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Hunt Institute will present "Japonica Magnifica" exhibition

Pittsburgh — The Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation of Carnegie Mellon University will present the exhibition "Japonica Magnifica," which celebrates the beauty of Japanese flowers and plants through the original botanical paintings and drawings of English artist and horticulturist Raymond Booth.

The 85 artworks on view from 1 April through 31 May 1996 are the originals featured in the newly published book Japonica Magnifica. The exhibition and book represent a collaboration between artist Raymond Booth and botanist Don Elick. Booth has maintained a 12-year correspondence with Elick, who has lived and collected plants in Japan for over 40 years. Elick provided many of the specimens for the artist, who grew them in his garden in Yorkshire, England, in order to study them and draw them from life. Each plant portrait is true to scale. Booth's botanical paintings are remarkably accurate, including depictions of Japanese plant habitats that the artist himself has never seen. Although he works in various media, he favors painting in oil on sized paper, an unusual medium for flower subjects.

Booth is a graduate of the Leeds College of Art and divides his time between botanical painting and the cultivation of rare and exotic plants. His work is regularly exhibited at The Fine Art Society in London, where he has had three solo exhibitions. In 1984, a retrospective exhibition of his work was presented at several galleries in his native Yorkshire. Booth has won awards at Royal Horticultural Society exhibitions.

Japonica Magnifica was published simultaneously in 1992 by Alan Sutton and The Fine Art Society in the United Kingdom and by Sagapress Inc./Timber Press Inc. in the U.S. It is available through Timber Press Inc. in Portland, Oregon. The deluxe edition of the book, which contains two specially commissioned plates signed by the artist, is available from The Fine Art Society.

The exhibition, sponsored by PaineWebber in cooperation with The Fine Art Society of London, opened at PaineWebber Art Gallery in New York City in the spring of 1995. Subsequent bookings were at The Morris Museum (Morristown, NJ) and Elvehjem Museum of Art (University of Wisconsin — Madison). After the exhibition closes at the Hunt Institute, it will travel to the Bruce Museum (Greenwich, CT) and Chicago Botanic Garden.

The Institute is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to noon and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Telephone (412) 268-2434 for additional information.