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Orlando Museum of Art
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**Two Exhibitions Opening Friday, March 11, 2016
“The InFlux Series: Will Cotton” and
“The Sources: Paintings and Drawings by Steve Lotz”**

ORLANDO, March 9, 2016 – Two captivating exhibitions will share the spotlight as the Orlando Museum of Art simultaneously presents “The InFlux Series: Will Cotton” and “The Sources: Paintings and Drawings by Steve Lotz.” The internationally recognized artists, Will Cotton and Steve Lotz, will be in attendance at the exhibition opening reception, this Friday, March 11th. Museum Members will get an early preview at 6pm. Both exhibitions will open to the general public at 7pm.

“The InFlux Series: Will Cotton” and “The Sources: Paintings and Drawings by Steve Lotz” will be on view through June 5, 2016.

The InFlux Series: Will Cotton

Presented here is the first ever exhibition examining artist Will Cotton’s entire working process, from concept sketch, to costumes, to prints and paintings. Cotton is known for depicting an astonishing world, composed of an abundance of sugary sweets. Figures pose languidly in settings where landscapes are cakes and icing, seas are whipped cream and clouds are cotton candy. These appear to be utopian realms where all desires are indulged without guilt or consequence. The flawless naturalism with which Cotton renders this idealized world makes it both more seductive and more remote from ordinary experience.

It is important for Cotton that the world he has created is convincing on its own terms. In the past several years, Cotton has explored the question of what women might wear in this confectionary paradise. To that end, Cotton has focused on solitary female figures posed in a variety of distinctive clothing designs he has created using the



Will Cotton, *Deferred Promise*, 2015, 15 color lithograph, edition 11 of 25, 37 ½ x 28 in., Courtesy of Flying Horse Editions, Orlando, © Will Cotton, Image courtesy of the artist and Mary Boone Gallery, New York.

materials available in a world where everything is made of sweets (frosting, sugar bags, cotton candy, cupcakes). Though their attire may be absurd to those bound to commonplace reality, tiaras of lollipops, hats of French macarons and gowns of whipped cream are all haute couture in Cotton's world.

While Cotton's fantastic subject matter is visually arresting, his work is made more compelling by the beauty of his draftsmanship and painterly techniques. This can be seen in a number of preparatory drawings that range from quick sketches of details on a dress to fully developed oil studies that are the basis of finished paintings and prints. His process of refining ideas with drawings and maquettes is similar to the preparations made by painters in centuries past.



Will Cotton, *Icing*, 2014, oil on linen, 72 x 80 in. Private Collection. © Will Cotton. Image courtesy of the artist and Mary Boone Gallery, New York.

Cotton began working in lithography in 2010. Lithography is a printmaking process that is perfectly suited to capturing the beautiful qualities of line and tone that characterize Cotton's drawings. Since then, Cotton has developed a passion for lithography and produced a significant body of work in the medium. Following this passion, he came to Flying Horse Editions (FHE), the fine arts press of the University of Central Florida in 2015. While at FHE, he produced three editioned prints. One of these, *Candy Crown*, was commissioned by *ArtNews* for the cover of its summer 2015 edition.

The Sources: Paintings and Drawings by Steve Lotz

In a career that now spans 57 years, Steve Lotz has created a distinctive visual vocabulary of symbolic and archetypal forms drawn from the “Sources” that inspire his work. These sources are very personal and, through his philosophical outlook, are also linked to universal themes. The large-scale drawings, paintings and collages presented in this exhibition reflect his engagement with these themes and are expressions of his spiritual connections to the world, to nature and to the cosmos.



Steve Lotz, *Source #3*, 2015, acrylic, wax pencil and India ink on canvas, 68 x 93 1/2 in. Collection of the artist. © Steve Lotz. Image courtesy of the artist.

Lotz began his studies at the University of California, Los Angeles, where he received a BFA, before attending graduate school at the University of Florida. After receiving his MFA, Lotz came to Central Florida in 1968 to create the Art Department at the University of Central Florida (UCF), serving as chairman of the department for its first 10 years. He stayed at UCF until he retired as a professor emeritus in 2003. During this period, he established a successful career as an internationally recognized artist with numerous exhibitions in the United States and Europe. His best known work in Central Florida is perhaps his monumental triptych, *Florida Dream*. Installed in the main terminal of the Orlando International Airport, it has greeted millions of visitors to Orlando since 1980.

In the 1970s, Lotz produced a striking group of drawings on black paper that depict ethereal worlds in which elemental forms and sometimes human figures appear engaged in procreative events. In some

drawings, the figures move to embrace while writhing animated forms, some of which allude to sexual organs, swirl around them. The strong vertical compositions of several works reference the lingam, an ancient Hindu phallic symbol that represents the god Shiva and his male creative power. Materializing out of darkness, these figures and the sinuous forms around them, move together in a pulsing visual rhythm that suggests primordial energies at work.



Steve Lotz, *Kama and Rati: Source Couple*, 1974, wax pencil on paper mounted onto foam core, 86 3/4 x 48 in., Collection of the artist, © Steve Lotz, Image courtesy of the artist.

The symbolic content and visionary construct of the drawings continued to shape Lotz's work in the years that followed, even as his primary medium shifted to painting. Universal procreative forces are also central themes seen in his recent paintings included in this exhibition. These themes are expressed through images that are more serene and meditative than his earlier drawings. Elaborate leaf structures, swollen fruits, scattered seeds, flowers and birds, as symbolic elements, dominate these images, appearing to remain still or float in soft atmospheric fields. The visual rhythms in these works are created by botanical tendrils that twist and curl through space, evoking a quiet but active generative force.

In his recent paintings, Lotz introduces vistas comprised of cloud-filled skies and wide, dark seas. Their atmospheres are soft and misty; their light is cool and defused. The foreground contains elements silhouetted in shadow against the sky, with occasional bright highlights causing a leaf, ribbon, flower or bird to glow with ethereal light. These are dream-like visions of transcendent metaphysical realms, related to, but apart from common earthbound reality.

Lotz does not follow a religious practice, he does believe in a spiritual force within us that connects us to all things in the universe. He developed this belief based on his life-long appreciation of Eastern philosophy, the writings of Carl Jung and others, and his own profound personal experiences. Lotz has chosen to access and explore this spiritual state through art.

The Sources: Paintings and Drawings by Steve Lotz is organized by the Orlando Museum of Art and presented in conjunction with the community-wide celebration, *Art Legends of Orange County*. This collaboration runs throughout the 2015-2016 arts season and includes more than 15 exhibitions and events. *Art Legends of Orange County* celebrates 20 distinguished artists and patrons who helped build Orange County's vibrant cultural landscape. The full exhibition schedule and link to the virtual exhibition are available at www.ArtLegendsOC.org.

The Orlando Museum of Art's mission is to inspire creativity, passion and intellectual curiosity by connecting people with art and new ideas. Its purpose is to interpret and present the most compelling art for the public to experience, and to positively affect people's lives with innovative and inspiring education programs that will endure as a cultural legacy in Central Florida.

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