



di Rosa

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:



Mari Andrews, *Graphite, Flint, Lead*, 2016. Courtesy the artist and di Rosa Center for Contemporary Art.

di Rosa presents *M is for Water*, curated by artist Isabelle Sorrell

The latest in a series of exhibitions curated by Sorrell exploring language and human consciousness opens June 29, 2024

Napa, CA (May 30, 2024) – di Rosa Center for Contemporary Art is pleased to present [M is for Water](#), a group exhibition guest curated by artist Isabelle Sorrell and featuring work by Shiva Ahmadi, Mari Andrews, Mildred Howard, Paul Kos, Hung Liu, Cheryl Meeker, Susan Middleton, Gay Outlaw, J. John Priola, Isabelle Sorrell, Theodora Varnay Jones, and Wanxin Zhang. *M is for Water* will be on view June 29 – October 6 in di Rosa's Gallery 1.

An [Opening Reception](#) on Saturday, June 29, will welcome di Rosa patrons at 5:30 p.m., and the public 6 – 7 p.m. Public reception \$10 general admission, free for di Rosa members.

M is for Water is the latest in a series of exhibitions curated by Sorrell exploring the origins of language and its relation to human consciousness. Bringing together figurative and abstract work from a diverse group of artists, the exhibition probes the limits of elemental materiality, examining the roots of language where our differentiation between "water" and "mother" begin to diverge.



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Sorrell writes: "'M', believed to be one of the first letters of the Phoenician alphabet, had an antecedent in the Egyptian hieroglyph describing 'water,' and its history is intertwined with its mirror: 'W'. Words with a common etymology convey meanings that reveal the source of life in nature and humans alike...The letter 'M' reflects the sacredness of these shared origins: there is no life without water, there is no child without mother."

di Rosa will host an Artist Panel Discussion on Saturday, July 13, 2 – 3:30 p.m. Moderated by guest curator Isabelle Sorrell, exhibition artists Paul Kos, Wanxin Zhang, Susan Middleton, Mari Andrews, and Gay Outlaw will discuss their work and the themes of the exhibition. \$25 general admission includes gallery admission; free for members.

This exhibition is supported in part by John and Pam Story.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Shiva Ahmadi is an Iranian-American artist based in the Bay Area. Represented by Haines Gallery, Ahmadi utilizes a variety of mediums including painting, sculpture, and animation to tell stories. She combines luminous colors and mystical beings with violent imagery, drawing attention to global issues such as migration, war, and brutality against marginalized peoples. Having received her BFA from Azad University (Tehran) and MFA from Cranbrook Academy of Art, she has had solo exhibitions at the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco, and Asia Society Museum, New York. Ahmadi's work has been collected by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Dallas Museum of Art; and Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento, among others. The recipient of numerous grants and awards including the Kresge Fellowship and Pollack-Krasner Foundation Grant, she is currently a professor of art at the University of California, Davis.

Mari Andrews is known for delicate, haiku-like sculptures that she has been making for the past 20 years. Her three-dimensional drawings combine collected natural objects like seeds, leaves, moss, and stones with linear man-made materials, such as metal wire. She has had solo exhibitions at the Monterey Art Museum, Palo Alto Art Center, and San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art, among others; and exhibited in group exhibitions at venues including the Sun Valley Museum of Art, Ketchum, ID, and Contemporary Jewish Museum, San Francisco.

Paul Kos, a leading member of the Bay Area Conceptual Art movement since the 1960s, is best known for sculptural installations incorporating video, sound, and interactivity. Having received his MFA in 1967 from the San Francisco Art Institute, he went on to teach at the institution for more than thirty years. He has been the subject of major retrospectives at both di Rosa Center for Contemporary Art and the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive. His work is included in public museum collections including Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, and Museum of Modern Art, New York, among others. He is the recipient of numerous awards including Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Fellowship, John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation fellowship in video and audio, and multiple National Endowment for the Arts fellowships.



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Hung Liu (1948-2021) was a renowned contemporary artist known for her powerful paintings based primarily on historical Chinese photographs, and installations addressing the racial and cultural complexities she witnessed upon immigrating to the United States at the age of 36. After receiving her MFA from the University of California, San Diego, she exhibited internationally at institutions including the Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing. She was a professor of painting at Mills College, Oakland, for many years. Represented by Rena Bransten Gallery, San Francisco, she was the subject of solo exhibitions at institutions including the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery, and Oakland Museum of California.

Cheryl Meeker is a visual artist based in San Francisco whose work ranges from photography to installation, drawing, painting, archives, video, interactive web projects, and social sculpture, often touching on the fundamentals of sustenance in our environmentally destabilized world. She is a founding member of Stretchr.org, and has frequently collaborated with artist Dan Spencer as the art team Dan and Cheryl, producing actions, panel simulations, and video. Her ongoing activism with the housing and climate justice movements and recent work in the public library system inform her approach. She was one of the organizers of *Capitalism Is Over! If You Want It*, and her work has been exhibited in San Francisco at Artists' Television Access, Mission 17, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, and Southern Exposure.

Susan Middleton is an artist, photographer, author, and educator specializing in the portraiture of rare and endangered animals, plants, sites, and cultures. She was Chair of the Department of Photography at the California Academy of Sciences from 1982 to 1995, where she now serves as research associate. Her most recent book, *Spineless: Portraits of Marine Invertebrates, the Backbone of Life*, was published by Abrams in 2014. Middleton was awarded a Guggenheim fellowship in 2009, and is the recipient of an Endangered Species Coalition Champion Award for Education and Outreach and a Bay & Paul Foundation Biodiversity Leadership Award. Middleton's photographs have been exhibited and published throughout the world, both in fine art and natural history contexts, and her work is represented in the permanent collections of the National Gallery of Art and the National Academy of Sciences. She lives in San Francisco.

Gay Outlaw is an American artist working in sculpture, photography, and printmaking. She is the recipient of awards and honors including SFMOMA's SECA Award and has been the subject of solo exhibitions at the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art and elsewhere.

J. John Priola received his MFA from SFAI in 1987. His work has been shown in many exhibitions, including *In A Different Light*, Berkeley Art Museum and Prospect '96, the Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt, Germany. His work is included in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; and the Art Institute of Chicago. Arena Editions published a monograph of his work in 1998. He taught at SFAI for 25 years, and has taught at ICP Bard, SF State, and CCA. He is represented by Anglim/Trimble Gallery, San Francisco; Joseph Bellows, LaJolla, CA; and Weston Gallery, Carmel, CA.

Isabelle Sorrell is a painter and curator living and working in San Francisco. She has exhibited her work at institutions including di Rosa Center for Contemporary Art and Anglim/Trimble Gallery.



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Theodora Varnay Jones is a visual artist working in 2D and 3D mediums. Her work has been exhibited internationally and is held in public collections in the US, Hungary, Costa Rica, and Japan. She was born in Budapest, Hungary, and lives and works in San Francisco.

Wanxin Zhang is a Chinese-American sculptor based in San Francisco, known for his large-scale ceramic figures, formless ceramic structures, and bronze pieces. Represented by Catharine Clark Gallery, San Francisco, his works have been showcased in various international competitions and biennales, including The 22nd UBE Sculpture Competition in Japan, Taiwan Ceramics Biennale, and the Anren Biennale in China. He received awards such as the Joan Mitchell Painter and Sculptor Grant, the Virginia A. Groot Foundation First Place, and a curatorial award from the Contemporary Jewish Museum, San Francisco.

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, on 217 acres in the Carneros region of Napa, di Rosa includes two large art galleries, a beautiful lake, abundant birding, walking trails with vineyard views, outdoor sculptures, and picnic grounds.

di Rosa presents contemporary exhibitions by Bay Area-based artists in addition to maintaining 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 events for all ages to inspire creativity and curiosity. di Rosa is open to the public without reservations Thursday through Sunday from 11 am to 4 pm, and by appointment Tuesday through Wednesday. Visitors are encouraged to bring picnics. Children and educators are always free at di Rosa. For more information visit www.dirosaart.org.

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