

***Botanical Art***

*by Marilyn K. Alaimo*

***Botanical Serigraphs: The Gene Bauer Collection* by Gene Bauer. Redlands, CA: ESRI Press, 2010. Hardcover, 145 pp., ISBN 978-1-58948-253-1, \$40.00.**

A native of California, artist Gene Bauer presents in this elegantly illustrated book photographs of what remains of her collection of hand-printed serigraphs. Serigraphy, the art of silk screen painting, has been the focus of her artistic skills over a lifetime. Taken from her observations of plants in the wild and in the public gardens of California, the sixty-one serigraphs in this work appeared as illustrations in booklets she wrote while serving on the Board of the California Garden Clubs, Inc. She reports that her subjects have included “two birds and almost every type of plant: tree, shrub, [herbaceous] perennial, cactus, saprophyte, vine, bulb, [and] grass.” These grew in a wide range of environments across the state. Unfortunately, others of her original art collection were destroyed in a fire at her home in 1997. The texts accompanying photographs contain descriptions of the individual plant, where it was found in her travels, and her personal notes on its genus.

***Botanical Drawing in Color: A Basic Guide to Mastering Realistic Form and Naturalistic Color* by Wendy Hollender. New York: Watson-Guption Publications, 2010. Paper, 144 pp., ISBN 978-0-8230-0706-6, \$24.99.**

Artist Wendy Hollender, nationally recognized for her botanical art, guides the reader in developing skills in botanical illustration through text and drawings. She reviews the fundamentals of the subject, beginning with appropriate art supplies, and then addresses value and form before considering the topics of color and perspective. She encourages the reader to study the form and function of plants in order to master drawing techniques. Accompanying each lesson plan is a series of drawings that demonstrate her clear instructions.

***The Art of Natural History: Illustrated Treatises and Botanical Paintings, 1400-1850.* By Therese O'Malley and Amy R. W. Meyers, eds. New Haven, CT: National Gallery of Art, Washington, Publisher; Yale University Press, Distributor, 2008. Paper, 279 pp., ISBN 978-0-3000-16024-6, \$45.00.**

This volume is a celebration of both art and natural history. In this lavishly illustrated text, editors Therese O'Malley and Amy Meyers direct attention to the link between images and texts when artists who were naturalists or gardeners sought to convey scientific knowledge through paintings and studies of plants and natural history subjects. Contributing authors of essays in this volume center their thoughts on the importance of direct observation of a specimen by the artist or artisan and its relationship to the texts. A particularly interesting chapter considers the role of women artists and illustrators during this period.

***The Art of Plant Evolution* by W. John Kress and Shirley Sherwood. Richmond, Surrey, UK: Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, 2009. Paper, 320 pp., ISBN 978-1-84246-417-5, \$41.00.**

Eighty-four artists depict in 136 paintings the botanical relationships between plant forms as identified in the most up to date sequencing in the scientific endeavors through DNA analysis. In the introduction, the distinguished botanist W. John Kress speaks of these evolutionary relationships and the current classification of major groups. Art expert Shirley Sherwood who selected the art works relates the individual artists' backgrounds and the significance of each beautiful painting.