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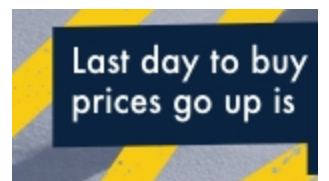
Napa Valley Art Notes: Aisha Rivera named Napa County poet laureate

May 17, 2023



The Napa County Board of Supervisors has named Aisha Rivera as the new poet laureate for the 2023-2025 term. Submitted photo

Aisha Rivera selected Napa County poet laureate



The Napa County Board of Supervisors has named Aisha Rivera as the new poet laureate for the 2023-2025 term.

Tasked with serving as an ambassador for poetry, the county stated in a release, Rivera's mission will be to further infuse poetry into the community and make it more accessible in everyday life.

"I believe in the impact of diverse poetry that addresses intersectional issues," Rivera stated during their application process. "My aim is to serve our community as a poet laureate, advocating for diversity and fostering positive social change."

Rivera, a graduate of California State University, Fullerton with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Theater Art, also holds an Associate of Arts in Psychology and an Associate of Science in Natural Science and Mathematics from Napa Valley College.

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Rivera's professional experience includes heading the Equity and Inclusion Committee at Arts Council Napa Valley and working as a Social Justice Educator at the LGBTQ Resource Center. They currently sit on the board of the Arts Council Napa Valley.

Rivera succeeds Marianne Lyon, who served as the Napa County Poet Laureate from 2021 to 2023.

The role is an honorary, volunteer position, the release stated, signifying an ongoing commitment to the promotion and appreciation of poetry within the county.

Serge Sorokko Gallery + Martin Ray Tasting Room to open

The Serge Sorokko Gallery + Martin Ray Tasting Room, which will exhibit a rotating collection of contemporary American and European art while offering single vineyard wines from Martin Ray Vineyards, is set to open mid-May, according to a press release from the company.

The gallery is co-owned by art gallerist Serge Sorokko and Martin Ray Vineyards' proprietor, Courtney Benham. It will be open to the public year-round and offer a salon for private gatherings of up to 40 people. The salon will feature a curated selection of artwork and provide a sensory food experience from Martin Ray's food program.

The gallery will showcase works from internationally recognized artists, including New York-based Donald Sultan, Ross Bleckner, and Hunt Slonem, as well as Belgian artist Isabelle de Borchgrave, known for her intricate paper sculptures.

The nearly 4,500 square-foot space, designed by award-winning architect Craig Steely, features retractable glass walls, reflective gloss white epoxy floors, and oversized dynamic circular "power" shapes. The steel wine bar in the center of the building will offer various wines, including Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon, Estate Russian Valley Pinot Noir, and Brut Rosé sparkling wine.

"We both had been wanting to create a space that merged fine art and fine wine in a new way," said Sorokko.

Martin Ray winemakers Leslie Renaud, Raemy Paterson, and consulting winemaker Keith Emerson, will be producing the wines.

"I'm thrilled that Martin Ray's first-ever standalone tasting room will offer something conceptually and architecturally unlike anything else that exists here," said Benham.

The gallery is located at 1500 First St., Napa, and will be open Tuesday - Sunday from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.

di Rosa Center exhibition opening June 3

The di Rosa Center for Contemporary Art will showcase "Figure Telling: Contemporary Bay Area Figuration," an exhibition focusing on the narrative potential of the human figure, from June 3 to Sept. 17, according to a press release.

The exhibition features six local artists — Sydney Cain, Craig Calderwood, John Goodman, Afsoon Razavi, and Heather Wilcoxon — who employ a variety of media, including graphite, paint, textile, pen and ink. Their work reflects personal and honest stories, stemming from individual, family and community histories.

"Figure Telling" aims to explore the progression of the Bay Area Figurative movement, a significant North American art movement based on the West Coast that started in the mid-20th century as a counterpoint to the dominant Abstract Expressionist style.

"This exhibition examines the legacy of the movement," stated curator Kate Eilertsen. "It questions how contemporary works borrow from our rich regional tradition of figurative painting and how they differ."

Artists of the Bay Area Figurative movement, such as David Park, Elmer Bischoff, Manuel Neri, Joan Brown, and Nathan Oliviera, have significant representation within the di Rosa collection.

The center will host an opening reception on Saturday, June 3, from 5:30 to 7 p.m. The event, featuring an intimate performance by UPSide Dance Company, is free for members and \$10 for the general public. Tickets are available at **dirosaart.org**.

Arts Notes is compiled from announcements and press releases provided to the Napa Valley Register about art events and news in Napa County. For consideration for inclusion, please email Executive Editor Dan Evans at devans@napanews.com.