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## STATE OF THE ARTS GALLERY SHOWCASES AWARD-WINNING ARTIST'S EXOTIC FLOWER PORTRAITS AT MARIE SELBY BOTANICAL GARDENS

Sarasota, FL 2015 – State of the Arts Gallery is bringing a groundbreaking botanical photography exhibit to Marie Selby Botanical Gardens Dec. 18-30. Renowned for bold, dramatic close-ups of rare and exotic flowers, world-class photographer David Leaser will display several of his iconic flower portraits during Selby Gardens' "Lights in Bloom" holiday gala. David will also be on hand on opening night and at other times to meet visitors and discuss his cutting-edge space-age techniques. David's special exhibit will be held in the conservatory, Selby Gardens' showroom featuring a tropical rainforest-like setting.

Using innovative space-age technology he pioneered, David presents flowers and plants in a way they've never been seen before. With extremely magnified images that pop with bold colors and patterns, David's images show close-ups so detailed you can see a flower's tiniest hairs and the dew on its petals. His work reveals details traditional photography has been unable to show until now.

Visitors will see many of his most iconic images, including "Hokulei," a protea reminiscent of an exotic sea creature, and "Rococo," a classic parrot tulip, as well as other heirloom tulips from his award-winning "Tulipmania" collection. "Hokulei" and "Rococo" recently received the Gold Medal at the International Photography Awards as part of David's series, "When Darkness Falls in the Garden."

Mischa Kirby, Selby Gardens' Director of Marketing and Communications, said, "David's work evokes the serenity and beauty of nature that Selby Gardens is committed to conserving. We're proud to display his work at Selby Gardens."

Tre Michel, State of the Arts Gallery co-owner, said, "David's work has broad appeal, not only for art lovers but for nature lovers too because he offers a unique perspective on flowers. He shows them from a bee's eye view and marries nature's beauty with the same photographic technology used on the moon and Mars."

"These images show details in nature you would not have been able to capture with photography even a few years ago," David said. "Once you see this work, I am convinced you will have an appreciation for nature you never had before."

With six award-winning collections to his credit, David has been recognized as one of the world's leading botanical photographers. He uses a groundbreaking process he developed using NASA and Nikon technology to layer dozens of photos together and show flowers in a way they have never been seen before. His artwork has been praised by the art and photographic communities and has been featured on ABC News, Fox News and in the *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Architectural Digest*, *Sunset Magazine* and *Nikon World*. *Architectural Digest* says Leaser's images "glow with eye-popping color and pattern," and Ann Landi, contributing editor for *ARTNews*, says, "Leaser's work seduces us as only an unforgettable work of art can, to look and look again."

Two of David's collections were recently awarded Gold and Silver Medals in the International Photography Awards competition out of thousands of submissions from around the world.

He was also awarded Grand Champion in Nature in the Moscow International Foto Awards '14 competition, and his "Tiger's Eye" image was the only photograph juried for the prestigious London Art Biennale. The Huntington Library, Art Collections and Botanical Gardens in Los Angeles developed an artist series around Leaser's work and houses 14 of his large-scale images in its permanent collection.

David has also written four botanical books, including two acclaimed photographic essays. He is a featured lecturer at botanical gardens and museums on fine art photography. For more information, visit <http://www.davidleaser.com>.

David Leaser's exhibit will be on display at the Marie Selby Botanical Gardens' conservatory Dec. 18-30, 2015, excluding Dec. 25. Hours are from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Please call State of the Arts Gallery at 941-955-2787 or visit <http://selby.org> for more details.

The State of the Arts Gallery showcases contemporary fine art from locally established and internationally recognized artists. Based in Sarasota, a premier art destination, The State of the Arts Gallery collections include several large-scale paintings as well as diverse mixed media artwork, such as collages, metal, wood and stone sculptures. See <http://www.sarasotafineart.com/> for more details or call 941-955-2787.

Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, an urban oasis overlooking Sarasota Bay, features rare and beautiful tropical plants. Selby Gardens is also a respected center for the study and conservation of plants, particularly epiphytes, which are plants adapted to live in tree canopies, such as orchids, bromeliads, gesneriads and ferns. Selby Gardens' 12<sup>th</sup> Annual "Lights in Bloom" is a spectacular lights display where the gardens are transformed into a wonderland featuring a half-million twinkling lights and has become a popular holiday tradition. Please see <http://www.selby.org> for more information or call 941-366-5731.

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For information and photographs, contact Denise Leaser at (800) 928-9098 or visit <http://davidleaser.com/press-kit> to download text and high resolution images.

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