

Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation  
5th Floor, Hunt Library  
Carnegie Mellon University  
Pittsburgh, PA 15213-3890  
Contact: James J. White  
Day Phone: 412-268-2434  
Email: [huntinst@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:huntinst@andrew.cmu.edu)  
Web site: <http://huntbot.andrew.cmu.edu/HIBD/Exhibitions/Exhibitions.shtml>

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HUNT INSTITUTE PRESENTS  
*WINGS OF PARADISE: WATERCOLORS OF SILKMOTHS BY JOHN CODY*  
26 March–30 June 2009

Pittsburgh, PA—The Hunt Institute will exhibit 47 watercolors of silkmoths by John Cody. Cody is passionate about portraying the magnificent beauty of silkmoths and their associated plants with both artistry and accuracy. With these widely appealing watercolors, he hopes to increase awareness of their dwindling numbers and the need to conserve their natural habitats. Although the majority of silkmoths, which are members of the family Saturniidae, are found in the tropics, some species are found in North America and Europe. There are many possibilities as to why these big moths are endangered—from the loss of their tropical habitats through deforestation, to the damaging effects of man-made light, to pollution and to pesticides.

Since the age of five, when John Cody saw his first live specimen in his childhood neighborhood of Brooklyn, New York, he found silkmoths appealing simply for their magnificent form, color and texture. He was encouraged by family, friends and teachers to pursue his interests in understanding these short-lived creatures and was inspired by the flower and the bird paintings of the early 19th-century botanical artists Pierre-Joseph Redouté (1759–1840) and John James Audubon (1751–1851), respectively. During a class in entomology in college, Cody began this series of silkmoth paintings. After college he exhibited at the American Museum of Natural History and many university libraries. He trained as a medical illustrator at Johns Hopkins University, which honed his artistic and observational skills. A few years later he enrolled in medical school and pursued the field of psychiatry. His life in Kansas was filled with work, family and the biographies he authored, with occasional periods for painting. Over the years he and his family traveled to New Guinea, Peru, Madagascar, Ecuador, Borneo and China where he studied these moths in their native habitats and developed a concern for their conservation. It was not until he retired that he was able to devote all of his time to his avocation of painting the saturniid moths. Since then, John Cody's work has appeared in periodicals and art and natural history museum exhibitions throughout the United States, including the National Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C. He was presented the Kansas Governor's Arts Award for Lifetime Achievement in the Individual Artist Category in 1997.

In *Wings of Paradise: The Great Saturniid Moths by John Cody* (1996), the artist addressed the often-asked question, "what are moths good for." Just as flowers are beautiful and short-lived, the main purpose of these moths is to perpetuate the species. Once they emerge from their chambers, from which they have stored enough energy to survive no more than a week on earth, these moths do not eat or drink. The male uses all of its energy to find a mate. Once the female's eggs are fertilized, she attaches them to a suitable food plant that will provide the necessary nutrition to sustain the life-cycle from caterpillar—to pupa—to moth. He is "surprised that these short, passionate lives do not strike people as romantic."

Last summer at the age of 83, John Cody taught a workshop introducing moths into botanical illustration to a class at Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens. Considering the interest in his paintings, Phipps

will also exhibit giclée prints of Cody's paintings in its Welcome Center on Schenley Drive from 21 March to 30 June 2009.

We continue to seek funds for our Adopt-a-Moth Program. Your tax-deductible contribution of \$125 will cover the shipping fee of one of Cody's 47 paintings from his home in Kansas to Pittsburgh. Donors will receive the name of the moth they are adopting and be invited to a special meeting to be arranged with the artist. Contributions may be sent to James J. White, Curator of Art, Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation, 5th Floor, Hunt Library, Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, PA 15213. Please make checks payable to Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation. For additional information, call 412-268-2440 or email [jw3u@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:jw3u@andrew.cmu.edu).

In conjunction with *Wings of Paradise: Watercolors of Silkmoths by John Cody*, the Hunt Institute will hold its annual Open House on 14–15 June 2009. We will offer two talks and displays, one on the life and work of Maria Sibylla Merian (1647–1717), whose work included beautifully illustrated folios on the insects of Surinam, and another highlighting women botanical illustrators over four centuries. We will also have a guided gallery tour of the exhibition by our assistant curator of art, tours of our departments and reading room, and opportunities to meet one-on-one with our staff to ask questions and see items in the collections. We encourage everyone to consider visiting us during this Open House. It will be a good time to see the new exhibition and an opportunity to have an inside look at our collections and our work. A schedule of events will be available soon on our Web site. We are looking forward to your visit.

The exhibition will be on display on the 5th floor of the Hunt Library building at Carnegie Mellon University. Hours: Monday–Friday, 9 a.m.–noon and 1–5 p.m.; Sunday, 1–4 p.m. (except 10, 12 April and 3, 24, 25 May). We also will open Sunday, 17 May, 1–4 p.m., during Carnegie Mellon's commencement. The exhibition is open to the public free of charge. For further information, contact the Hunt Institute at 412-268-2434.

The Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation, a research division of Carnegie Mellon University, specializes in the history of botany and all aspects of plant science and serves the international scientific community through research and documentation. To this end, the Institute acquires and maintains authoritative collections of books, plant images, manuscripts, portraits and data files, and provides publications and other modes of information service. The Institute meets the reference needs of botanists, biologists, historians, conservationists, librarians, bibliographers and the public at large, especially those concerned with any aspect of the North American flora.

Hunt Institute was dedicated in 1961 as the Rachel McMasters Miller Hunt Botanical Library, an international center for bibliographical research and service in the interests of botany and horticulture, as well as a center for the study of all aspects of the history of the plant sciences. By 1971 the Library's activities had so diversified that the name was changed to Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation. Growth in collections and research projects led to the establishment of four programmatic departments: Archives, Art, Bibliography and the Library. The current collections include approximately 29,000 books; 30,000 portraits; 30,000 watercolors, drawings and prints; and 2,000 autograph letters and manuscripts. Including artworks dating from the Renaissance, the Art Department's collection now focuses on contemporary botanical art and illustration, where the coverage is unmatched. The Art Department organizes and stages exhibitions, including the triennial *International Exhibition of Botanical Art & Illustration*.

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