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For Immediate Release

HUNT INSTITUTE PRESENTS
YUUGA: CONTEMPORARY BOTANICAL WATERCOLORS FROM JAPAN
23 March to 30 June 2006

Pittsburgh, PA — The Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation presents the exhibition *Yuuga: Contemporary Botanical Watercolors from Japan* from 23 March to 30 June 2006. *Yuuga* means elegant and gorgeous and aptly describes these contemporary botanical paintings. The exhibition includes 43 works — the majority of them donated — by 33 artists. The artists represented in the exhibition include Junzo Fujishima, Rei Fukuzawa, Tadako Hayashi, Mieko Ishikawa, Michiko Ishiyama, Yoko Kakuta, Yumi Kamataki, Yoshiko Kamei, Seiko Kijima, Sanae Kikuchi, Yuriko Kikuchi, Hidenari Kobayashi, Mariko Kojima, Mieko Konishi, Makiko Makihara, Naomi Morino, Sadao Naito, Yoko Nomura, Yoai Ohta, Takeko Sagara, Masao Saito, Masako Sasaki, Toshi Shibusawa, Akiko Shimizu, Fumiko Sugizaki, Kiyohiko Sugizaki, Kazuko Tajikawa, Kazuto Takahashi, Miyako Takahashi, Kiyoko Tanaka, Yoko Uchijo, Keita Yonezu and Keiko Yoshida.

Flowers have always played an important role in Japanese culture. Indeed, botanical art classes now are offered in cultural centers throughout Japan. In recent years The Japan Association of Botanical Illustration has encouraged artists, produced exhibitions with catalogues, and issued a journal. JABI has stimulated additional exhibitions and books, even bringing exhibitions to Japan from abroad. As a result, Japan easily ranks in the top half dozen countries to actively promote the genre of botanical art. Since mounting the exhibition *Talking in Flowers: Japanese Botanical Art* in 1982, the Hunt Institute has been interested in the subject. We are delighted to take this opportunity to display our growing collection of Japanese botanical art.

We are unaware of any other exhibition catalogue produced in the United States on this subject, and we are very pleased to have been able to produce a fully illustrated exhibition catalogue, which was made possible through the generous support of numerous donors. The catalogue includes a preface by James J. White, curator of art at the Hunt Institute, and the essay “Contemporary botanical art in Japan and its historical background” by Kazunori Kurokawa, honorary curator of Hunt Institute and honorary director of the American Society of Botanical Artists as well as an important figure in JABI. Assistant Curator of Art Lugene Bruno designed the catalogue and compiled the biographical information about the artists. Graphics Manager Frank A. Reynolds did the reproduction photography with a Nikon D1X digital camera.

Weekly until the end of the exhibition on 30 June, Dr. Norbert Pietrzak, former president of the Pittsburgh Bonsai Society, will provide a bonsai from his personal collection. The first bonsai shown was a 21-year-old *Ficus benjamina*. Along with this traditional Japanese art form is a selection of *suiseki* he has collected. In the exhibition text Mr. Pietrzak explains that “The Japanese Islands are composed of various rock formations such as igneous, sedimentary and metamorphic, ranging from the Silurian and lower Paleozoic to the Recent Era. The Japanese have traditionally enjoyed the beauty of nature and so they searched for stones resembling steep mountains, rapids, waterfalls and seascapes. They called these

stones *suiseki*, sometimes adorned with tiny clay or metal homes, bridges or boats. The Japanese place the stones in categories such as hut stones, figure stones, distant mountain or chrysanthemum stones. They are never altered—they are viewed as found. In Japan, *Suiseki* are used for meditation thus taking us away from the stress of everyday life. An old Japanese man might carry a small stone in his pocket. He feels the stone for its shape and texture. This keeps him in constant contact with nature.”

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 1–5 p.m.; Sunday, 1–4 p.m. (except 14–16 April, 21 May, 28–29 May). The exhibition is open to the public free of charge. For further information, contact the Hunt Institute at 412-268-2434.

In conjunction with the exhibition at Hunt Institute, Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens will display *Fuuryu: Japanese Botanical Watercolors from the School of Yoshiko Kamei* in its new rotunda gallery from 1 March to 30 June 2006. The exhibition includes 24 artworks by Ms. Yoshiko Kamei and her students based on the plants represented in their traditional family emblems, which are passed from generation to generation. In the emblem the plant image is reduced to its essence and used on kimonos and decorative items.

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*.

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