EDUCATOR GUIDE

Story Theme: Collectors & Their Collections
Subject: Rene di Rosa
Discipline: Visual Arts

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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 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 at www.kqed.org/spark/education.
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.](image)

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 18th 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](http://www.kqed.org/spark).)

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

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

TEXSTS


WEB SITES
Art Collecting.Com - Resource site on collecting visual art - art-collecting.com


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

MEDIA

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

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


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


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

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
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 resale, 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.

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/

### 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 (aesthetician).

**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.