

Media Release:



Auckland Museum Explores the Magic of the World's Most Romantic Flower

Is there any flower more romantic than the rose? On 4 December, Auckland Museum opens the second chapter of its *Wonderland* exhibition: *The Magic of the Rose*. The exhibition unravels the fascinating lineage of this flower family and explores fabulous tales of love, passion and secrecy that have made the rose revered by royalty, praised by poets, and enjoyed by gardeners around the world.

Wonderland: The Magic of the Rose embraces cutting-edge technology to bring stories of the rose to life in vivid detail. These innovations are fused with striking exhibition design to create a truly immersive experience.

The Magic of the Rose is the second chapter in a two-part exhibition exploring the world's most popular flowers. The first chapter, *Wonderland: The Mystery of the Orchid*, opened in July and was visited by over 20,000 people.

"*Wonderland* is about telling the stories of our favourite flowers in fun and accessible ways," says Auckland Museum director, Dr Vanda Vitali. "The iconic image of the rose has infused itself with art, myth and legend since the dawn of civilization. This is a chance for Aucklanders of all ages to discover the rose's allure in a unique setting."

Since the first European settlers arrived, roses have proved immensely popular in New Zealand. *Wonderland* includes stories of heritage rose species, some of which were thought to be lost to the world, until rediscovered here.

The exhibition features an exclusive interview with local rose-breeder Sam McGredy. One of the great rose breeders of the 20th century; his star varieties include 'Dublin Bay' and 'Sexy Rexy', found growing in gardens across the globe.

The rose lies at the heart of the language of love, and in *Wonderland* you can listen to its symbolic use in romantic poems by George Eliot and Robbie Burns. Also, investigate the ancient art of extracting rose oil, valued weight-for-weight more than gold

Drawing from the Museum's rich collections, the Rose Fashionistas section of *Wonderland* looks at the popularity of the rose motif over time – from Victorian dresses inspired by the Orient to the chic designs of the 1950s.

As well as examining the rose's inspiration on culture, *Wonderland* explores the flower's pollination process, and allows visitors to see the world through the eyes of a bee. Stop to smell the roses in the scent station. A multi-touch 'pollinator' screen allows you to pollinate a virtual garden.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a full programme of events, including panel discussions, *Fabulous Fridays*, a *Midsummer Night's Dream*-themed performance for children, as well as sleepovers.



What: *Wonderland: The Magic of the Rose*
When: Opens Friday, 4 December
Where: Special Exhibitions Hall
Cost: Adults \$8, Concession \$6, Children and Members FREE

ENDS

Wonderland: A Snapshot of the Exhibition

New Zealand Heritage Roses: A Floral Legacy

New Zealand is home to a number of heritage rose species once thought lost to the world. Thanks to the hard graft of local rosarians, these species have flourished and are now being reintroduced abroad. Discover the fascinating tales of our heritage roses in *Wonderland*.

Sam McCredy: An Irish Rose in New Zealand

Wonderland features an interview with Sam McCredy (the fourth), one of the great rose breeders of the 20th century. McCredy, who comes from a long line of rose breeders, moved to Auckland in the 1970s, where he began to produce beautiful new roses that are grown in gardens all over the world.

The Pollinator: Pollinate your own Rose Garden

Which insect is best for the job? Choose your own pollinator using the Museum's cutting-edge touch screens, to try your hand at pollinating a digital rose garden.

Soundscapes: Language of Love

The image of the rose goes to the very heart of the language of love. Listen to a selection of rose-infused romantic poems, including those of George Elliot and Robbie Burns.

Bee Vision: Hunting Pollen

Discover how bees see roses in a completely different light to us. Some flowers reflect the ultra violet light our eyes can't detect, but bees can.

Scent Stations: Stop and Smell the Roses

Roses are equally revered for their beauty and fragrance. Sniff out the scent of roses in the scent station.

Audio-Visual Portraits: Mika's Magical Roses

Stare into a set of magical portraiture frames, and watch as performance-artist Mika reveals the extravagant rose in three fabulous tales of love, passion and secrecy.

Lady Painters

Wonderland features the art of 'lady painters' Fanny Osbourne, Matilda Smith, Jessie Brownlee and the Blumhardt sisters. Together, they painted the native New Zealand rose cousin, rubus, in the early years of the 20th century.

The Roses World Tour

Discover the opulent world of roses. All wild roses originate from the Northern Hemisphere, the majority found in China, but also Europe, North America, and northwest Africa. They grow in a range of habitats, from the shores of the Mediterranean to the heights of the Himalayas.