



For Immediate Release

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The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens Presents

Flamboyance! A Topiary Menagerie

The Museum's first horticultural exhibition brings fun and whimsy to the Jacksonville community this Spring

March 7, 2023 — JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens announces its first horticultural exhibition, *Flamboyance! A Topiary Menagerie*, which opens on Saturday, April 1, 2023. The exhibition features 50 topiary flamingos situated throughout the Museum's historically significant gardens located on the St. Johns River. *Flamboyance! A Topiary Menagerie* will be on view until June 25, 2023.

"Flamboyance" is the collective noun for a gathering of flamingos, providing inspiration for the title of this extraordinary spectacle. The sculptural flamingo topiaries will be posed in groups and punctuated by colorful, bold tropical plants—a fun juxtaposition to the otherwise formal geometry of the Cummer Gardens. The exhibition is a playful riff on the plastic pink flamingo, a classic Floridian garden motif, and it will invite visitors to enjoy the riverfront gardens through a refreshing new lens of color and creativity. Each of the nearly five-foot-tall topiaries sculptures have been named by "adoptive parents," or "Flockstars," as the Museum playfully refers to them, revealing each flamingo's unique personality.

"*Flamboyance!*, our first horticulture exhibition, elevates our cherished gardens, places the Museum squarely in conversation with botanical garden peers, and ushers in a dynamic chapter for the Cummer Museum," said Dr. Andrea Barnwell Brownlee, the George W. & Kathleen I. Gibbs Director and Chief Executive Officer of the Museum. "With its focus on the fantastic, fun, and the unexpected, this exhibition promises to delight visitors and marks a new era of outdoor programming for the Museum."

Preparations for this exhibition started months in advance. In the late fall, Museum horticulturists, led by Patrick MacRae, the Doolittle Family Director of Gardens & Horticulture, constructed a purpose-built structure behind the scenes on the Museum campus to house and protect the topiaries from the threat of frost. The flamingos arrived in late January on loan from the Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens in Columbus, Ohio. Within days of their arrival in Florida, the Museum horticulture team and a group of twelve volunteers from the Late Bloomers Garden Club had planted each topiary with wax begonias, which flower a perfect shade of flamingo-pink.

“The Museum is well-known for extraordinary exhibitions in our galleries, and this is an opportunity to expand the dynamism of the Cummer experience into our beautiful gardens,” said MacRae.

“*Flamboyance!* is all about experiencing gardens with a sense of humor. Gardens are tremendous sources of joy—what better way to experience unbridled happiness than through a fabulous, and flamboyant, exhibition?”

The ancient art of topiary—the artful pruning and shaping of plants into decorative shapes—dates to the first century C.E. The fantastical style of topiary on display in *Flamboyance!* was pioneered by the Walt Disney Company in the 1960s, when the company began utilizing steel mesh frames wrapped over metal support structures in the shapes of animals, including Disney characters. The steel mesh structures are planted with fast-growing plants that can achieve the desired effect in far less time than traditional topiary art.

The Museum relies on generous support from individuals, corporations, and foundations in order to realize its unique mission and serve as a vibrant cultural resource. Support is provided by **Lead Sponsor**, Joan & Preston Haskell; **Celebrated Sponsor**, Munz Family Holdings; **Tourism Sponsor**, Visit Jacksonville; **Program Partners**, First Horizon Bank, Hair Peace, Jacksonville Environmental Protection Board, Teresa Radzinski; **Exhibition Season Presenters**, City of Jacksonville, Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville, Ronald and Karen Rettner; **Exhibition Lead Sponsors**, State of Florida, The Robert D. Davis Family Endowment, The Schultz Family Endowment; **Exhibition Sponsors**, Director’s Circle Donors at the Cummer Museum, The Winston Family Foundation

Highlighted related programming includes:

***Flamboyance!* Behind the Scenes Tour**

March 17 | 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. | Members \$50, Non-Members \$75 | Registration required

***Flamboyance!* A Retro Florida Experience**

This fundraiser will offer an exclusive sneak peek at the exhibition before it opens to the public and celebrate all things retro Florida, including fun cocktails, kitschy bites, and other surprises. March 31 | 6 to 9:00 p.m. | Registration required

To register for programming, visit cummERMuseum.org/events. For more information about the Museum’s permanent collection and special exhibitions, visit cummERMuseum.org/visit/art.

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About the Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens:

For more than 60 years, the Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens has been committed to engaging and inspiring through the arts, gardens, and education. A permanent collection of more than 5,000 objects and historically significant gardens on a riverfront campus offers nearly 140,000 annual visitors a truly unique experience on the First Coast. Nationally recognized education programs serve adults and children of all abilities. The Museum is committed to ensuring that diversity and inclusion is woven into the fabric of its exhibitions, programs, and offerings. For further information, including hours, visit www.cummERMuseum.org.