

Large-Scale Floral Sculpture by Willem de Rooij Created for the Jewish Museum's Lobby

Third Offering in Museum's *Using Walls, Floors, and Ceilings* Series

New York, NY – From October 31, 2014 through April 20, 2015, the Jewish Museum's lobby will feature a site-specific floral sculpture by Dutch artist Willem de Rooij titled *Bouquet XI*. The artist's first solo presentation at a New York museum, *Bouquet XI* is a nearly ten-foot-tall floral sculpture comprised of colorful and diverse Middle Eastern flora. This work is the third iteration of *Using Walls, Floors, and Ceilings*, a series showcasing new works by artists from around the globe in the Skirball Lobby. The series builds on the Museum's 1970s program called *Using Walls*, which featured the work of 14 up-and-coming international artists of the time such as Richard Artschwager, Sol Lewitt, Richard Tuttle, and others. Now, nearly 45 years later, the Museum is revisiting this moment in its history by showcasing new work by emerging artists from around the globe.

Placed prominently in the entrance lobby, *Bouquet XI* may be confused with grand arrangements often found in public reception areas, but its grand stature and wildly varied, all-over composition reveals its uncommon status. Created in collaboration with floral designer Bella Meyer, each species contributes to a sensory experience that is both visually lush and physically impactful.

In 2002, de Rooij began collaborating with Jeroen de Rijke (1970–2006) on the *Bouquet* series, a group of floral sculptures with distinct thematic conceptions and arrangements. *Bouquet XI* is comprised of floral species indigenous to the Middle East—inspired by the fact that Israel, like de Rooij's native Netherlands, is a major flower exporter. *Bouquet XI* is comprised of allergenic flowers that may interrupt a pleasant viewing with sneezes, snuffles or a stuffed nose. The drifting pollen alludes to the conflicts and harmonies that arise when borders are traversed and cultures collide, while the display of Middle Eastern flora, thousands of miles from their native habitat, hints at other global forms of movement, such as trade and commerce. To maintain this experience, the flowers of *Bouquet XI* will be replaced weekly.

Based in Berlin, Willem de Rooij is a Dutch artist who has worked in a variety of mediums including film, photography, and textiles. Much of his work emphasizes its own inherent material qualities and mechanisms of production in an effort to question contemporary art's reliance on external cultural, historical and personal references. De Rooij's art has been prominently exhibited in Europe, including in the Dutch pavilion at the 2005 Venice Biennale. The Jewish Museum's presentation is the artist's first solo installation at a New York museum. *Bouquet XI* will be realized in collaboration with noted flower designer Bella Meyer, who is the founder and creative director of the New York flower shop and design studio Fleurs Bella in Greenwich Village.

In May 1970, the Jewish Museum presented *Using Walls*, an exhibition of commissioned projects installed both within and beyond the gallery space of the Warburg Mansion. A former residence, the Museum renovated the French Gothic chateau-style building in the early 1960s and expanded its gallery space by adding new, modern galleries and an outdoor sculpture court to accommodate the larger scale works created by artists in the postwar era. *Using Walls (Indoors)* focused on the sentiment that the wall was not merely a structure or surface but could function as a material or component of a work of art. This philosophy extended to *Using Walls (Outdoors)* with emphasis placed on the relationship between art, public space, and the viewer. *Using Walls (Indoors)* featured innovative works by 14 international artists such as Sol Lewitt, Robert Ryman, Richard Tuttle, Mel

Bochner, Richard Artschwager, and others. *Using Walls (Outdoors)* focused on the work of City Walls, Inc. and Smokehouse Associates, two collectives known for their large-scale, vibrant murals in unexpected places across New York City.

The *Using Walls, Floors, and Ceilings* series is organized by Jens Hoffmann, Deputy Director, Exhibitions and Public Programs, and Kelly Taxter, Assistant Curator.

About Willem de Rooij

Willem de Rooij (born 1969 in Beverwijk/Netherlands) lives and works in Berlin. Central in his work is the selection and combination of images in a variety of different media, ranging from sculpture to photography, film and texts. De Rooij analyses conventions of presentation and representation and constructs tensions between historical, political and autonomous sources. His early film installations, made with Jeroen de Rijke, already had a sculptural character. Recent exhibitions make use of existing objects and works of other artists.

De Rooij studied art history at the University of Amsterdam and art at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie and the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam. Recent solo exhibitions include "Farafra" at Bergen Kunsthall, Bergen (2013), "Untilted" at Kunstverein München, Munich (2012), "Residual" at Kunstwegen Open Museum, Burg Bentheim (2012), "Crazy Repelled Firelight" at Friedrich Petzel Gallery, New York (2011), "Intolerance" at Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin (2010) and "Slit or Gloved" at Galerie Buchholz, Cologne (2010). De Rooij is Professor of Fine Art at the Staatliche Hochschule für Bildende Künste, Städelschule in Frankfurt am Main since 2006. His works can be found in the collections of Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, MUMOK in Vienna, Hamburger Bahnhof in Berlin, Centre Pompidou in Paris, MOCA in Los Angeles and MOMA in New York.

About the Jewish Museum

Located on Museum Mile at Fifth Avenue and 92nd Street, the Jewish Museum is one of the world's preeminent institutions devoted to exploring art and Jewish culture from ancient to contemporary, offering intellectually engaging, educational, and provocative exhibitions and programs for people of all ages and backgrounds. The Museum was established in 1904, when Judge Mayer Sulzberger donated 26 ceremonial objects to The Jewish Theological Seminary as the core of a museum collection. Today, the Museum maintains a collection of over 30,000 works of art, artifacts, and broadcast media reflecting global Jewish identity, and presents a diverse schedule of internationally acclaimed temporary exhibitions.

The Jewish Museum is located at 1109 Fifth Avenue at 92nd Street, New York City. Museum hours are Saturday, Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday, 11am to 5:45pm; Thursday, 11am to 8pm; and Friday, 11am to 4pm. Museum admission is \$15.00 for adults, \$12.00 for senior citizens, \$7.50 for students, free for visitors 18 and under and Jewish Museum members. Admission is Pay What You Wish on Thursdays from 5pm to 8pm and free on Saturdays. For information on the Jewish Museum, the public may call 212.423.3200 or visit the website at TheJewishMuseum.org.

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