



# SOUTH FLORIDA MUSEUM

BISHOP PLANETARIUM • PARKER MANATEE AQUARIUM

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(Additional photos are available by request.)

## SOUTH FLORIDA MUSEUM TO HOST NATIONAL EXHIBITION

### *Following in the Bartrams' Footsteps*

in addition to two supporting exhibitions featuring local artists

September 19 – December 29, 2013



©Carole Gorin, *Spanish Moss on Laurel Oak Branch*

Selection in *Following in the Bartrams' Footsteps* by Sarasota artist Carole Gorin.

(Bradenton, FL) Over the next three months, three exhibitions on view at the South Florida Museum will draw our attention to the delicate world of botanical art and scientific illustration. One of the oldest art forms, botanical art is a history of the development of human civilization. Director of Exhibitions and Chief Curator Matthew Woodside remarks, "These works of art are reflections of how humans have played a role influencing global change through the discovery, study, cultivation and global dispersion of plants we use for medicine, commerce, fashion, ritual and survival. The exhibits will delight our senses, giving an opportunity to explore modern day masterpieces and understand them for their beauty as well as the technical bravado artists use to execute these refined and life-like images. More than compulsion drives these artists to relentlessly pursue an art form that has the power to transform our complex, three-dimensional world into two-dimensional, idealized microcosms."

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The nationally traveling exhibition *Following in the Bartrams' Footsteps: Work from the American Society of Botanical Artists* will open in the South Florida Museum's East Gallery on Thursday, September 19th, 2013. A collaboration between the American Society of Botanical Artists (ASBA) and Bartram's Garden in Philadelphia, the exhibition features contemporary botanical artworks depicting plants observed and described by 18<sup>th</sup> century naturalists John and William Bartram during their travels, and often studied and cultivated at Bartram's Garden in Philadelphia, PA. Native Florida species observed during William Bartram's pioneering travels through Florida as a naturalist in the late 18th century are included. The exhibition reflects John and William's passionate observation and discovery of nature, which has influenced generations of artists and explorers throughout the world. An opening reception will be held for the exhibition on Thursday, September 26 from 5:30 – 7 pm.

The original artworks have been selected from a field of nearly 200 entries submitted by ASBA members from around the world and Philadelphia Society of Botanical Illustrators members. Each artist focuses on a native plant discovery made by John and William in their travels through the eastern wilderness between the 1730's and 1770's. The exhibition allows a fresh look at their seminal body of knowledge and art. William's illustrations were often the first images seen of North American plants and animals. Beautiful native rarities including *Franklinia* (commonly known as the Franklin tree), *Dodecatheon* (commonly called the shooting star, American cowslip or sailor saps among others), and American lotus have been depicted. Other subjects include foxglove, morning glory and cockscomb – examples of introductions the Bartrams made to American and worldwide gardening through their plant business.

*Following in the Bartrams' Footsteps* seeks to draw attention to the history and culture of 18<sup>th</sup> century American naturalists including those of botanical and artistic bent, and to illuminate the role contemporary artists play in depicting these same plants for today's audience and preserving their record for generations to come. The exhibition promises to appeal to a wide audience as it ties together art, science, history, nature, and culture. Artists have enthusiastically sought and captured images for the past two years, with some having gone so far as to track down heirloom seeds and cultivate them in their own gardens in order to be able to paint a particularly appealing subject. One such artist is Carole Gorin, a Sarasota local whose illustration Spanish Moss on Laurel Oak Branch is featured in the National exhibition and will be on exhibit at the South Florida Museum.

In addition to the national exhibition, the South Florida Museum has coordinated supporting exhibitions to further communicate the art and skill of botanical art. These two exhibitions will be showcased on the second floor of the Museum's galleries, running concurrently with *Following in the Bartrams' Footsteps* from September 19 – December 29, 2013. *Fine Art Botanicals by O.M. Braidia* features the work of Olivia Braidia. Ms. Braidia is the founder and an instructor at the Academy of Botanical Art in Sarasota, as well as a member of the American Society of Botanical Artists and the Copley Society of Art. This exhibition will be located in the Rincon Gallery. *Aspects of Art by Julia Rega* will be displayed in the Riverine Gallery. Ms. Rega, an alumna of the Academy, studied with Ms. Braidia before going on to study art in college and become a professional graphic designer. The abilities and sensitivities she gained through the botanical arts paved the way for her career.

Olivia Marie Braidia is a nationally recognized nature artist whose works have appeared on exhibition at museums, gardens, and galleries in the United States and abroad. Her art has won numerous awards and has been published in several books. Numerous pieces are in public collections. Ms. Braidia's style has been inspired by the great Dutch floral master, Gerard van Spaendonck (1746-1822). Jack Kramer, art critic and author of more than a hundred books on botanical art, recognized her work as "genius" and favorably compared it with van Spaendonck. In addition to her work as a commissioned artist, Ms. Braidia is the author of twelve books on the subject of botanical art instruction and the founder of the Academy of Botanical Art in Sarasota.

Her widely acclaimed program for botanical art and illustration has been offered by Vermont College, Isabelle O'Neil School in New York, the Ringling College of Art and Design in Sarasota, the Marie Selby Botanical Gardens in Sarasota, and the State Arboretum University of Kentucky. Her teachings are based on the technical traditions of the French Court Period of botanical art and are clearly explained in a series of books she wrote, entitled "Ten Steps – A Course in Botanical Art & Illustration, Volumes 1-12." In addition to training at the school, the

Academy's distance-learning program has students in the United States including Hawaii in addition to South America, Canada, Europe, Australia, and New Zealand. The Academy of Botanical Art program certification is offered by the renowned Marie Selby Botanical Gardens in Sarasota, Florida.

One of the Academy's talented graduates, Julia Rega, displays how her skill developed over the course of her journey with the Academy studies from the ages of 15 – 17 in the exhibition *Aspects of Art by Julia Rega*. Her accomplishment at such a young age was the foundation for a unified personal focus. The work provides a case study of the training required to become a certified botanical artist. Ms. Rega states, "Living in Sarasota, Florida and enjoying art classes as a child, I decided to attend an open house for the Ringling College of Art and Design's Continuing Studies Program. It was at that open house where I was first introduced to Olivia Braidia and learned about botanical art. When I saw Olivia's work, I was awestricken by its delicate beauty. I couldn't believe someone could produce paintings so realistic and ornately detailed – at least not in this century. I had always enjoyed nature, so the idea of getting to know plants as intimately as botanical artists do appealed to me." Julia received her certification from the Academy of Botanical Art before going on to become a professional illustrator and designer for such corporations as Victoria's Secret in Manhattan.

Matthew Woodside summarizes, "Perhaps it is their natural impulse to capture time, freezing it and asking us to stop for a moment to wonder at the magnificence of the living but non-animal world, because as Georgia O'Keefe says, 'Nobody sees a flower really; it is so small. We haven't time to see a flower, and to see takes time – like to have a friend takes time.' Please join us and take time to 'see a flower' with a friend." The opening reception for the exhibitions will be held on Thursday, September 26 from 5:30 – 7 pm. The reception will offer patrons the opportunity to see the *Following in the Bartrams' Footsteps* exhibition, as well as the two supporting exhibitions on the Museum's second floor, and to discuss the work with the Museum's curator, staff and special guests. The exhibition is FREE for Museum Members, \$5 for all others. Cash bar. Please call 941-746-4131, ext. 13 or visit [SouthFloridaMuseum.org](http://SouthFloridaMuseum.org) to RSVP.

*Following in the Bartrams' Footsteps* will run in the East Gallery of the South Florida Museum from September 19 – December 29, 2013. The exhibition will be on view during regular Museum hours and is included with regular admission to the Museum: Members – FREE, Adults – \$15.95, Seniors (65+) – 13.95, Children (4-12) – \$11.95. *Fine Art Botanicals by O.M. Braidia* and *Aspects of Art by Julia Rega* will run concurrently with the Bartrams' exhibit from September 19 – December 29, 2013 and are also included in regular Museum admission. Please contact the South Florida Museum at 941-746-4131 or visit [SouthFloridaMuseum.org](http://SouthFloridaMuseum.org) with any additional questions about the exhibitions.

### **About the South Florida Museum**

South Florida Museum is located at 201 10th Street West in downtown Bradenton. The Museum is celebrating 65 years of engaging and inspiring visitors and the community. South Florida Museum is the largest natural and cultural history museum on Florida's Gulf Coast, featuring engaging exhibits as well as educational programs which interpret the scientific and cultural knowledge of Florida, the world and our universe. The facility includes the all-digital Bishop Planetarium Theater and Parker Manatee Aquarium which is home to Snooty™ the manatee, Manatee County's official mascot and the oldest known manatee in the world. Also included in the Museum is the Spanish Plaza, featuring full-scale replicas of a 16th-century manor house, chapel and conquistador Hernando De Soto's birthplace surrounding an open-air Courtyard. For more information about current exhibitions and special programs, membership, hours, or admission prices please call 941-746-4131 or visit [SouthFloridaMuseum.org](http://SouthFloridaMuseum.org).

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