

## **Historic Timeline of di Rosa Center for Contemporary Art**

### **8,000 B.C. to 1500 B.C.E.**

The area was occupied by several different indigenous tribes, including, the Wappo, the Patwin, the Coast Miwok and the Pomo dating back to 8000 B.C.

### **1500**

The Wappo (Mishewal, Mutistul, Mayakmah) peoples take control of what is now the present-day Carneros region of Napa Valley

### **1823**

Mission San Francisco Solano is founded in present-day Sonoma ushering stronger Spanish control of the region.

### **1835**

General Mariano Vallejo lays out the city of Sonoma.

### **1841**

During the 1830s and 40s, parceling land grants became much more common. The present 465-acre ranch was part of the "Rancho Huichica" an 18,000 acre Mexican land grant given to Mariano Vallejo's brother-in-law Jacob P. Leese.

### **1855**

The original grant of 18,000 acres was quickly subdivided and sold as farmland which helped the settling of the Carneros region. William Winter bought the 465 acres which is where di Rosa is now settled. Grapes and an olive grove were planted.

### **Circa 1880**

The area becomes known as "Carneros" (rams/sheep).

### **1884**

The ranch is sold to 2 Frenchmen, Michael Debret and Pierre Priet, who planted more vineyards, later lost to phylloxera.

### **1886**

A stone building is erected to house a winery-later used for mushroom growing, moonshine production, and storage for hay and grain.

### **1930s**

The property's lake began as a pond dug by WPA workers in the 1930s for irrigation in the surrounding area.

### **1960**

Rene di Rosa purchases the property and begins restoring the stone winery, transforming it into a residence.

**1963**

Rene built a dam and extended "the pond" into a 35-acre lake, naming it Winery Lake. Winery Lake Vineyards is established. Eventually 250 acres of vines are planted and a total of 53 wineries purchase the grapes over the next 25 years. "Winery Lake" becomes the first vineyard noted on a wine label.

**1976**

Rene di Rosa and Veronica McDonald are married. During the next 15 years, Rene and Veronica are very active in both the wine and art communities. Rene serves as a trustee on museum boards in SF and NYC.

**1983**

Rene and Veronica give much of their art, land, and buildings to the Rene & Veronica di Rosa Foundation, an operating foundation for the benefit of the public.

**1986**

The di Rosas sell Winery Lake Vineyards to Seagram. Rene and Veronica begin planning for an art environment and nature preserve on the remaining property.

**1991**

Death of Veronica di Rosa in a hiking accident.

**1993**

Ground is broken for the first of two new gallery buildings.

**1996**

Rene di Rosa moves out of the historic Residence.

**1997**

Rene di Rosa opens his collection to the public. The art collection is housed in four buildings on more than 200 acres of preserved open space. The "di Rosa Preserve" is established as an independent non-profit public trust. Rene di Rosa is Chair and Alexandra Phillips is the Founding President of the Board.

**2002**

Jack Rasmussen is hired as the new organization's first Executive Director.

**2005**

Kathryn Reasoner starts term as Executive Director in September.

**2006**

Volunteer office and Collection Library/Conference Room are created. Monthly public programs expanded (artist lectures, family workshops, and First Friday art parties).

## **2008**

Rene di Rosa moves off-site to The Meadows due to failing health.

## **2009**

Stock market crash hits di Rosa hard, reducing endowment by 24% and requiring 25% staffing cut, including Director of Education & Public Programs, events and site support. State highway widening removes front acreage and landscaping, blocking front entry and necessitating reengineering of drive and turn lanes by di Rosa.

## **2010**

Rene di Rosa passes away at age 91, leaving the bulk of his estate to the Rene & Veronica di Rosa Foundation. His apartment is remodeled for new staff offices, consolidating all under one roof.

## **2011**

The Rene di Rosa Trust begins transfer to the Foundation of the remaining private art collection of 800 works, the Milliken Peak property of 167 acres and an endowment estimated at approximately \$4M.

Winery Lake Vineyards are sold by Diageo to an outside investment company, requiring legal action for renegotiation of access agreements and correction of property lines. Community Celebration of Rene di Rosa's life draws 500+ with support from Carneros vintners, collection artists and a gathering of art cars from all over the region.

## **2012**

Successful community advocacy campaign results in Napa Planning Commission's unanimous vote to lift restrictions on visitor access and events, allowing di Rosa to expand public hours 40% including weekends, and add busses for school and group tours.

Estate transfer is completed, including sale of former Carneros Social Hall, personal property and filing of art appraisals with the IRS. Final removal of personal property from storage barns.

## **2013**

Gatehouse Gallery remodeled for expanded program of contemporary exhibitions and new media; di Rosa reaches record high for visitors and membership.

## **2014**

Major earthquake in di Rosa's neighborhood causes damage to the collection.

Launch of new strategic planning effort.

## **2015**

Executive Director Kathryn Reasoner announces her resignation.

Robert Sain hired as Executive Director.

## **2016**

Interim Director of Education, Barbara Henry, is contracted to pave the way for increased education programming, docent training, and community engagement.

The collection housed in di Rosa's Main Gallery and portions of the collection around the site are moved to professional art storage.

## 2017

Director of Education and Civic Engagement, Andrea Saenz is hired.

The organization launches its new graphic identity and clarified name, di Rosa Center for Contemporary Art. The Main Gallery and Gatehouse Gallery are renamed Gallery 1 and Gallery 2 respectively. Updated signage and wayfinding is placed throughout the property with funding from the County of Napa.

di Rosa sustains damage from the North Bay wildfires in October. The fire swept through the north edge of the property, burning a storage barn, and causing smoke damage to the outdoor sculpture collection and works in the Residence Gallery and offices (Tractor Barn). di Rosa hires SF Art Conservation to restore the works.

Free, bilingual programming is offered to support the local community in the aftermath of the fires (Community Open Studios / *haciendo arte con todos*).

Work begins to develop community partnerships with organizations that serve diverse populations (Napa County Library, Boys & Girls Clubs).

## 2018

The organization re-opens with a new admission structure and increased flexibility to move between galleries without tours or reservations.

The year-long exhibition *Be Not Still: Living in Uncertain Times*; addresses socio-political issues in two parts. The exhibition features collection artworks in conversation with large-scale commissioned installations by BIPOC and LGBTQA Bay Area artists addressing the topics of surveillance, white nationalism, American exceptionalism, citizenship, assembly, immigration, societal health, and solidarity.

New school programs launch, including a tour themed around social justice, called Our Contemporary Moment.

Director of Education & Curator participate in Museums As Sites for Social Action (MASS Action) in Minneapolis. As a result of attending MASS Action, discussions begin to deinstall a collection object created by Rene di Rosa, *Lynched Volkswagen*.

## 2019

Seasonal *Site Walk Weekends* launches Fridays through Sundays further removing restrictions for guests to access di Rosa's campus without a guide.

*First Wednesdays* program begins, providing the city of Napa and the city of Sonoma residents free admission to di Rosa on the first Wednesday of each month.

di Rosa's Board of Directors make a public announcement that the organization will become non-collecting and will begin a slow process to deaccession a portion of its collection. Proceeds from collection sales will be used to replenish the organization's endowment and ensure financial sustainability.

Free admission is offered for Title I schools; subsidized transportation is offered for Title I schools.

*Lynched Volkswagen*, a work by Rene di Rosa is deinstalled.

## 2020

Education staff initiate a year-long plan for diversity, equity, accessibility, & inclusion training with volunteers; MASS Action diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility reading group initiated with staff.

Artist & Richard A. Ward Fellow Arleene Correa Valencia creates murals depicting the unseen nighttime labor of Napa's field workers for di Rosa's outdoor studio area.

di Rosa's Board of Directors announces temporary public closure due to COVID-19 concerns and to strategically recalibrate for a sustainable future. Non-essential staff are furloughed or laid off. Executive Director Robert Sain transitions to Director Emeritus.

Education team creates bilingual education content for use at home during the COVID-19 quarantine. Through partnerships with Boys & Girls Clubs of Napa Valley, First 5 CA, and Rainbow Action Network, content serves thousands.

The Board of Directors launches working groups to envision a sustainable future for di Rosa and commits to re- envision the mission with an eye toward community and equity. This results in the adoption of a new mission statement and a diversity and equity statement.

Kate Eilertsen is named Executive Director & Chief Curator.

## **2021**

Eilertsen launches *The Incorrect Museum*, a major exhibition of di Rosa collection works, and begins repairing relationships with the local and artistic community.

Curatorial staff initiates contemporary exhibitions series highlighting contemporary emerging and mid-career artists practicing in Northern California with *Ceramic Interventions*. Gallery 1 goes on to host 3-4 contemporary exhibitions per year.

The first *Camp di Rosa: Art + Nature* is held for two weeks in the summer.

William T. Wiley's monumental *Peace Gong* is relocated from the Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem Museum of Art to di Rosa, inaugurating a new phase of installations on long-term loan intended to refresh visitor experience in the absence of formal acquisition policy.

## **2022**

di Rosa is awarded a grant from the County of Napa to begin accessibility improvements. di Rosa undergoes an ADA site assessment to determine priorities.

A Land Acknowledgement statement is adopted.

Fundraising begins for a new storage area on site to "bring the collection home."

First iteration of *True North*, a juried biennial celebrating artists working in Napa, Solano, Sonoma, and Marin Counties, draws more than 500 entries and breaks attendance records.

*Camp di Rosa: Art + Nature* is expanded after a successful pilot.

di Rosa holds its first Halloween event, hosting hundreds of participants.

Three di Rosa collection sculptures are placed in downtown Napa in partnership with First Street Napa.

## **2023**

di Rosa is awarded its second grant toward ADA improvements from the County of Napa. Progress is made to automate gallery doors.

*Camp di Rosa: Art + Nature* enters its third year.

di Rosa's new on-site collection storage area is unveiled to the public. Approximately 2/3 of the collection is relocated back to the property from off-site storage.

## **2024**

di Rosa develops a sustainability plan and begins to actively partner with Art + Climate Action.

The second iteration of *True North* cements di Rosa's role as an incubator of art and artists in the North Bay.