

## EDUCATOR GUIDE

Story Theme: Collectors & Their Collections

Subject: Rene di Rosa

Discipline: Visual Arts

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Collector Rene di Rosa walks through student studios of the San Francisco Art Institute. Still image from SPARK story, February 2004.

## SECTION I - OVERVIEW

### EPISODE THEME

Collectors & Their Collections

### SUBJECT

Rene di Rosa

### GRADE RANGES

K-12 & Post-secondary

### CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Visual Arts & Language Arts

### OBJECTIVE

To use the SPARK story about Rene di Rosa to talk about collecting and the value of art.

### STORY SYNOPSIS

Rene di Rosa made his fortune growing some of Napa Valley's most sought-after grapes. But now his vineyard has been transformed into an art preserve filled with hundreds of works by Bay Area artists. Spark tags along with Rene as he trolls galleries and studios, looking for artists and artwork that appeal to his eclectic tastes.

### INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Group oral discussion, review and analysis, including peer review and aesthetic valuing as a group  
Teacher-guided instruction, including demonstration and guidance  
Hands-on individual projects in which students work independently  
Critical reflection on personal expressions and how they are seen and received by others

### INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

To introduce student to the idea of collecting art as well as its habits and history  
To provide context for the understanding of private and public collections  
To inspire students to consider the valuation of artwork and other collected objects

### EQUIPMENT NEEDED

SPARK story "Homegrown Bounty" about Rene di Rosa on DVD or VHS and related player  
Computer with Internet access, navigation software, speakers and a sounds card, printer  
Cassette player, CD player, or computer audio program

### MATERIALS NEEDED

Access to libraries with up-to-date collections of periodicals, books, and research papers  
Pencils, pens, and paper

### INTELLIGENCES ADDRESSED

Bodily-Kinesthetic - control of one's own body, control in handling objects  
Interpersonal - awareness of others' feelings, emotions, goals, motivations  
Intrapersonal - awareness of one's own feelings, emotions, goals, motivations  
Spatial - ability to manipulate and create mental images in order to solve problems  
Logical-Mathematical - ability to detect patterns, reason deductively, think logically

See more information on  
[Multiple Intelligences](http://www.kqed.org/spark/education) at  
[www.kqed.org/spark/education](http://www.kqed.org/spark/education).

## SECTION II – CONTENT/CONTEXT

### CONTENT OVERVIEW

Rene di Rosa made his fortune growing some of Napa Valley’s most sought-after grapes. But now his vineyard has been transformed into an art preserve filled with hundreds of works by Bay Area artists. Spark gets a look at di Rosa's unusual collection, and goes along with the collector as he trolls galleries and studios looking for artists and artwork that appeal to his eclectic tastes.



Art works created by Bay Area artists in the collection of the di Rosa Preserve in Carneros, California. Still image from SPARK story, 2003.

Collections can be established by either individual or institutions, and may come about for a variety of reasons. Historically, only aristocrats, prominent ecclesiastics, and other wealthy individuals collected art. Beginning in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, many royal and religious collections were opened to the public, as when Napoleon opened the Louvre--which had been the personal collection of the French kings--to the people. Since then, collecting art has taken on a more public, educational flavor, as institutions have sought to bring exceptional works of art together for the benefit of the larger community.

For an individual, the process of collecting is usually very personal and may change over time. While some collectors amass objects based on personal preference, others may collect for historical posterity, or as a vehicle for financial speculation, expecting

their collections to increase in value. Di Rosa maintains that the artworks in his collection, which is the most diverse and extensive collection of Bay Area artists in the world, have always been selected based on his own ever-expanding tastes. Because he wanted the public to be able to see the works he has collected, di Rosa has established his preserve in Carneros, California, which houses over 2,000 works by more than 750 artists.

Other private collectors may have other goals, such as preserving important works of a particular genre as a historical archive. Pamela and Richard Kramlich collect video art – a young and experimental genre that came to prominence only in the late 1960s and 70s. The Kramlichs’ collection serves the larger purpose of establishing an art historical collection of video art. The Kramlichs and other collectors at this level may therefore make decisions about what to add to their collection in order to include a wide diversity of styles, forms, artists, and content, in addition to satisfying any personal preferences. (The Kramlichs have also been featured on SPARK, and their story may be streamed on the SPARK Web site at <http://www.kqed.org/spark>.)



Rene di Rosa with the first work of art he ever purchased. Still image from SPARK story, 2003.

Collecting is certainly not limited to the acquisition of artworks, but extends to any number of objects, and is a practice that all types of people undertake. Some people collect baseball cards, stamps, coins, glass paperweights, records, or other objects that give them pleasure.

## SECTION III – RESOURCES

### TEXTS

Duboff, Leonard D. Antique and Art Collector's Legal Guide: Your Handbook to Being a Savvy Buyer (Legal Survival Guides). Sphinx Pub; 1st ed., 2003.

Yeager, Kathlee. Collecting Seashells. Johnstone. Grosset & Dunlap, 1970.

Vuillard, Paul. Collecting Stamps. Doubleday, 1974.

### WEB SITES

Art Collecting.Com - Resource site on collecting visual art - [art-collecting.com](http://art-collecting.com)

Collect Books – Web site detailing how to become a collector of Harry Potter books - <http://classiclit.about.com/od/collectingharrypotter/>

Ebay – Most successful national Web site for the buying and selling of objects, including fine art, antiques, and other collectibles - <http://www.ebay.com>

Stamp Store - Stamp collecting Web site - <http://www.stampstore.net/week.html>

University of Santa Cruz - Overview of course taught on collecting and museum practices - [arts.ucsc.edu/faculty/gonzalez/museum\\_studies.html](http://arts.ucsc.edu/faculty/gonzalez/museum_studies.html)

### MEDIA

TV SERIES: “Antiques Roadshow” – PBS series (check KQED’s Web site, San Francisco Magazine, or your local television listing for broadcast dates and times). More information at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/roadshow>

### BAY AREA FIELD TRIPS

Asian Art Museum, SF - <http://www.asianart.org>

Berkeley Art Museum/Pacific Film Archive, U.C. Berkeley - <http://www.bampfa.berkeley.edu>

California Academy of Sciences, SF – Natural sciences, live aquatic animals, and historical exhibitions - <http://www.calacademy.org>

California Historical Society, SF - <http://www.calhist.org>

Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento - California art and European drawings, contemporary northern California art and, more recently, of East Asian painting and international ceramics - <http://www.crockerartmuseum.org/index.htm>

## BAY AREA FIELD TRIPS (continued)

Di Rosa Preserve, The Carneros, California (Napa Valley). Reservations are required Admission is \$12 per person and includes a guided 2½ hour tour.  
<http://www.dirosapreserve.org>

Essig Museum of Entomology, University of California at Berkeley - One of the largest and most active research collections of arthropods (insects) in the US, with more than 5 million specimens, primarily from western North America and the northern neotropics –  
<http://www.mip.berkeley.edu/essig>

Golden Gate Railroad Museum, SF -  
<http://www.gsmrm.org>

Humboldt State University Natural History Museum – Museum dedicated to local Northern California natural history, including the Maloney Fossil Collection of nearly 2,000 specimens -  
[sorrel.humboldt.edu/~natmus](http://sorrel.humboldt.edu/~natmus)

Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Center for Visual Arts at Stanford University -  
<http://www.stanford.edu/dept/ccva>

Lindsay Wildlife Museum, Walnut Creek – The museum operates the oldest and one of the largest wildlife rehabilitation hospitals in the United States, treating more than 6,000 injured and orphaned wild animals each year - <http://www.wildlife-museum.org>

Mexican Museum, SF - Contemporary and historic art from Mexico and the Americas -  
<http://www.mexicanmuseum.org>

Monterey Bay Aquarium - <http://www.mbayaq.org>

Museum of Paleontology, UC Berkeley –  
<http://www.ucmp.berkeley.edu/>

Museum of the City of San Francisco, SF -  
<http://www.sfmuseum.org>

Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, UC Berkeley -  
<http://www.mip.berkeley.edu/mvz>.

Napa Valley Museum, St. Helena -  
<http://www.napavalleymuseum.org/>

Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum and Planetarium, San Jose-  
<http://www.rosicrucian.org/park/index.html>

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art -  
<http://www.sfmoma.org>.

San Francisco Performing Arts Library & Museum -  
<http://www.sfpalm.org>.

San Jose Museum of Art – 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century art -  
<http://www.sjmusart.org>.

The de Young Memorial Museum, SF - American paintings, decorative arts and crafts; arts from Africa, Oceania and the Americas; textiles -  
<http://www.thinker.org/deyoung/index.asp>

The di Rosa Preserve, Carneros, Napa – Works by California artists from 1960s to the present -  
<http://www.dirosapreserve.org>.

The Exploratorium, SF – Interactive science and technology exhibits and collections -  
<http://www.exploratorium.edu>.

The Oakland Museum of California, Oakland – fine art and local and state history -  
<http://www.museumca.org>.

The Tech Museum of Innovation, San Jose -  
<http://www.thetech.org>.

Treasure Island Museum, San Francisco – Exhibitions about the US Navy, Marines and Coast Guard in the Pacific, including lighthouses the 1939-40 ; the World's Fair (Golden Gate International Exposition); Yerba Buena and Treasure Islands; the Trans-Pacific Pan American China Clippers; and the Bay and Golden Gate Bridges -  
<http://www.treasureislandmuseum.org/>

## SECTION IV – VOCABULARY

### DISCIPLINE-BASED VOCABULARY AND CONCEPTS IN THE SPARK STORY

**Artwork**

A work of art, usually visual in nature, such as a painting, drawing, print, photograph, video, etc

**Collector**

A person who collects things, such as objects or works of art

**Collectible**

Something that appeals to collectors, such as unique objects, works of art, or other creative products

**Collection**

An assembled grouping of objects or works of art, the intentional gathering or grouping of particular types of objects or works of art

**Collecting**

The practice of acquiring objects or works of art

**Gallery**

An institution dedicated to exhibiting artwork, usually visual art work, usually a commercial enterprise, although they are sometimes non-profit

**Label**

Printed information about a work of art at a museum, usually placed beside or below the work, including the facts about the work and the artists, such as artist name, title, year, and medium. Labels for historic works may also include date of acquisition (if owned by the museum), owners (if on loan), birth and death dates of the artist, etc

**Museum**

An institution dedicated to the acquisition, preservation, and exhibition and preservation of works of art, historical artifacts and/or documents, or other types of objects deemed socially or historically significant

**Preserve**

To keep safe or away from harm

**Private**

Intended for or restricted to the use of a particular person, or persons, group, or class; belonging to or concerning an individual person, company, or interest

**Preference**

The power or opportunity to choose; to discriminate between options

**Provenance**

The history of ownership of a valued object, work of art, or literary work

**Public**

Of or relating to people in general

**Tradition**

A belief, idea, or custom that is inherited from a previous generation, other persons, or culture

## SECTION V – ENGAGING WITH SPARK

### STANDARDS-BASED ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION POINTS

#### Talking About Collecting

Ask students to brainstorm about collecting, including what is collected and by whom. Make two lists on the board of different collectibles and different types of collectors.

At the root of the concept of collecting is the question of “value” – the value of an object or a work of art. Referring to the lists of collectors and collectibles, discuss value and collecting with students, including:

- Does an object (such as a baseball card or a stamp) have intrinsic value?
- Does a work of art (such as a painting, drawing, or print) have intrinsic value?
- Does a crafted object (such as a desk, a piece of jewelry, or a pen) have intrinsic value?
- What are the differences between these types of collectibles?
- What gives each type of object its value?
- What changes about an object when it becomes part of a collection?

Move on to talk about financial value, as opposed to personal value.

- What impact does being part of a collection have on financial value?
- What are the differences between an object of financial value and an object of personal value?
- What events or factors affect value, such as re-sale, exhibition, death of the artist or subject, etc.?
- Who decides that a work of art is valuable?
- What influence does an appraisal of value have on an object?

Suggest that students take notes on the discussion about *value in art* organizing the points under the headings covered in the discussion.

#### RELATED STANDARDS

##### VISUAL ARTS

Kindergarten

##### HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXTS

3.3 Look at and discuss works of art from a variety of times and places.

##### CONNECTIONS, RELATIONS & APPLICATIONS

5.4 Discuss the various works of art (e.g., ceramics, paintings, sculpture) that artists create and the media used.

Grade 3

##### HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXTS

3.4 Identify and describe objects of art from different parts of the world observed in visits to a museum or gallery (e.g., puppets, masks, containers).

##### AESTHETIC VALUING

Make Informed Judgments

4.4 Identify and describe how various cultures define and value art differently.

Alternatively they could organize their ideas in the form of a mind map showing the connections between the ideas discussed.

#### Provenance

Throughout history one of the ways in which people have attributed value to a work of art or a collection has been through the documentation of successive ownership, or provenance.

As a group or individually, research records of provenance for selected works of art tracking the sale or donation of the works from their first purchase to their present location.

### **Provenance** (continued)

In relation to provenance, consider famous works that have changed ownership often or been the subject of some controversy, such as Guernica by Pablo Picasso, Mona Lisa by Leonardo da Vinci, David (sculpture) by Michelangelo, Fountain by Marcel Duchamp. For example, Picasso's Guernica is a painting that is political in subject. As such, it is desired and revered by a number of different cultures due to its subject, who painted it, and where it was originally executed. When studying Guernica or another famous work, consider the relationship between provenance and value. (For help in understanding the concept of provenance, refer to the Art Institute of Chicago's Web site at <http://www.artic.edu/aic/provenance>.)

Invite students to share their findings and discuss the issues that have arisen in their search.

### **Thinking About and Comparing Collections**

Arrange a visit to a local museum or collection. If possible, arrange a tour or talk with a curator or person involved with the collection. What is on view at the museum? What is not on view (that is, what percentage of the museum's collection is on view at any given time)? Who decides what is shown? How are the works/objects presented? What does the institution tell the public about the work? How does this change the way the works are seen?

Using the Internet, visits to local institutions, the library, and research phone calls, challenge students to work in pairs and compare two different kinds of collections, such as a collection of African objects in a natural history museum with a collection of European art.

They should organize their comparative study in the form of a short report, with each section addressing one of the following questions.

- What are the differences in the way the objects are presented?
- What information is provided about the artists?
- What information is known about the artists?
- How were the works acquired?
- If works were donated or are on loan to the museum, who donated or loaned them?

- How did the donor or loaner obtain the objects? Why did they donate/loan them?

Invite each pair to present their report to the whole group and guide the discussion towards comparing and contrasting collections in terms of curatorial approaches. Invite students to evaluate the impact curators have on the way collections are viewed and enjoyed.

### **SPARKLERS:**

\* Divide students into 2 groups. Challenge one group of students to look at an object or work of art in the museum collection and to write a short description of the work without reading the label or any information provided by the museum. Challenge another group to look at the object or work of art and to read all of the information provided and to write a short description. Ask each group to present their experience. Ask students to explain the differences in their descriptions. What impact does the information provided by the museum have on the viewing experience? How does this change the way the work is seen?

\* Suggest that students create their own collection, working together to decide what types of objects are going to be collected and the budget available to spend. Invite each student to propose an idea for the collection, researching their choice and assembling a complete historical and financial background of the objects/artworks to support their proposal. Each student should then make their "pitch" to the group, arguing the case as to why it should be these objects/works into which the class invests. After each student has presented – take a silent vote.

### **Finding out about Auctions**

Assign students to research eBay and other online auction houses, as well as more traditional "brick and mortar" auction houses, such as Sotheby's and Christie's in New York City. Ask students to prepare presentations on auctions, describing with documentation each type of auction, the pricing structures, and bidding processes. How do the auction houses make money through the sale of objects and works? What percentage does an auction house take? How are objects, works of art, and antiques appraised? What values are assigned?

### **Finding out about Auctions (continued)**

Invite students to present their findings to the group for feedback and discussion.

Challenge students to organize their own auction as a fundraiser for the school or site. Solicit families and the community for donations. Ask students to conduct market research and propose minimum prices for all donated items. Explain the bidding process, including who will lead it, the manner in which people will bid, and the form of payment. Using a pre-determined budget for the event, challenge students to use a percentage of the sales to pay for the event, dedicating the remainder to the school for a special arts project or program.

At the end of the activity, ask student to submit a financial report about the auction and to include a narrative description of the experience.

#### **RELATED STANDARDS**

##### **VISUAL ARTS**

Grade 5

##### **HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXTS**

3.1 Describe how local and national art galleries and museums contribute to the conservation of art.

Grade 7

##### **CONNECTIONS, RELATIONS & APPLICATIONS**

5.4 Identify professions in or related to the visual arts and some of the specific skills needed for those professions.

Grades 9-12 Proficient

##### **CONNECTIONS, RELATIONS & APPLICATIONS**

5.4 Demonstrate an understanding of the various skills of an artist, art critic, art historian, art collector, art gallery owner, and philosopher of art (aesthete).

##### **HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXTS**

3.4 Research the methods art historians use to determine the time, place, context, value, and culture that produced a given work of art.

For more information about SPARK and its educational content, including the Visual & Performing Arts Standards, visit the Web site at <http://www.kqed.org/spark/education>.



For more information about the California Visual & Performing Arts Standards, visit the CA Dept. of Education at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/>