



## **NEWS RELEASE**

**December 11, 2017**

### **Media Contacts:**

Mischa Kirby, APR, Selby Gardens

[mkirby@selby.org](mailto:mkirby@selby.org)

(941) 366-5731 ext. 225

Amber Hendrickson, Blue Water Communications

[amber@bluewatercommunications.biz](mailto:amber@bluewatercommunications.biz)

(800) 975-3212

## **Rare Exhibition of Andy Warhol's 'Flowers' Ideally Sited at Marie Selby Botanical Gardens in Early 2018**

***"Land really is the best art." – Andy Warhol***

SARASOTA, Fla. – Consummately cosmopolitan and cool, Andy Warhol in the great outdoors seems like an oxymoron. Yet the groundbreaking artist known for his Pop Art multiples of celebrities and soup cans created more than 10,000 images of flowers over the course of his career. *Warhol: Flowers in the Factory* showcases the surprising, and little examined, role of nature in Warhol's art and life. The spectacular 15-acre tropical setting of Marie Selby Botanical Gardens on Sarasota Bay will provide a matchless context for examining Warhol's fascination with the natural world in this focused, immersive exhibition.

*Warhol: Flowers in the Factory* is curated by Carol Ockman, Ph.D., curator-at-large of Marie Selby Botanical Gardens and the Robert Sterling Clark Professor of Art History at Williams College. It will be on view exclusively at Selby Gardens in Sarasota, Florida, from Feb. 11 through June 30, 2018.

"This stunning exhibition demonstrates in exciting new ways how the richness of the Selby Gardens living collections can enhance the understanding and experience of the visual arts for all audiences," said Jennifer O. Rominiecki, president and chief executive officer of Marie Selby Botanical Gardens.

The centerpieces of this innovative exhibition are four of the artist's silkscreens entitled *Flowers*, on generous loan from the Williams College Museum of Art. Begun in the mid-1960s

in his studio dubbed the Factory, the series of flower silkscreens represented Warhol's debut that fall at the avant-garde Leo Castelli Gallery in New York, whose stable of contemporary artists included Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg and Frank Stella. These striking prints are among the artist's first works to defy a clear sense of orientation – they have no obvious top and bottom – and meld a range of techniques and media, namely silkscreen, pencil, acrylics and Day-Glo Paint.

Over the years the blooms recreated in the *Flowers* series have been misidentified as anemones, nasturtium and pansies. They actually represent hibiscus, which grow at Selby Gardens.

Complementing the four hibiscus silkscreens in the exhibition are two prints entitled *Poinsettias*, on loan from the private collection of Sarasota art patron Flora Major. Created nearly 20 years after the 60s "Flower Power" movement, the works underline Warhol's career-long preoccupation with nature.

Rounding out the exhibition will be additional loans of Warhol works from the Williams College Museum of Art, including the Polaroid *Christmas Poinsettias* (1982), which inspired the prints on view; lithographs *Flower* (1957) and *Happy Bug Day* (1954); and artist book *In the Bottom of My Garden* (1956).

"From his early commercial illustrations to later work from the mid-1980s just before his untimely death, there are many examples of botanical imagery in Warhol's body of work," said Ockman. "This exhibition grew from an idea about how to best capture the energy behind Warhol's commitment to natural beauty and conservation. What better platform to discover and explore these horticultural prints than the Selby Gardens?"

For this special exhibition, the Warhol milieu and aesthetic will take over Selby Gardens, with reproductions of archival photographs of the Factory in dialogue with Warhol's forays into natural imagery; facsimiles of Warhol's preparatory drawings that reveal his process for creating the flower screenprints through his signature grids; and select images from the 1960s that recall the "Flower Power" era and provide critical historical context for Warhol's concerns.

In the conservatory and gardens, vivid plant and floral displays by Selby horticulturists will emphasize the seriality and modular design of Warhol's work. Like many landscape architects, Warhol was inspired by the repetition of shapes and bright pops of color. Some of the plants to be featured in these dynamic interpretations include hibiscus, periwinkle, bromeliads, poinsettia and sunflowers.

In addition, a food truck will replicate the all-American fare served at the Factory's opening party, which according to art dealer Ivan Karp, "launched the 60s."

*Warhol: Flowers in the Factory* is the second exhibition in the Selby Gardens' Jean and Alfred Goldstein Exhibition Series, which combines nature and fine arts. The series offers a direct connection to one of the original purposes of the Christy Payne Mansion, which houses the Museum of Botany and the Arts at Selby Gardens. With its founding in 1979, the mansion displays major fine arts exhibitions and relates them to nature and the botanical collections in the gardens. The first exhibition in the series, *Marc Chagall, Flowers and the French Riviera: The Color of Dreams*, was on view in 2017.

## **RELATED PROGRAMS**

A host of complementary programs, studio art classes and special events have been planned in conjunction with the exhibition, including a special keynote lecture by curator Carol Ockman, Ph.D., on Feb. 12. For more details, please visit [selby.org/programs](http://selby.org/programs).

## **ABOUT ANDY WARHOL**

Born Andrew Warhola, son of a Slovak-American coal miner in 1928, the self-styled Andy Warhol left his native Pittsburgh in 1949 for New York, straight out of Carnegie Tech (today Carnegie Mellon University). On the heels of a hugely successful career as a commercial artist, he established the Factory on East 47th street in the heart of Manhattan. By the early 1960s, Warhol emerged at the forefront of the Pop Art movement by painting familiar consumer objects such as soup cans and vacuum cleaners. He also received hundreds of portrait commissions, painting celebrities and socialites in vivid colors. In the artist's own words, "The Pop idea, after all, was that anybody could do anything, so naturally we were all trying to do it all." Warhol was prolific in a wide variety of media, including film, performance art, sculpture, photography, music and creative writing.

In 1972, together with Paul Morrissey from the Factory, Warhol bought 15 acres of stony beach in Montauk at the tip of Long Island, New York. In the early 1980s he purchased another 40 acres of undeveloped land in Missouri Heights near Aspen, Colorado. Warhol hosted guests including Jackie Onassis, Truman Capote, Mick Jagger and Dick Cavett on his New York oceanfront property before gifting it to the Nature Conservancy some years before his death. It is now The Andy Warhol Preserve. In Colorado, where he went to ski, Warhol left the acreage wild, confessing to a reporter of the *Aspen Times*, "I'm not going to build on it, it's too pretty." He also directed a foundation to support the preservation of urban parks. In short, Warhol was an advocate of conservancy.

## **CREDITS**

*Warhol: Flowers in the Factory* has been made possible by generous support from Amicus Foundation, Betsy and Doug Elder, Gulf Coast Community Foundation, and State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture. Additional exhibition support has been provided by Gerri Aaron, Maryann & James Armour, Better-Gro, BMO Private Bank, The Doris M. Carter Family Foundation, Margot and Warren Coville, Drs. Andrew and Judith Economos, Gold Coast Eagle Distributing, Ernest R. Kretzmer, Flora Major, Katherine and Frank Martucci, So Staged and Williams Parker Harrison Dietz & Getzen. Further support has been provided by Beverly and Bob Bartner, Linnie E. Dalbeck Memorial Foundation, Dart Foundation, Marcy and Michael Klein, and The Woman's Exchange, with additional support from Teri A Hansen, Maria and Allen Heise/Aimee and Chris Cogan, and Charlotte and Charles Perret.

## **ABOUT SELBY GARDENS**

Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, which opened to the public in 1975, was founded as a result of Marie Selby's generous bequest of her home and property to the community in 1971 to establish a botanical garden "for the enjoyment of the general public." It is the only botanical garden in the world dedicated to the display and study of epiphytes, air plants such as orchids, bromeliads, gesneriads and other tropical plants with a focus on botany, horticulture and environmental education. Education programs for all ages and special events are offered at our tropical, urban oasis on Sarasota Bay year-round. Ongoing research of and exploration for tropical plants attracts worldwide attention of international scholars and plant enthusiasts.

For more information: [selby.org](http://selby.org)

## **TICKETS**

All-access admission to this special exhibition is \$25 (ages 18 and up), \$15 ages 4-17; members and children 3 and under enter free.

# # #