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*Speculation, Like Nature, Abhors a Vacuum* AI video work and installation shot of wood sculptures on view in Getty's PST ART in LA.

**DI ROSA SF ANNOUNCES ANCIENT WISDOM FOR A FUTURE ECOLOGY,  
AN EXHIBITION BY TIFFANY SHLAIN AND KEN GOLDBERG**

San Francisco, CA (Wednesday, November 12, 2025) – di Rosa San Francisco is pleased to announce *Ancient Wisdom for a Future Ecology: Trees, Time, and Technology*, an exhibition by Bay Area artists Tiffany Shlain and Ken Goldberg. The exhibition, which originated as part of Getty's PST ART in LA, reimagines our past and collective futures using large-scale salvaged wood sculptures, video, and artificial intelligence. The exhibition will be on view January 22 - April 11, 2026.

The presentation at di Rosa expands on the original presentation of the exhibition, with new collaborative artworks that are site-specific to the Bay Area and related artworks from each of the artists' careers. The exhibition is deeply influenced thematically by the ancient technology of dendrochronology, the science of tree ring dating, embedded in the Bay Area's redwood trees, and the new technologies of AI.

The exhibition uses trees as a symbol to provoke questions about the way history and time are documented; explore the disparity between different neighborhoods; and draw a connection between visitors and the landscapes that surround them, through an invitation to create



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personal tree tributes using AI software. Collectively, the works on view in *Ancient Wisdom* invite us to meditate on the depth and structure of time.

“We are thrilled to bring a re-envisioned and expanded presentation of this acclaimed exhibition to di Rosa SF,” said di Rosa curator Twyla Ruby. “Shlain and Goldberg exemplify the ethos of Northern California artists, using the very material of our geography as their medium, and inviting visitors in to participate in the process and inspire new ways of thinking. We are also excited to create a dynamic interplay between contemporary artists and the work in our collection through *The Fullness of Time*, which offers an art historical musing on Shlain and Goldberg’s exploration of time.”

*Ancient Wisdom* builds on Shlain and Goldberg’s previous independent work: Shlain’s artwork challenging traditional timelines found on tree ring slices at the entrance of national parks like Muir Woods, and Goldberg’s art installations involving robots, AI, and nature. The collaborative works in this exhibition evolve each artist’s body of work in a new way incorporating the other’s expertise.

A central work in the exhibition is *The Tree of Knowledge*, made from a 10,000-pound salvaged eucalyptus. The artists include nearly 200 historical and contemporary questions that have spurred humanity’s ongoing quest to understand the world that Shlain burns into wood with pyrography. Envisioning time not as a unidirectional line but rather as a series of beginnings and endings—as well as incorporating geological notions of deep time—the works invite visitors to consider the scale of existence and to conceive of themselves in relation to nature and time in new and thought-provoking ways. The *Tree of Knowledge* sculpture will be featured in Minnesota Street Project’s (MSP) atrium entrance nearby, and a large-scale 17-foot supergraphic will be displayed in di Rosa SF.

Some collaborative artworks in the exhibition are rooted in Goldberg’s previous work with robots and artificial intelligence, such as his renowned *Telegarden* art installation (1995). One new work is *Speculation, Like Nature, Abhors a Vacuum*, a video piece that contrasts disparity in tree canopies along four San Francisco streets, in a style inspired by Ed Ruscha’s urban landscapes. In *Seeing The Forest interactive artwork*, visitors will also be invited to provide information about any San Francisco tree along with their own reflections, which will be uploaded and analyzed using generative AI to produce a unique textual and visual “tree tribute.”



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The di Rosa SF exhibition will also include a new participatory swing set made out of three tree rings. Each swing is inscribed with phrases: “You were here,” “You are here,” and “You will no longer be here.” Swings function as pendulums, adding another layer of visualization of time and gravity to the exhibition. In addition, the artists will present individual works from earlier in their career, including Shlain’s *Dendrofemonology: A Feminist History Tree Ring*, and Goldberg’s 2013 generative video artwork, *Bloom*, a land-art installation that considers time and geological endurance. By streaming live seismic data from the Berkeley Seismology Laboratory, minute motions of the earth trigger “blooms” of color sampled from a sequence of landscape paintings by O’Keefe, Diebenkorn, Gorsky, Celaya, and others.

In addition, the exhibition will be accompanied by *The Fullness of Time*, a companion exhibition of works from di Rosa’s permanent collection that visualize and represent time in unexpected ways, challenging conventional ideas about humankind’s shared past and collective future. The exhibition invites a conversation with Shlain and Goldberg’s meditation on the passage and marking of time, and creates an interplay between generations of artists.

### **About the Artists**

Partners in life and frequent creative collaborators, Shlain and Goldberg have worked together on art projects and documentaries for over 20 years, including the Emmy-nominated series *The Future Starts Here*, which includes episodes they co-wrote “Why We Love Robots,” & “Technology Shabbats.” They received over 17 awards for their Sundance hit film, *The Tribe*, which will have a 20th anniversary screening taking place in San Francisco at Manny’s on December 6, 2025. Shlain and Goldberg have also worked independently for decades as artists—including being shown at the Whitney, Guggenheim, and at MoMA in New York. Goldberg is represented by Catharine Clark Gallery in San Francisco and Shlain by Nancy Hoffman Gallery in New York.

### **ABOUT DI ROSA CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY ART**

di Rosa is a non-profit art center and nature preserve specializing in the art of Northern California. Located at 5200 Sonoma Highway, and a satellite museum in San Francisco’s Minnesota Street Project, di Rosa presents contemporary exhibitions by Bay Area-based artists and maintains a permanent collection of notable works by artists with ties to the Bay Area from the mid-twentieth century to the early 2000s. di Rosa offers an array of public programs and



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events for all ages to inspire creativity and curiosity. For more information visit [www.dirosaart.org](http://www.dirosaart.org).

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Artists Tiffany Shlain and Ken Goldberg with *Tree of Knowledge*





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Detail shot of one of the question hand burned into the wood on *The Tree of Knowledge*



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Artists Tiffany Shlain and Ken Goldberg working on *Abstract Expressions*





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*Tree of Knowledge* supergraphic at di Rosa SF 168 by 210 inches

All photos by Stefanie Atkins Schwartz