

The 23rd Leonardo Challenge

Leonardo in bloom

INVENTIONS OF THE FLOWER

A flower's bloom beckons – *Notice me!* Its colors, scent, texture and anatomy summon suitors with messages of hunger, nectar and procreation. That lust for life may underlie the power that summons us. We make flowers our companions. When our voices seem inadequate, we appropriate their voices to speak our congratulations, our confidences, our condolences. Long ago we invested in flowers mythical and divine associations to narrate creations we cannot explain. We still revel in their tidings of Winter's end. We breed and domesticate flowers. We exploit their alchemy for medicine and witchcraft. We extract their colors and fragrances. We press and dry them. We trade them over great distances...all to wrestle with their ephemeral presence. To preserve the essence of flowers, we make art.

LEONARDO'S GARDEN

In his notebooks and paintings, Leonardo collects flowers. They are rarely simple decorations. The scientist Leonardo draws flowers, often as subjects unto themselves, with precise anatomy that will set the standard for Renaissance botanical illustration. The artist Leonardo gives flowers meanings and mystery. *Madonna with Flower*, the earliest painting attributed to him, depicts Mary and a pensive child studying a cruciform flower. Leonardo illustrates myths and allegories with flowers that represent pleasure and pain, truth and deception, innocence and desire.

THE CHALLENGE

The bloom is the fullest expression of a flower's creativity.
Let a flower seed your creativity.

As if to forestall the brutal mechanics of Darwin's science, the early Victorians codified the language of flowers in elaborate dictionaries: a fixed meaning and code for each bloom. We've all but forgotten those.

We still need to stop and surrender to the beauty and mystery of flowers. Pick a flower from your memory, your imagination, or from a random walk. Evolve a flower in paper, steel, glass, or any improbable medium. Arrange a flower in an unexpected bouquet or myth. Plant a flower in a fresh and unfamiliar garden. Let your flower beckon – *Notice Me!*

We ask that sculptural works rest on a 12" x 12" footprint. In past Challenges, some of the works have been constructed for wall display; some suspended; a few used electricity; the others were free standing and 3-dimensional. We expect variations in scale and presentation. Please include your display requirements or instructions and include any unique display elements. Please, if this is a wall piece which belongs in a frame, *please bring it already framed, or bring the frame and we'll install it for you.*

- We would appreciate receiving entries by **April 24th latest.**
- For your entry fee you get 2 tickets for the April 27th event and a t-shirt. These will be held for you at the Museum until the night of the event.

There is a page below with FAQs and a Call for Entries.

Other questions, please call Sally Hill 203.777.1833 or email: sh@eliwhitney.org

Entry Form

Please enclose this with your finished entry.

Your name: _____

Your address: _____

Your phone: _____

E-mail address: _____

Title of Work: _____

Please check one:

- ☐ I wish to donate the work to the EWM.
☐ I wish to have the work returned to me.

(Donated works will be auctioned off by silent bid the night of the opening to benefit the Museum scholarship fund.)

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Frequently Asked Questions

Who can participate?

Adult artists, artisans, and designers contribute to the Challenge. Others with many different day jobs contribute.

There is a \$60 entry fee (though underwriting is available.) Please contact Sally Hill (sh@eliwhitney.org) to let us know you will enter. You receive 2 tickets to the benefit, a tee shirt, a gift certificate to Miya's, and the Museum's gratitude.

What kinds of work is submitted?

Wall pieces, hanging pieces, free standing and pedestal pieces, jewelry, artist books. Some that require electricity. We are not sure we will be able to accommodate constructions that require darkened spaces. And if the entry is living, and requires water, *please* be sure a spot to do that is easily accessible.

Are all submissions contributed for sale?

Almost all are. But some are not and are returned after May 20th. You can also set an opening bid. Your piece will be returned if the bids do not reach that level.

Are there size and display guidelines?

We expect variations in scale and presentation. Our pedestals best accommodate pieces that fit within a 12" x 12" footprint. Let us know early if your work will require a large space or special handling. Our space limits the number of large submissions we can accept. Wall pieces should be mounted or framed. Display guidelines are helpful.

What is the deadline for submissions?

April 24th, 10pm. We may be able to accommodate later work if you send a picture and dimensions. Just give me a call to discuss.

CALL for entries

Please fill out your name, address, email and phone number below. Enclose a \$60 entry fee (patron underwriting is available) and mail to the Eli Whitney Museum, 915 Whitney Avenue, Hamden, CT, 06517 in the enclosed envelope.

We will send you, via email, Entry Guidelines and a display form to bring in with your entry. We anticipate that most everyone will have access to some kind of lens, but we do have a supply of hand lenses like the one in the invitation should you need that. Just give us a call.

Please deliver the finished piece to the Museum by Monday, April 25th. Your tee shirt and the tickets to the April 28th event for you and your guest will be held at the door that evening. Please call Sally Hill at 777.1833 or email sh@eliwhitney.org for more information or questions.

name: _____

address: _____

phone: _____ cell: _____

email: _____

☐ I enclose a check for _____.

☐ Please charge to my Visa, Master Charge or Discover Card.

Exp date: _____ CVC code _____

☐ I would like to request underwriting. _____.