



Media only: Marty Emery (202) 633-5518; emerym@si.edu

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

“Beautiful Blooms: Flowering Plants on Stamps,” opening Oct. 20 at the Smithsonian’s National Postal Museum, celebrates the variety of flowering plants commemorated on U.S. postage stamps during the past 50 years. The exhibition, on view through July 14, 2019, 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.

“Our goal is for visitors to enjoy, appreciate and witness the beauty associated with this incredible collection of artwork,” said Elliot Gruber, director of the museum. “Every stamp tells a story, and this exhibition tells the story of the design process and creativity resulting from the beauty of flowering plants on stamps.”

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SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION MRC 570 PO Box 37012 Washington DC 20013-7012 Telephone 202.633.5500 Fax 202.633.9393

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.

“Botanical stamp art, particularly flowering plant stamp art, represents some of the most attractive artwork in the Postmaster General’s Collection,” said Calvin Mitchell, exhibition curator. “This exhibition, displayed in a garden setting, offers the general public a rare view of the stunning art work that results in the beautiful stamps appreciated by people around the world.”

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.

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