

Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation
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For Immediate Release

HUNT INSTITUTE PRESENTS
THE HEALING PLANTS OF IDA HRUBESKY PEMBERTON
25 SEPTEMBER 2003 to 29 FEBRUARY 2004

Pittsburgh, PA—The Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation presents *The Healing Plants of Ida Hrubesky Pemberton* from 25 September 2003 to 29 February 2004. The exhibition includes 45 watercolors of medicinal plants painted between 1935 and 1942 for the artist's planned book, "Drug Plants."

Ida Pemberton (1890–1951) studied botany and art at Doane College in Nebraska and the University of Nebraska at Lincoln. She continued her art studies at the Art Institute of Chicago but did not graduate. In 1918 she married and later taught school for a short time in 1920. In 1924 the Pembertons moved to the Denver area. After the tragic death of her son, she found solace in the healing plants of her garden and began to paint. She completed 64 paintings and then designed a title page and endpapers. She visited publishers in Chicago and New York but was unable to find one for her book, "Drug Plants." However, the New York Botanical Garden was so impressed with her portfolio of drawings that they organized a one-person exhibition of Ida's work in 1950.

Following her death in 1951, Ida's paintings were sold to the University of Colorado Museum of Natural History in Boulder in 1955. The paintings were organized for a tour by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES) and were displayed at numerous venues around the country from the 1950s to the 1970s. The artworks have not been seen for 21 years, and we are pleased to have them on loan from the University of Colorado Museum of Natural History for this exhibition.

We are delighted that at last the images intended for the book "Drug Plants" will be published in a full-color, illustrated catalogue accompanying the exhibition. The catalogue includes a biographical essay by botanical artist and plant taxonomist Carolyn Crawford, a study of the artist's technique by horticultural taxonomist and editor Victoria Matthews, and a catalogue of the 64 artworks in the Pemberton Collection of the University of Colorado Museum of Natural History.

The exhibition will be on display on the fifth floor of the Hunt Library building at Carnegie Mellon University. Hours: Monday–Friday, 9 a.m.–noon and 1 p.m.–5 p.m.; Sunday, 1 p.m.–4 p.m. (except 27–30 November; 10, 19 December; 21 December–1 January). 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 founded 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 28,000 books; 24,000 portraits; 30,000 watercolors, drawings and prints; and 2,000 autograph letters and manuscripts.

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