

di Rosa



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di Rosa Center for Contemporary Art Unveils Artist Projects and Programming for Part 1 of *Be Not Still: Living in Uncertain Times*

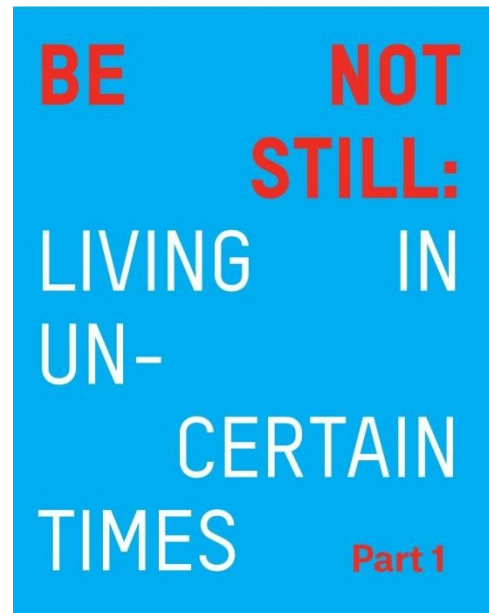
Part 1: November 4, 2017–May 27, 2018
Dodie Bellamy & Kevin Killian, Ala Ebtekar
Rigo 23, Allison Smith

Part 2: Opens June 23, 2018
Victor Cartagena, Ranu Mukherjee,
Lava Thomas, Lexa Walsh

Press Preview: November 2, 12-2 p.m.

Opening Reception: November 4, 2017
3-4 p.m. Member Reception + Artists' Talk
4-6 p.m. Public Reception

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Napa, Calif., September 27, 2017—di Rosa Center for Contemporary Art is proud to present its first institution-wide exhibition comprised of new commissions and guest-curated projects utilizing work from the permanent collection. Unfolding in two parts from November 4, 2017, through 2018, *Be Not Still: Living in Uncertain Times* addresses concerns of the present social and political climate through eight large-scale and ambitious artist-led inquiries. These projects offer viewers multiple lenses through which to reflect on and engage with prescient matters affecting our local and global communities. Central to *Be Not Still* is an extensive education and civic engagement roster, including community partnerships and artist-centered programming, to provide multiple opportunities for visitors to interact with the exhibition throughout its run.

Part 1 of *Be Not Still* is anchored by the selected topics and projects of each of the exhibition's participants—**Dodie Bellamy & Kevin Killian** (Surveillance), **Ala Ebtekar** (Citizenship) **Rigo 23** (American Exceptionalism) and **Allison Smith** (The Rise of White Nationalism)—which are presented to open a conversation around our contemporary moment. “The power of the artists’ projects coupled with the impact of compelling educational experiences, allow us to show why art and artists matter,” di Rosa Executive Director Robert Sain states.

Organized by Curator Amy Owen and Assistant Curator Kara Q. Smith, with Andrea Saenz Williams, Director of Education and Civic Engagement, *Be Not Still* is the inaugural exhibition under the newly renamed di Rosa Center for Contemporary Art, emphasizing the organization's renewed focus on artist-driven collaborations. The ambitious exhibition came together through a series of internal dialogues examining how to bring new relevance to the permanent collection and support artists working in the Bay Area by providing platforms for experimentation while also being critically and socially engaged with the local community and the world at large. "If ever there was a time that the world needed artists, it is now," Owen states. "Their visionary creativity and ability to imagine new ways of thinking about the most pressing issues of our day are essential to society."

The organization is also making an institutional commitment to thought-provoking programs and to civic engagement. "We believe that engaging the public in dynamic and creative ways is essential to a thriving center for contemporary art," Saenz Williams states. As a result, di Rosa will present a wide array of new programs in conjunction with the exhibition including a series of artist talks, a symposium addressing the issues explored in the first rotation of the exhibition, and a book club. "We want to provide audiences with programming that is innovative, thoughtful, evocative, and relevant."

For this phase of the exhibition, di Rosa is partnering with the Boys & Girls Clubs of Napa Valley and Napa Valley College Theater Arts to provide a platform for students to engage with the art and themes of *Be Not Still*. Additionally, relationships with Community Resources for Children, Napa Valley Unified School District, Napa Bookmine, the Napa Public Library, and Sonoma State University, as well as outreach efforts across the Bay Area are taking place to further the organization's mission of providing inspiring experiences with contemporary art of Northern California.

Be Not Still: Living in Uncertain Times Part I is on view November 4, 2017–May 27, 2018 at di Rosa Center for Contemporary Art (5200 Sonoma Hwy, Napa). A public reception will be held on November 4, from 4 to 6 p.m. Part II opens on June 23, 2018, and will feature new work by Victor Cartagena, Ranu Mukherjee, Lava Thomas, and Lexa Walsh. Hours: Wed-Sun, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Visit dirosaart.org for admission fees and tour schedule.

Generous support for Part I is provided by the di Rosa Producers Council, Stags' Leap Winery, Darioush & Shahpar Khaledi, and Wanda Kownacki.

BE NOT STILL: LIVING IN UNCERTAIN TIMES PART I — ARTIST PROJECTS

Dodie Bellamy & Kevin Killian - Surveillance

Aligning with Rene di Rosa's own history as a writer and journalist, San Francisco-based authors Dodie Bellamy and Kevin Killian mine di Rosa's permanent collection to explore the theme of surveillance in *There's a Dark Secret in Me: Precarity, Exposure, Camouflage*. The project, on view in Gallery 1, highlights works that evoke a sense of unease, danger, and foreboding through imagery, mood, or form, and reveals the collection's prescient ability to foreshadow the present moment. As Bellamy and Killian state, "Amid the upheaval of a divided nation, we all feel vulnerable and uncertain."

Ala Ebtekar - Citizenship

Primarily known for his work in painting and drawing, di Rosa collection artist Ala Ebtekar tests the possibilities of clay in a new ceramic floor installation responding to the theme of citizenship

and our shared humanity. The artist transfers a field image from the Hubble Space Telescope onto an immersive tile grid using a cyanotype photographic process. Transposing this cosmic tapestry to clay marries the sky with the earth, simultaneously harkening celestial geometric patterns found in Persian mosque architecture and the rich history of experimental ceramic artistic practice in Northern California. Viewers gaze downward to find no visible distinctions between stars, planets, space, or time, participating in a universality of existence and exploring what it means to be a territory without borders.

Allison Smith - The Rise of White Nationalism

Building on past projects that explore the role of craft in the construction of national identity, Allison Smith debuts a series of sculptural installations investigating the rise of white nationalism and how what we call 'patriotism' might be viewed, from various perspectives, in a different light. The artist anchors her project through an assembly of cast iron Tiki torches evoking those recently used by white supremacist protesters in Charlottesville, VA. The act of solidifying these charged, menacing objects becomes an exercise in historicizing the present moment as a means to move beyond it. Smith prompts viewers to take current debates on the removal of confederate monuments as a reference point for discussions on the potent materiality of sculpture.

Rigo 23 - American Exceptionalism

Taking our present leadership's "America First" rhetoric as a point of departure, di Rosa collection artist Rigo 23 presents *Madre Tierra (Mother Earth)*, a large-scale immersive installation that employs an imposing three-dimensional rendering of the American Flag to explore the concept of American Exceptionalism. The artist explores the long-term environmental and human impact our contemporary politics may have on the world at large. The white stripes of the flag emerge as solid walls from a red and blue gallery floor, inviting viewers to walk through and around this metaphor for a territory. As our nation is literally building walls around itself, Rigo 23's powerful installation evokes both the physical and ideological/conceptual boundaries that may come to define us as a country.

PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHTS

November 4: Member Reception

di Rosa members are invited to the opening of *Be Not Still: Living in Uncertain Times Part I* featuring a talk with participating artists and Curator Amy Owen. 3-4 p.m.

December 9: Artist Talk: Allison Smith

Exhibition artist Allison Smith and di Rosa Curator Amy Owen will have an intimate conversation about Smith's artistic practice and the inspiration for her new sculptural works featured in *Be Not Still: Living in Uncertain Times*. 2:30-3:30 p.m.

January 20: Artist Panel: Surveillance

Dodie Bellamy, *Be Not Still: Living in Uncertain Times* guest curator and author; Pamela M. Lee, Osgood Hooker Professor in Fine Arts at Stanford University; and Amy Owen, di Rosa's curator will participate in a panel discussion addressing the topic of surveillance. 2:30-3:30 p.m.

March 10: Bring in the Spring

This durational event begins with a talk by exhibition artist Ala Ebtakar followed by activities that invite participants to investigate their cultural heritage and participate in aspects of Nowruz, the

Iranian New Year. Music, poetry, food, and stargazing will be part of this pre-equinox experience. 4:30-9 p.m.

Late May: *Be Not Still: Living in Uncertain Times* Symposium

Panel discussions addressing the art and issues explored in the first rotation of the exhibition.

[View additional upcoming and ongoing programming](#)

PARTNERSHIPS

Boys & Girls Clubs of Napa Valley

This collaboration aims to increase leadership skills for teens while addressing issues relevant to their everyday lives through an artist-led project.

Napa Valley College Theater Arts

Led by Jennifer King, Professor of Theater Arts/Performing Arts Coordinator and Artistic Director of Napa Valley College, students will create theater pieces based upon *Be Not Still: Living in Uncertain Times*. San Francisco theater maker, Mark Jackson will provide an intensive workshop on theater making to generate work that will be developed and performed at di Rosa and at Napa Valley College. The workshop will provide tools and a platform for students to create their own performance pieces based on the works and topics explored in the exhibition.

Additional outreach efforts with community-based organizations and local businesses include relationships with Community Resources for Children, Napa Valley Unified School District, Napa Bookmine, the Napa Public Library, and Sonoma State University.

ABOUT DI ROSA CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY ART

di Rosa is a catalyst for transformative experiences with contemporary art of Northern California. The nonprofit art center presents dynamic exhibitions and educational programs for all ages and houses the foremost collection of contemporary Bay Area art in the world. 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. di Rosa features three galleries, a sculpture park, a 35-acre lake, and a wildlife preserve, all located on 217 scenic acres in Napa Valley's famed Carneros region. For more information, visit dirosaart.org.

CONTACT

For images, interview requests, and curatorial media tours, contact Danielle Smith, danielle@frameworksf.com.

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