72 × 84 in.

Woman Preparing for a Shower, 1975

Enamel on canvas
84 × 72 in.

William Theophilus Brown

Untitled, 1964

Oil on canvas
31 × 37 ½ in.

Squeak Carnwath

Sioux City Sue, 1973

Graphite and colored pencil on paper
18 ½ × 26 in.

Bruce Conner

MEXICO COLLAGE, 1962

Netting, paper, paint, ink stamps, fringe, bell, and costume jewelry on Masonite
23 × 32 × 5 in.

Gordon Cook

Boat House, 1983

Oil on Masonite
8 ¼ × 8 ⅞ in.

Roy De Forest

40 Miles West of Rabbit Corner, 1981
Polymer on canvas
75 ½ × 170 in.

Diane Flyr

Cup, 1976
Glazed porcelain
3 ½ × 4 ¼ × 5 in.

William Geis

Untitled, 1970
Watercolor and ink on paper
31 ¼ × 26 ¼ in.

Aquatic Attic, 1971

Fix-It-All plaster, wood, wire, paint, and electric light
19 × 12 × 10 in.
Gift of Richard Reisman

Untitled, 1971

Glass, wire, paint, and Fix-It-All plaster
14 × 17 × 18 in.

William Geis and William T. Wiley

Collaborative Watercolor, 1970

Watercolor on paper
30 × 22 in.

George Herms

Universal Telephone, 1965

Mixed media
6 × 12 × 9 in.
Gift of James A. Elliott

Robert Hudson

Twisted Hip, 1967

Polychrome steel
85 × 85 × 87 in.

Oliver Lee Jackson

Untitled No. 6, 1985

Oil pastel on linen
57 × 70 in.

Les Kerr

Private, 1963

Oil on zinc
12 × 15 in.

Paul Kos

Concrete Street, 1968

Watercolor and ink on paper
12 × 18 in.

Cyclone Fence, 1968

Ink on paper
12 × 16 ¾ in.

One Mile of Painted Highway, 1968

Watercolor on paper
11 ¾ × 17 ½ in.

Marilyn Anne Levine

Brown Drawstring Bag, 1980

Ceramic and leather
6 ½ × 5 ½ × 4 ½ in.

K. Lee Manuel

Necklace, 1973

Paint on cotton
17 × 8 × 1 in.

Necklace with Stuffed Palm Leaves, 1973

Paint on cotton
22 × 12 ½ × 1 in.

Sea Charm, 1975

Fabric and paint
7 × 60 × 1 in.

Fred Thomas Martin

A Book Is a Magic Carpet, 1963

Distemper, watercolor and graphite on paper
17 ¾ × 17 ½ in.

James Melchert

Ghost Jar with Butterflies, 1964

Glazed ceramic
9 ½ × 8 × 8 in.

Photo Negative with Metal Ashtray, 1968

Metal, clay, and glazes
4 ½ × 15 × 15 in.

#1, 1975

Rubbing; graphite on seed packet
25 × 20 in.
Gift of James Melchert

#2, 1976

Graphite on paper
25 × 20 in.
Gift of James Melchert

Ron Nagle

California Dreamin', 1975

Slipcast low-fire clay with overglaze
5 ¼ × 3 ¼ × 2 ¾ in.

Untitled (Cup Portrait), 1977

Color Xerox on print
13 ½ × 10 ½ in.

Untitled (Cup Portrait), 1977

Color Xerox on print
15 ¾ × 11 ½ in.

Untitled, 1982

Glazed ceramic
15 × 7 ¾ × 7 ⅝ in.

Anderson Ranch Series—Turquoise, 1988

Multi-fired overglaze earthenware and porcelain
2 ½ × 3 × 1 ⅞ in.

**Gunvor Nelson and
Dorothy Wiley**

*Five Artists:
BillBobBillBillBob*, 1971
Video, black and white,
sound, 70 min.
Courtesy Filmform, Sweden

Nathan Oliveira

Nude with Teddy Bear, 1966
Watercolor on paper
21 × 17 ½ in.

Irene Pijoan

Detergent Miracles, 1980
Encaustic and oil on canvas
15 ½ × 19 in.
Gift of Wanda Hansen Ashe

Peter Saul

Master Room (Hide a Bed),
1961
Oil on canvas
60 × 77 in.

Sandra Shannonhouse

Galen Figure, 1978
Glazed porcelain
69 × 9 × 9 in.

Richard Shaw

House and Can Tower, 1980
Porcelain with decal
overglaze
29 × 30 × 11 in.

Gerd Stern

Help—Who-R-U, 1962
Mixed-media assemblage
29 × 8 ¾ × 1 in.

Who R-U, 1963

Mixed-media assemblage
15 ½ × 14 ½ × 3 in.

Norman Stieglmeyer

*Disappearing Void of the
Sunrise Eyeball*, 1966
Acrylic on canvas
49 ½ × 45 ⅞ in.

Gage Taylor

Untitled, 1971
Painted wood and electrical
wire
6 ¾ × 3 ½ × 3 ½ in.

Sam Tchakalian

Shovel, 1975
Shovel and paint
35 ½ × 8 ½ × 4 in.

Broom, 1978

Wood, straw, and paint
52 × 10 × 3 in.

Carlos Villa

Souvenir Shoes, 1981
Dyed feathers and paper
pulp
3 ½ × 8 ½ × 12 in.

Head with Bone Dolls, 1982

Paper pulp, feathers, and
bones
9 ½ × 7 × 4 in.

Third Coat, 1983

Cloth, canvas, taffeta, acrylic
paint, feathers, bones, and
hair
79 × 80 × 11 in.

H. C. Westermann

Untitled, 1976
Watercolor on paper
20 × 26 in.

William T. Wiley

Taking a Lot for Granite,
1964
Oil on board
45 ¼ × 48 in.

Franklin Williams

Gracious Gift (Self-Stuffed),
1974
Acrylic, yarn, twine, feathers,
and fabric on canvas
40 × 48 × 3 in.
Gift of Franklin Williams,
courtesy Lizabeth Oliveria
Gallery

About the Curator

Dan Nadel is a writer and curator based in New York. His past exhibitions include *Samaritans*, Galerie Eva Presenhuber, New York (2019); *Gertrude Abercrombie*, Karma, New York (2018); *Red Grooms, Handiwork 1955–2018*, Marlborough Contemporary, New York (2018); *What Nerve! Alternative Figures in American Art: 1960 to the Present*, RISD Museum, Providence, and Matthew Marks Gallery, New York (2014–15); *Return of the Repressed: Destroy All Monsters 1973–1977*, Prism, Los Angeles (2011); and *The Passing of Time: Michael Hurson at Work, 1971–2001*, Paula Cooper Gallery, New York (2017–18). Nadel is a frequent contributor to *Artforum* and the *New York Review of Books*. He has authored several books, including *The Collected Hairy Who Publications* (Matthew Marks, 2015), *Art Out of Time: Unknown Comics Visionaries 1900–1969* (Abrams, 2006), and *Dorothy and Otis: Designing the American Dream* (Harper Design, 2015). His upcoming exhibitions include *Landscape without Boundaries* and *Kathy Butterly*, both at the Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem Museum of Art, Davis.

Public Programs

Community Open Studios / Haciendo Arte con Todos

11 AM- 3 PM

2/23, 4/6, 6/1, 8/24, 12/7

Community Open Studios / Haciendo Arte con Todos is made possible with support from the Five Arts Fund and the Napa Valley Community Foundation.

March 23 / 24

Viola Frey Clay Workshop for Families:

Portrait Plates

9 AM- 12 PM | MarinMOCA

April 6

In Conversation: *Stewarding a Legacy: The Care and Conservation of Viola Frey's Work* with Rowan Geiger, Robin Bernhard, and Cynthia De Bos, moderated by di Rosa Curator Amy Owen
3-5 PM | Gallery 2

May 11

di Rosa Days

10 AM-4 PM | Site-wide

May 11

Afternoon Exchange: *Rethinking Northern California Figurative Painting* with di Rosa Guest Curator Dan Nadel and Company

June 1

In Conversation: *About Mentorship* with Andrea Saenz Williams, di Rosa Director of Education and Civic Engagement and Allison Smith, Dean, Fine Arts Division, California College of the Arts
3-5 PM | Gallery 2

June 11, 18

interACTIVE

6 PM-8 PM | Napa County Library
Main Branch

July 16, 23

interACTIVE

6 PM-8 PM | Napa County Library
Main Branch

September 7

In Conversation: *Architecture of Resilience* with Brandon Jorgensen of Atelier Jorgensen and Guests
3-5 PM | Gallery 2

October

interACTIVE

5 PM-7 PM | Wednesdays | Sonoma Valley Regional Library

October 5

di Rosa Days

10 AM-4 PM | Site-wide

October 5

Afternoon Exchange: *A co-organized discussion with di Rosa Curator Amy Owen and California College of the Arts Ceramics Chair Nathan Lynch*
2:30-5 PM | Gallery 2

November 2

In Conversation: di Rosa Guest Curator Dan Nadel and Company
3-5 PM | Gallery 2

For information about these and other programs please visit dirosaart.org

Community Partnerships

Arts Council Napa Valley
Boys & Girls Clubs of Napa Valley
California College of the Arts
Community Resources for Children
MarinMOCA
Napa County Library
Napa Valley College Performing Arts
Nimbus Arts
Sonoma Valley Regional Library

