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For Immediate Release

HUNT INSTITUTE PRESENTS
INSPIRATION AND TRANSLATION
BOTANICAL AND HORTICULTURAL LITHOGRAPHS OF JOSEPH PRESTELE AND SONS
11 September to 22 December 2005

Pittsburgh, PA—The Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation in collaboration with the National Agricultural Library (Beltsville, Maryland) presents the exhibition *Inspiration and Translation: Botanical and Horticultural Lithographs of Joseph Prestele and Sons* from 11 September to 22 December 2005. Joseph Prestele (1796–1867) was a flower painter and a master of lithography, the technique of engraving on stone. Skilled in painting and botany, he produced work of aesthetic and scientific value. His three sons, Joseph Jr. (1824–1880s), Gottlieb (1827–1892) and William Henry (1838–1895), followed in his artistic, but not all in his religious, footsteps.

In 1843 Joseph Prestele and his family emigrated from Germany with the True Inspirationists (later the Amana Society). The Community of True Inspiration emphasized individual piety and humility within a brotherhood of believers. Prestele had joined the community in 1837, becoming a church elder. Settling with the Inspirationists in Ebenezer, New York, Prestele was assigned the task of tending the orchard for the community. At this time, Joseph Jr. returned to New York City, the first of the sons to leave the community. In 1845 Prestele was given permission to pursue botanical art, and in the following year he purchased a printing press. With his sons Gottlieb and William Henry, Prestele began producing scientific and horticultural watercolors and translating the drawings of Isaac Sprague (1811–1895) onto stone for publications by eminent botanists Asa Gray (1810–1888) and John Torrey (1796–1873) and by the Smithsonian Institution and for expedition reports by the United States government.

However, the Inspirationists were soon on the move again as the community outgrew Ebenezer and the outside world encroached. In 1858 a 62-year-old Prestele once again put aside his art to follow his community to Amana, Iowa. His son William Henry did not follow, but moved to New York where he did some work for his father and eventually enlisted in the Civil War. In 1867 he worked for the F. K. Phoenix Nursery in Indiana, joined three years later by Joseph Jr. William Henry went into business for himself until he was offered a position as artist in 1887 in the Pomological Division of the United States Department of Agriculture in Washington, D.C. Dutiful Gottlieb did follow his father. Together they continued to produce engravings of fruits and flowers for nurserymen since they had limited access to eastern botanists. After Joseph's death, Gottlieb continued their work for another eight years until it was no longer in demand.

The exhibition will include original watercolors, lithographic prints (including nurseryman plates), account books and other ephemera from the local collection of Marcelee Konish (a descendant of the Prestele family), William Henry's pomological watercolors from the National Agricultural Library, artworks and books from the Hunt Institute collection, a lithographic stone from the Smithsonian Institution, and a lithographic print of the Inspirationists' journey to America from the Amana Heritage Society.

An 84-page catalogue with 75 color and 2 black and white images will be available at the Institute and the National Agricultural Library. The catalogue includes essays by James J. White, Curator of Art, and Gavin D. R.

Bridson, Bibliographer, Hunt Institute; Peter R. Young, Director, and Susan H. Fugate, Head of Special Collections, National Agricultural Library, United States Department of Agriculture, Beltsville, Maryland; Marcelee Konish, a descendant of Joseph Prestele; Lanny R. Haldy, Executive Director, Amana Heritage Society; and Adrian Higgins, Garden Editor, *Washington Post*. Assistant Curator of Art Lugene Bruno wrote additional text and designed the catalogue. Graphics Manager Frank A. Reynolds did the reproduction photography with a Nikon D1X digital camera.

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. The Institute will be closed 24–27 November and 16 December. The exhibition is open to the public free of charge. For further information, contact the Hunt Institute at 412-268-2434. The exhibition will be on display at the National Agricultural Library from 1 March through 31 May 2006.

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 29,000 books; 25,000 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.

The National Agricultural Library (NAL) is one of the world's largest and most accessible agricultural libraries and plays a vital role in supporting research, education, and applied agriculture. As part of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Agricultural Research Service (ARS), NAL's mission is to collect, preserve, and advance access to agricultural information. Its collections of more than four million items and its leadership role in technology applications combine to make NAL a world leader in agricultural information services.

Special Collections of the National Agricultural Library houses a wealth of materials relating to all aspects of agricultural history, discovery, and advancement. Special Collections is charged with the collecting, preserving, and providing access to unique materials significant to the history of agriculture and the USDA. The combination of rare books, manuscript collections, nursery and seed trade catalogs, original works of art, and photographic collections makes Special Collections a premiere center for historical research.

To expand its reach, NAL is building an electronic repository of USDA materials accessible through the NAL Web site <<http://www.nal.usda.gov/>>.

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