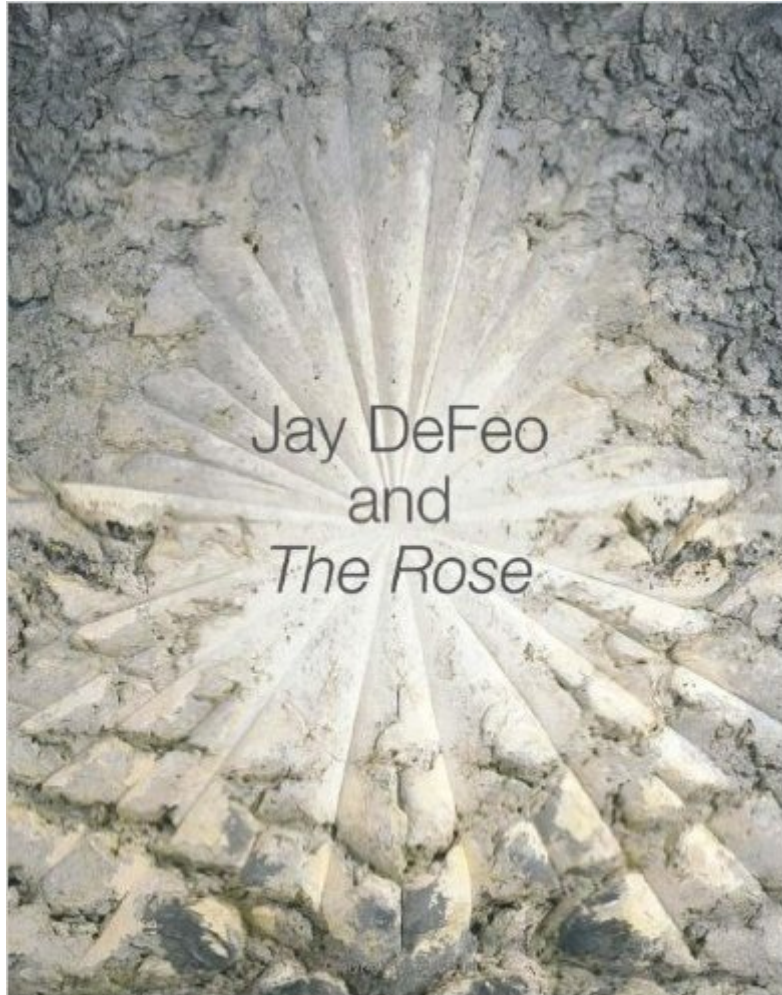


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# Jay DeFeo And The Rose



## Synopsis

Rarely is an artist so closely associated with a single work as is Jay DeFeo with her monumental painting *The Rose*. Begun in the late 1950s, when DeFeo, a central figure of the Beat generation of San Francisco, was just starting to garner widespread national recognition, the visionary work occupied the artist for eight years. Massive in scale, layered with nearly two thousand pounds of paint, the overpowering painting was already famous before its first exhibition in 1969 at the Pasadena Art Museum. It was next exhibited in San Francisco, then stored at the San Francisco Art Institute, where it languished for twenty-five years before a historic conservation restored it to public view. *The Rose* now resides in the collection of the Whitney Museum of American Art. This volume is the first major study of *The Rose* in particular and of Jay DeFeo in general. In the collection, eleven distinguished art and cultural historians—Bill Berkson, Niccolo Caldararo, Richard Cndida Smith, Walter Hopps, Lucy R. Lippard, Greil Marcus, Sandra S. Phillips, Marla Prather, Carter Ratcliff, David A. Ross, and Martha Sherrill—unfold the story of the creation, as well as the tricky and painstaking rescue, of DeFeo’s radiant masterpiece. While providing new material on *The Rose* and exposing many myths surrounding both the artist and her great work, these essays also place Jay DeFeo in relation to artists of her time, including Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, Lee Bontecou, and Eva Hesse. The book, which adds significantly to the scholarship of postwar American art, includes nearly eighty halftones, thirteen color plates, and Judith Dunham’s detailed *Rose*-related chronology.

## Book Information

Hardcover: 226 pages

Publisher: University of California Press; 1st edition (November 13, 2003)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0520233557

ISBN-13: 978-0520233553

Product Dimensions: 7.5 x 0.8 x 9.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.8 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars— See all reviews— (3 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,501,328 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #108 in Books > Literature & Fiction > History & Criticism > Movements & Periods > Beat Generation #4480 in Books > Arts & Photography > Painting #8598 in Books > Arts & Photography > History & Criticism > Criticism

## Customer Reviews

Jay DeFeo spent many years of her life painting one picture, first called DEATHROSE, then just plain THE ROSE, and it grew so heavy with paint that it had to be hauled out of her studio on Fillmore Street in San Francisco on a crane. The proceedings were filmed by the artist Bruce Conner, a longtime friend of DeFeo's, and assembled by him into a film called THE WHITE ROSE: JAY DEFEO's PAINTING REMOVED BY ANGELIC HOSTS (actually Bekins movers). After a few showings, the painting was stored at the San Francisco Art Institute and eventually plastered over to stabilize its shifting masses of paint and also to protect it from student graffiti. For many years it hid behind this plaster and its absence became a giant statement. DeFeo herself began to think of Conner's film as a kind of displaced substitute for her work, and Jane Green and Leah Levy, the editors of the present volume, are astute enough to let this fact speak for itself. In a great act of showmanship, Lisa Phillips, a Whitney curator, not only restored the painting but bought it for the Whitney where it can be viewed today (sometimes). This book contains many essays by people who were close to DeFeo, as well as some by those who never met her. Bill Berkson's essay imagines the 1960 "Sixteen Americans" show by Dorothy Miller (which featured DeFeo, as well as her husband Wally Hedrick, in addition to giving national exposure to the likes of Frank Stella, Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg), but was missing THE ROSE, which DeFeo did not send saying it was not yet finished. Lucy Lippard's essay considers similarities between DeFeo's production and that of her contemporaries Eva Hesse and the Lees--Lee Bontecue and Lee Lozano, relating her depressing years of inactivity (1966-1970) to the nascent women's art movement. It is provocative to say the least. The University of California Press has printed many fine photos to go with the book, including some color images which I had never seen.

This was a very inspiring book to look at. Her direction was amazing . It's a good historical reference, about a female artist and her passion

Wonderful book for feminist artists. This woman is not very well known even though her work is quite beautiful. This book not only shows the making and the restoration of her incredible painting. The Rose, but shows some of her large drawings.

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