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**National Postal Museum Opens Art Exhibition Celebrating  
Beautiful Blooms on Stamps**  
*Original Stamp Artwork from the Postmaster General's Collection*

“Beautiful Blooms: Flowering Plants on Stamps,” opened today, Oct. 20, at the Smithsonian’s National Postal Museum. The exhibition, open through July 14, 2019, celebrates the variety of flowering plants commemorated on U.S. postage stamps during the past 50 years and explores the symbiotic relationship between flowering plants, bees, birds and butterflies.

The exhibition showcases 33 botanical artworks from the renowned Postmaster General’s Collection, on long-term loan to the National Postal Museum from the U.S. Postal Service. Created in partnership with Smithsonian Gardens, “Beautiful Blooms” invites visitors to observe and appreciate not only the compelling artwork, but also the creative process behind stamp design. By juxtaposing concept art and final art, and by linking larger-scale art with images on actual stamps, visitors will be able to see beyond the stamps to their meaning and messaging.

Featured botanical artwork, which includes 29 framed pieces and four pieces of digital art displayed interactively, are organized into seven themes: Flowering Trees; The Rose: Queen of Flowers; Birds in the Garden; Pollination; Botanical Congress; The Seasonal Garden and Beautification of America.

A garden-themed atrium display complements the exhibition gallery with garden furniture and live plants from Smithsonian Gardens as well as a large-scale mural triptych featuring lush garden imagery from the Smithsonian Institution’s collection of hand-painted glass lantern slides. The overall experience will transport visitors into a relaxed but vibrant garden setting.

“The exhibition represents an opportunity for visitors to see and appreciate some of the most admired artwork in the Postmaster General’s collection,” said Elliot Gruber, director of the museum. “Highlights include original artwork for the classic rose-themed Love stamps, some of the most

popular state bird and flower stamps and a concept art piece created by Mary GrandPre’ whose illustration style visitors will recognize from the Harry Potter book series.”

The exhibition explores the diversity of artwork used in the U.S. stamp production process, including both developmental and final art designed by illustrators using a variety of media, such as oils, pastels and digital design software. The display of stamp art in various phases of development will enable visitors of all ages to understand the role developmental artwork plays in the production of postage stamps.

In celebration of the exhibition opening, the museum will host a “Garden Party Family Festival” on Saturday, April 7, 2018, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., with activities taking place throughout the museum. The museum, in partnership with Smithsonian Gardens, Smithsonian Libraries and local garden clubs, will explore and celebrate the many facets of flowers through craft projects, fun activities for children, curator talks and other informative programming.

On Wednesday, Apr. 18, 2018, from 12:00 - 12:45 p.m., the museum will host a lunchtime lecture by Cindy Brown of Smithsonian Gardens, where she will share her insights into the creation of the floral displays incorporated into the “Beautiful Blooms” exhibition and highlight the pan-Institutional work they do in support of the Smithsonian’s mission.

The museum will also host a teacher workshop in the summer of 2018, using “Beautiful Blooms” exhibition content as context for new learning experiences. The workshop, in partnership with Smithsonian Gardens and the Smithsonian Center for Learning and Digital Access, will utilize the Smithsonian Learning Lab to demonstrate to local teachers how to use the museum’s exhibition and collection content in the classroom, with curriculum that demonstrates the intersection of art, science and history. A special [website](#) has been created to augment the exhibition as well, providing additional access to the rich content presented.

### **About the Smithsonian’s National Postal Museum**

The National Postal Museum is devoted to presenting the colorful and engaging history of the nation’s mail service and showcasing one of the largest and most comprehensive collections of stamps and philatelic material in the world. It is located at 2 Massachusetts Avenue N.E., Washington, D.C., across from Union Station. The museum is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. (closed Dec. 25). For more information about the Smithsonian, call (202) 633-1000 or visit the museum website at [www.postalmuseum.si.edu](http://www.postalmuseum.si.edu).

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