

BLOOM

From page 21

The house, the sculpture gardens and all the flower artwork inside all create a sense of enchantment. The magic starts the minute you drive up to the building. If you look up, you'll see a 10-foot-tall red tulip balanced on a thin stem in front of this historic home in West Palm Beach. It's actually a bronze sculpture by Robert St. Croix (West Palm Beach), "Grande Prima Flora," one of the artists in the show.

The tulip proudly announces the exhibition with a small sign at its feet. Looking up, you may feel as if you have sipped from the bottle marked "Drink me," as Alice did, and shrunk down to a smaller size.

Mr. St. Croix has other smaller works in the exhibition, including a colorful metal bouquet of tulips.

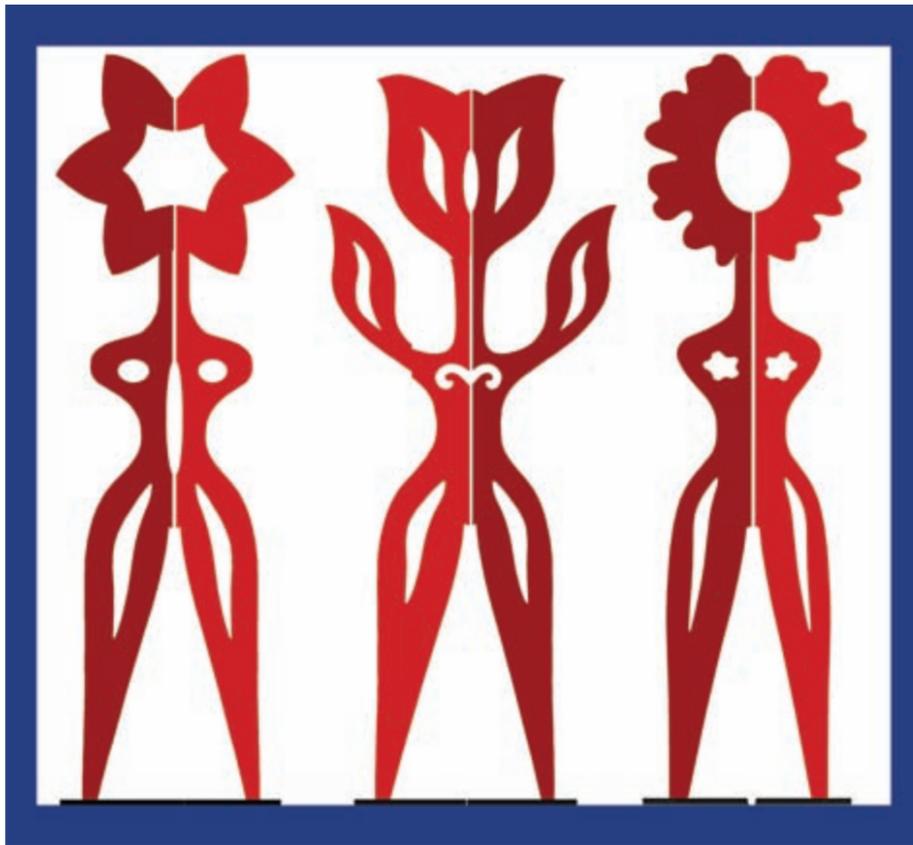
This exhibition consists of artwork by nine artists — six from South Florida. "Most of the artists have ties to Palm Beach," said Karen Steele, interim executive director. "That makes this exhibition even more special to the local community and art enthusiasts alike."

The sculpture, painting and photography reveal a wide range of styles, shapes, media, and imagination — all beautifully displayed inside and outside the home — artfully arranged by curator Marie Scripture. "This is our most comprehensive group art show so far," she said. "It's a perfect complement to the Ann Norton Sculpture Gardens."

As you wander through the exhibition and gardens, you'll see that tulips are the subject of choice of many of the artists — not just St. Croix. In the first room, for instance Clarita Brinkerhoff (South Florida) has created a mixed media sculpture titled "Tulip" that stands in a small flowerpot in a recess in the wall. This sculpture is made of pewter, polished and copper-plated, and then decorated with hundreds of Swarovski crystals that gleam sumptuously, almost like jewelry.

Babette Bloch (Connecticut) also is fascinated by tulips. In the outside garden, she has created a startling 6-foot-high bouquet of stainless steel tulips called "Tulipula." Even though it is made of stainless steel, this piece somehow manages to catch the grace of these flowers. Bloch also has several smaller flower sculptures inside the Norton house.

The main room holds one of the largest pieces by the exhibition's two photographers. It's a print by Dragana Connaughton (Palm Beach) of a bright carpet of sunflowers ("Sunflowers") that catches the eye. The sunflowers recede into the distance in the much same way the fields of flowers painted by the French Impressionists did; but in this case the bright gold blooms remain in much sharper



Mary Page Evans' 'Gladiolas by the Sea.'

focus.

Jean Matthews (Palm Beach) likes to move in very close to her subjects — and surprise the viewer. With this technique, she enlarges the subject, almost the way Georgia O'Keeffe does, but she may include other objects in her flower photographs. A good example of this approach is her print titled "Sentimental Journey," which examines a branch of queen's crape myrtle and a brown paper bag in a pool of water.

The four painters on display demonstrate very different styles. But, like the sculptors, they favor certain flowers. Roses are high on the list. Ben Schonzeit's (New York City) large rectangular acrylic painting of pink roses on linen ("Roses") is one of the most stunning paintings in the exhibition. Schonzeit is a well-known artist who was a pioneer in the

Edwina Sandys' 'Flower Women Trio.'

field of photorealism. In this painting, he combines photorealism with surrealism: A row of lovely large pink roses in a glass vase float across the canvas against a background of gray and black wavy stripes. It's a beautiful, calming, almost romantic picture and a highlight of the exhibition.

"Gladiolas by the Sea," by Mary Paige Evans (Gulfstream) is another painting that evokes calmness and serenity. Alice would surely be reassured and calmed by this painting. The style is almost the opposite of Schonzeit's "Roses" — although still realistic. A colorful bouquet of gladiolas sits gracefully in a blue-and-white Chinese vase set on a terrace table. Beyond the terrace lie the beautiful green and blue colors of the sea. It's clearly American Impressionist in style, very reminiscent of Claude Monet's painting, "Garden at Sainte-Adresse."

But not every artist in the exhibition focuses on the beauty in flowers. Patricia Nix's (New York, Palm Beach and Paris) mixed-media "Rose Baroque" is powerful, but also a little frightening. In the center left a large pink rose is just opening up and its pink petals float against a blood red wall. Something in the effect is disturbing. It's time to ask questions, almost the way Alice did when she was in Wonderland.

Your mood will turn sunnier when you enter the fourth room — a wide entrance hall the opens onto the sculpture garden. A whimsical, engaging acrylic of Winston Churchill at his easel is perched on the wall to the left with flowers in the corner of the canvas. The painting is called "Brush with History," and transmits such



Ben Schonzeit's 'Amaryllis Swirl.'

humor and affection that it is almost no surprise that it was painted by his granddaughter, Edwina Sandys (New York and Palm Beach), an accomplished sculptor and artist. Ms. Sandys has several other unique large flower sculptures outside in the sculpture garden, and she was the one who suggested the theme of the show.

The "Flowers" exhibition ends with a flourish as you step outside into the Sculpture Garden. There you will find more sculpture — giant-sized flowers — done by the sculptors and one artist (Ms. Sandys) in the show. These are powerful, not meek flowers, standing on strong, although thin stems. The strength, size, and delicacy of these pieces make an intriguing contrast with the massive wall-like brick sculpture by Ann Norton that stands in the center of the pond. As you gaze at the scene, you may feel you've become a miniature Alice again.

If you have enough time, stay for lunch. On good weather days, guests can eat a fine variety of light lunch items prepared by Emko Catering, at a reasonable price, on the shaded terrace outside Ann Norton's studio. It's a lovely place to sit and think — with the knowledge that you won't start shrinking or growing as Alice did in her Wonderland dream. ■

in the know

- >> **What:** "Flowers," an exhibition of flower art in paintings, sculpture, and photography.
- >> **When:** Through March 6
- >> **Where:** Ann Norton Sculpture Gardens, 253 Barcelona Road, West Palm Beach
- >> **Cost:** General admission is \$10 for adults; \$8 for seniors; \$7 for children or students
- >> **Info:** ansg.org or 832-5328

DOWNTOWN

From page 21

Palm Beach, on Feb. 28.

The free program, "Harmony: An Exhibition of the Arts," features Ballet Palm Beach and the Palm Beach Symphony. Stroll the waterfront before or after the show. Info: wpb.org.

Library on the lawn

The Third Annual Library on the Lawn runs from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Feb. 27 at the West Palm Beach Green Market, 100 N. Clematis St., West Palm Beach. The Friends of the Mandel Public Library of West Palm Beach host the event, which begins with a performance by the Florida Dance Conservatory. Lots of entertainment follows from magic to

yoga. Visitors can browse and check out cookbooks, gardening books and best-sellers while picking up fresh groceries.

For information, call 868-7709 or visit friendswpblibrary.org.

Let's hear about history

The Flagler Museum's 31st annual Whitehall Lecture Series continues with two very different lectures.

On Feb. 28, John Steele Gordon, a journalist and financial historian, will speak about "How the 16th Amendment and the Federal Reserve Act Changed America."

Mr. Gordon is the author of "An Empire of Wealth: The Epic History of American Economic Power." He'll speak about the early 20th century as a time of great change in America's financial system. He'll explain how, when the Supreme Court had ruled that a Federal Income Tax was unconstitutional, in 1913

a Constitutional Amendment and an Act of Congress changed everything. He'll discuss the implications of the Federal Reserve Act and the 16th Amendment on America's economy and government.

On March 6, Nathaniel Grow will speak about "The Sherman Act, Interstate Commerce, and Baseball."

Mr. Grow is a professor at University of Georgia, and the author of "Baseball on Trial: The Origin of Baseball's Antitrust Exemption."

In 1922 the United States Supreme Court ruled unanimously that baseball should be given an exemption from the antitrust laws of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It didn't matter that baseball fit the definition of interstate commerce. Mr. Grow will examine antitrust legislation and the baseball ruling within the context of the time.

The lectures begin at 3 p.m. Tickets

are free for museum members at the sustaining level and above, \$10 for individual, family and life members, and \$28 for nonmembers, which includes museum admission.

For more information, call 655-2833 or visit www.flaglermuseum.us.

Let's watch some dance

This one is for the ladies:

The dancing brothers Maksim and Valentin Chmerkovskiy — Val and Maks of "Dancing with the Stars" — are bringing their own show to the Kravis Center in West Palm Beach June 19. Called "Maks & Val On Tour: Our Way," the brothers say they are bringing to life the show they have dreamed about since childhood, "an honest and unfiltered narrative of their life story."

Tickets for start at \$25 and are on sale now. All 932-7469 or visit Kravis.org. ■