

GEORGIA ENTERTAINMENT SCENE

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Rarely seen artwork by iconic writer Flannery O'Connor to be unveiled

Exhibition is one of many events planned for Flannery at 100 centennial celebration in March.



Georgia College & State University has a variety of festivities planned to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Flannery O'Connor's birth. Photo: Joe McTyre

By Danielle Charbonneau

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Literary icon Flannery O'Connor is best known for her Southern Gothic fiction and short stories including "A Good Man is Hard to Find" and "Wise Blood," but she was also a visual artist.

Stored privately for decades by family and friends, 39 of her visual art works never before seen by the public will be unveiled for one day at her alma mater, Georgia College & State University, in March. It's planned as part of a monthlong centennial celebration of her birth in 1925. Titled "Flannery the Visual Artist," the exhibition, ranging from oil paintings and wood-burned illustrations to linoleum-block prints and a self-portrait, will show visitors a new side of O'Connor.

“She’s taught as an example of literature — but scholars are starting to look at her as a visual artist as well,” Katie Simon, interim executive director of GCSU’s Flannery O’Connor Institute for the Humanities, stated in a press release. “These paintings reveal that she never stopped creating visual art until her death.”

Exhibiting O’Connor’s artwork at GCSU is fitting; her first notable visual works were comics she created as an undergraduate student at the school (then called Georgia State College for Women) in Milledgeville, where she lived most of her life. Those early illustrations were published in the university’s student newspaper and literary magazine.

Several of the artworks in the “Flannery the Visual Artist” collection have been gifted to GCSU by the Mary Flannery O’Connor Charitable Trust.

“We’re excited to share these new dimensions of her artistic legacy with the world,” said GCSU President Cathy Cox in a press release. “Georgia College is the epicenter of Flannery O’Connor. From our stewardship of Flannery’s home at Andalusia to our library’s special collection of her work, the university attracts O’Connor experts from around the world to explore her roots and cultural impact.”

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Credit: Georgia College & State University

Painting of Andalusia by Flannery O'Connor. Courtesy of Georgia College & State University

“Flannery the Visual Artist” will open at 9 a.m. Wednesday, March 26, in Georgia College & State University’s Magnolia Ballroom. It runs until a 4 p.m. presentation titled “O’Connor’s Other Art” by Robert Donahoo, professor of English at Sam Houston State University.

Following the exhibition, the pieces that were gifted to the school will be relocated to O’Connor’s former home, [Andalusia Farm](#) — a National Historic Landmark operated and owned by GCSU. There the artworks will be paired with O’Connor’s personal items and artifacts in an exhibit called “Hidden Treasures,” which will run through the summer.



Credit: TNS

Andalusia Farm, just off U.S. Highway 441 north of Milledgeville, Georgia, was once the home of author Flannery O’Connor and her mother, Regina Cline O’Connor. Now a house museum, about 90% of its artifacts are original to the home. ([Explore Georgia/TNS](#))

In addition to her visual impact, O’Connor also made a mark musically. Author Irwin H. Streight’s 2024 book, “Flannery at the Grammys,” cites O’Connor’s influence on Lucinda Williams, Bruce Springsteen, PJ Harvey and Tom Waits, among other musicians.

In recognition of her musical influence, the centennial celebration, called Flannery at 100, will also feature a [songwriters workshop](#) led by folk musician Sally Jaye, a concert at Andalusia Farm by Grammy-nominated singer-songwriter Shawn Mullins and a daylong music festival featuring Colin Cutler and Hot Pepper Jam.

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Flannery at 100 will also feature a free screening of “Wildcat” with an introduction by the film’s producers, Mary Rogers and Joe Goodman; the inaugural Southern Gothic lecture series; and several readings hosted by the O’Connor Institute for the Humanities. There will be free tours of Andalusia all day Tuesday, March 25, and Saturday, March 29.

For details go to www.gcsu.edu.

About the Author



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