

Crimson Rose: Burning Man
Collection CAE1706

Introduction/Abstract

This archive contains materials related to fire conclave and Black Rock Arts Foundation (BRAAF) at Burning Man when in 1991 Crimson Rose danced at the foot of the Man and set it afire and started a curated group of fire dancers known as the fire conclave. Materials include Fire Conclave ephemera, documents, event ephemera, and photographs.

Biographical Note: Crimson Rose

As a co-founder of Burning Man, the Black Rock Arts Foundation and Burning Man Project, Crimson Rose's life passion and work have focused on the arts and artistic expression. She began participating in the Burning Man event in 1991, and developed the organization's Art Department, including the infrastructure, financial and other support services that make possible the large-scale participatory art works for which Burning Man is renowned. Before joining Burning Man, she was a fine art model and dancer with a background in theatre. She was the first fire dancer at Burning Man on the playa and the founder of the Fire Conclave in 1991.

Scope and Content

Burning Man is "an annual art event and temporary community based on radical self-expression and self-reliance," according to its website. The festival is held annually during the last week of August on the Black Rock Desert playa one hundred miles north of Reno. Attendance has grown from the low hundreds in the early 1990s to more than 70,000 in 2017.

The roots of the event began with the burning of figures on the summer solstice by sculptor Mary Graubeger on San Francisco's Baker Beach in 1986. In 1986 Harvey and his friend Jerry James erected an 8-foot tall wooden figure. In 1990 the then 40-foot figure was drawing so many attendees for the burning of "The Man" that police outlawed the event. A separate event had been planned by members of the Cacophony Society on the Black Rock Desert for that year, "Zone Trip #4, A Bad Day at Black Rock," which was billed as a dadaist and situationist performance happening. Harvey joined forces with the Cacophony Society and the first burn of the Man was held on the playa in 1990.

Fire at Burning Man expanded from the burning of the central figure in 1991 when Crimson Rose started a curated group of fire dancers known as the fire conclave. That year she danced at the foot of the Man and set it afire, which became an annual ritual. the Conclave is now an international group of performers with a strong educational component. Materials include Fire Conclave ephemera, documents, event ephemera, and photographs.

This archive is currently in process.