

NYBG/125

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 22, 2016

Redouté to Warhol: Bunny Mellon's Botanical Art Will Showcase Masterworks From the Oak Spring Garden Library—Many Shown Publicly for the First Time October 8, 2016–February 12, 2017

Spanning Seven Centuries, the Exhibition Will Demonstrate the Wide Range and Breadth Of Botanical Works of Art



Georg Dionysius Ehret (German, 1708–70)
[Southern magnolia], ca. 1737
Bodycolor on vellum. Oak Spring Garden Library



Pablo Picasso (Spanish, 1881–1973)
Pot of Flowers II, 1958. Colored lithograph
with crayon. Oak Spring Garden Library

Bronx, NY—Showcasing masterworks from one of the world's great private libraries devoted to the plant world, ***Redouté to Warhol: Bunny Mellon's Botanical Art*** will be on view in the William D. Rondina and Giovanni Foroni LoFaro Gallery of the LuEsther T. Mertz Library at The New York Botanical Garden from October 8, 2016, through February 12, 2017.

This stunning exhibition comprises nearly 80 works, ranging from the 14th through the 20th centuries, from the Oak Spring Garden Library, which the late Rachel Lambert ("Bunny") Mellon founded on her estate in Upperville, Virginia. Among the featured works—many never before exhibited publicly—will be rare masterpieces by renowned botanical artists such as Jacques Le Moyne de Morgues (ca. 1533–88) and Pierre-Joseph Redouté (1759–1840) as well as 20th-century paintings by Pablo Picasso (1881–1973) and Andy Warhol (1928–87).

Bunny Mellon, who died in 2014 at age 103, was an accomplished garden designer, legendary art collector, and noted philanthropist. Among her many important gardening and landscaping endeavors, she designed the White House Rose Garden during the administration of President John F. Kennedy. Over the course of decades, Mrs. Mellon assembled a distinguished collection of botanical artwork and a library of more than 10,000 volumes on botanical subjects, reference resources that informed her professional pursuits as well as her personal interests in Oak Spring's greenhouses and gardens.

"In partnership with our close friends at The New York Botanical Garden, we have the pleasure of sharing the special qualities of Mrs. Mellon's world with a broader audience through this exhibition," said Sir Peter Crane, President of the Oak Spring Garden Foundation, which maintains the Oak Spring Garden Library and promotes scholarship and public engagement in the fields of botany, horticulture, and landscape design. "We are deeply grateful for this opportunity and hope that all who visit ***Redouté to Warhol*** will enjoy this special glimpse into Mrs. Mellon's unique domain."

An Extraordinary Exhibition That Explores the Many Aspects of Botanical Works of Art

Redouté to Warhol will reveal the wide range and breadth of art that has been inspired by the beauty of the plant world through the centuries. An introduction in the rotunda of the Mertz Library will explore Mrs. Mellon's legacy as a skilled horticulturist and visionary collector, whose Oak Spring Garden Library and Foundation continue to carry out her mission and interests.

In the adjoining Rondina and LoFaro Gallery, rare illustrated manuscripts, works on paper, paintings, and three-dimensional objects will make up the heart of ***Redouté to Warhol***. Among the rare books that will be on display are extraordinarily ornate examples of books of hours, devotional texts popular in the medieval period, and *La clef des champs* (1586), a small pattern book by Le Moyne of natural history subjects for artists and craftspeople. Watercolors by French artist Nicolas Robert (1614–85) showcase the artist's scientific knowledge and keen attention to botanical detail, which was likely gained by painting the plants on the estate of Gaston d'Orléans, younger brother of Louis XIII.

The exhibition will also feature the art and economics of "tulipomania," the craze for tulips that seized Holland in the 17th century, with still life paintings by Johannes Baptista van Fornenburgh (1585–ca.1649) and Daniel Seghers (1590–1661) and watercolors by German painter Jacob Marrel (1614–81) that were made for tulip bulb catalogs. A central gallery wall in ***Redouté to Warhol*** will present a grid of 17 paintings on copper by Dutch artist Jan van Kessel (1626–79). Arranged to emulate a cabinet of curiosities, these highly detailed works depict plants, insects, arachnids, mollusks, and reptiles.

Georg Dionysius Ehret (1708–70), one of the greatest masters of botanical art, worked for preeminent botanists, including Carl Linnaeus, which contributed to his superior knowledge of plant form, as shown in his depictions of magnolias and pitcher plants included in the exhibition. Redouté, who served as a royal court artist for Marie-Antoinette and later for Empress Josephine, is represented by three watercolors painted in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

The time-spanning breadth of Mrs. Mellon's collection will also be highlighted by a grouping of works by prominent artists of the late 19th and 20th centuries. *Flowers of Poetry* (1890–95) by Henri Rousseau (1844–1910) features humble violas, asters, and other common garden plants arranged in a simple still life. Two of Picasso's still life prints, completed in Cannes in the late 1950s, depict floral arrangements as simplified, boldly colored shapes. Andy Warhol's *Vine Leaf Marinade*—an illustrated “recipe” from *Wild Raspberries* (1959), the handmade satirical cookbook he designed and illustrated with New York interior decorator Suzie Frankfurt—provides a more whimsical and stylized view of plants. Finally, Sophie Grandval (b. 1936) began her career as a textile designer but turned to intimate paintings of natural subjects, including that bane of gardeners in *Dandelion* (1990).

Redouté to Warhol is co-curated by Dr. Lucia Tongiorgi Tomasi, one of the world's leading experts on herbals and botanical art and author of two publications documenting the Oak Spring Garden Library collection; Susan Fraser, Vice President and Director of the LuEsther T. Mertz Library at The New York Botanical Garden; and Tony Willis, Librarian of the Oak Spring Garden Library.

A fully illustrated catalog will include an essay by Dr. Tomasi about Mrs. Mellon's singular vision as a collector as witnessed through their collaboration and friendship, a biographical essay by Mr. Willis, and an essay about the long relationship between the Oak Spring Garden Library and the Mertz Library by Ms. Fraser.

A series of public programs is also planned during the exhibition.

About the Oak Spring Garden Foundation

The mission of the Oak Spring Garden Foundation is to perpetuate and share the gift of Rachel Lambert Mellon, including her home, garden, estate, and the Oak Spring Garden Library, which comprises a celebrated collection of rare books, manuscripts, works of art, and other related artifacts. The Foundation is dedicated to facilitating scholarship and public engagement on the history and future of plants, including the culture of gardens and landscapes and the importance of plants for human well-being. For more information, go to osgf.org.

This exhibition is made possible through a partnership with the Oak Spring Garden Foundation.

Exhibitions in the Mertz Library are made possible by the LuEsther T. Mertz Charitable Trust.

###

The New York Botanical Garden is a museum of plants located at Bronx River Parkway (Exit 7W) and Fordham Road. It is easy to reach by Metro-North Railroad or subway. The Garden is open year-round, Tuesday through Sunday and Monday federal holidays, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. The best way to enjoy the Garden is with the *All-Garden Pass*, which includes admission to the grounds as well as to seasonal gardens, exhibitions, and attractions such as the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory, Everett Children's Adventure Garden, and Tram Tour. For ticket pricing, please check our Web site. For more information, please call 718.817.8700 or visit nybg.org

The New York Botanical Garden, 2900 Southern Boulevard, Bronx, New York 10458

The New York Botanical Garden is located on property owned in full by the City of New York, and its operation is made possible in part by public funds provided through the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs. A portion of the Garden's general operating funds is provided by The New York City Council and The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. The Bronx Borough President and Bronx elected representatives in the City Council and State Legislature provide leadership funding.

Media Contacts: Ellen Rubin, 360 BrandMarketMedia, 212.909.2625;
erubin@360brandmarketmedia.com

Stevenson Swanson, The New York Botanical Garden, 718.817.8512; sswanson@nybg.org.