

“Gloria Vanderbilt: An Artful Life” Explores the Multifaceted Life of Legendary Artist, Designer, and Heiress

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Huntsville, Ala – The Huntsville Museum of Art is set to explore the life of 20th-century legend Gloria Vanderbilt in the upcoming exhibition *Gloria Vanderbilt: An Artful Life*. Organized by the Huntsville Museum of Art, this exclusive exhibition not only features memorable photographs of Vanderbilt taken over her long career but will also highlight her artwork of over 35 paintings and sculptures, as well as memorabilia documenting Vanderbilt’s recent association with the Museum.

The exhibit will be on display from Oct. 30, 2020, through Jan. 24, 2021. Featuring a collection of photographs taken of Vanderbilt by Jonathan Becker, Horst, Annie Leibovitz, Jack Mitchell, and Adrián Villeta, the exhibit will delve into the life of Vanderbilt as an heiress, businesswoman, writer designer, and artist.

“Many of us remember Gloria Vanderbilt the heiress, who as a child was caught in the middle of a custody battle between her absent young mother, Gloria Morgan Vanderbilt and her powerful aunt, Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney,” said Museum Executive Director Christopher Madkour. “Of course, if you were a young adult in 1978, you would certainly know Gloria Vanderbilt for her breakthrough in creating her signature designer jeans. But who was Gloria Vanderbilt, the designer, and artist? Gloria’s studio was her sanctuary where she would paint, assemble her Dream Box sculptures, and pen her memoirs, novels, and short stories. Here she was the most comfortable, relaxed, and free to embrace her true creative ethos. Gloria concentrated very seriously and intensively on her art for over 75 years. This exhibition explores the depth of Vanderbilt’s broad artistic legacy.”

In 2012, Vanderbilt and Wendy Goodman, author of *The World of Gloria Vanderbilt*, accepted an invitation from Madkour, a longtime friend, to be the guest speakers at the Museum’s annual GALA Luncheon and Voices of Our Times event. During their visit to Huntsville, Vanderbilt and Goodman were presented with a Key to the City by Mayor Tommy Battle, who extended an open invitation to return any time.

Vanderbilt enjoyed her stay in Huntsville so much that she offered to host a fundraiser in New York for the Museum. The preview party for the *World of Gloria Vanderbilt*, an exhibition of her paintings and sculptures at 1stdibs, opened on Sept. 12, 2012, to rave reviews. At that time, Michael Bruno, Founder of 1stdibs, stated: “Regional museums like the Huntsville Museum of Art are making such a big impact on the art scene today. Gloria is a category unto herself. Her signature use of color astounds me in every work.”

Vanderbilt’s son Anderson Cooper once described her as “an emissary from a distant star; a visitor to our shores. In this world, but not necessarily of it.” *Gloria Vanderbilt: An Artful Life* showcases the life and work of this ethereal woman.

Access to Gloria Vanderbilt: An Artful Life will be included with general admission and free for Museum Members. Admission is \$12 for adults, \$5 for children and students, and \$10 for seniors, military, and educators. To learn more about the exhibition or the Huntsville Museum of Art, visit hsvmuseum.org.