



Silver Eye Center for Photography
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Botanical Images by Pittsburgh Area Photographers On View Now at Silver Eye

(Pittsburgh, PA) Silver Eye Center for Photography proudly presents ***250 Years of Plants: Photographs by Regional Photographers*** on view **June 25 – September 13, 2008**. As a visual gift to the city of Pittsburgh on its 250th anniversary, Silver Eye presents new botanical images from sixteen Western Pennsylvania area photographers as well as a few glimpses into historically significant gardens from Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation. Exhibiting photographers include: **Sue Abramson, Gayle Bair, Ruthanne F. Bauerle, Mary Jane Bent, Tim Fabian, John A. Fobes, Claudia Giannini, Gerald Hare, Stephen Y. Lai, Amy Kathleen Lamb, JoAnne Lightner, Anne Medsger, Dan Mohan, Duane Rieder, Donald M. Robinson, and Fiona Wilson**. Silver Eye Center for Photography, 1015 East Carson St., Pittsburgh, PA 15203. **Summer Gallery Hours:** Wednesday, Thursday, Friday: Noon – 6:00 p.m., Saturday, 11:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. or by appointment.

The **Opening Reception** will take place on Thursday, June 26, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. Come meet the artists and help launch Silver Eye's summer exhibition. Members and students free; Non-members \$5.00. Refreshments will be served. 1015 East Carson Street, South Side.

250 Years of Plants: Photographs by Regional Photographers celebrates the splendor and richness of our region's flora. The botanical works on display range from recent photographic studies of locally grown flowers such as lilies of the valley and forsythia, to Polaroid film emulsion lifts of Japanese Nettle and Norway Maple Seeds on watercolor paper, to several views of historic private gardens from Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation, Carnegie Mellon University. The garden views from Hunt Institute come from a collection of hand colored glass lantern slides that Rachel Hunt used for giving slide lectures on area gardens.

The photographers in this exhibition were specifically asked to capture subject matter that was from the Western Pennsylvania region. Some visited nearby trails and gardens such as Trillium Trail in Fox Chapel and Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens, while others were drawn to their own backyards. Exhibiting photographer John A. Fobes explains, "I gathered my subject specimens within a fifty-yard radius of the studio door. Photographer Tim Fabian adds, "As a landscape photographer, I have always believed that great photographs can be made within fifty feet of my house." This approach is reminiscent of the legendary California photographer Imogen Cunningham (1883 – 1976) who is internationally celebrated for plant forms she documented from her garden while she was raising small children.

All methods and kinds of botanical images are on display. The photographic styles and techniques vary from one artist to the next. Some photographers have worked digitally, while others have created one-of-a-kind silver gelatin photograms, Selenium toned silver chlorobromide emulsion prints, Polaroid emulsion lifts, and more. The matted prints in the exhibition are for sale and their purchases support both the artists and Silver Eye Center for Photography, which is a nonprofit gallery.

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Exhibition co-curators Linda Benedict-Jones and Paul g. Wiegman invited local photographers to provide a "congratulatory photographic bouquet" to Pittsburgh. This exhibition will also continue a Silver Eye tradition of showcasing the talents of image-makers currently working in the region. Silver Eye Executive Director Linda Benedict-Jones explains, "Silver Eye schedules a wide variety of exhibitions for our Main Gallery and every year or so we are gratified to be able to highlight the work of Pittsburgh area photographers. We did this with "Assignment: Six Pittsburgh Photographers" that focused on professional photographers; "A is for Aperture" that presented images by area educators; and "Pittsburgh NOW" which generated new images by photojournalists and documentary style photographers. In that sense, "Botanical Works by Regional Photographers" is not only our offering for the city's anniversary, but is also part of a continuum of exhibitions dedicated to the depth of photographic richness we have right here in Western Pennsylvania."

The photographs on view offer a chance for viewers to pause, reflect and perhaps celebrate in the same way the artists did when taking their botanical pictures. Contributing artist Anne Medsger describes her work, "The photographs in this series are all of flowers that have announced the arrival of spring for generations of Pittsburghers. All are from my garden. Because it is a relatively small garden, each blossom is cause for celebration and is worthy of close examination." Silver Eye is eager to honor this city's 250th anniversary and to celebrate with this summer 2008 group exhibition.

The exhibition is complemented by several upcoming public programs, including: **Exhibiting Photographers Speak** at Silver Eye on July 17 and August 21, 6:30 p.m., **Phipps Photographic Safari with Dan Mohan** on July 20, 10:00 a.m., **Wild Flower Count with Cameras** at Trillium Trail in Fox Chapel on August 2, 9:00 a.m., and a talk on **Photography at Hunt Institute** on August 6, 7:00 p.m. at Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation.

Exhibition Co-Curators

Linda Benedict-Jones has served as the Executive Director of Silver Eye Center for Photography since 1999. She was Curator of the Polaroid Collection in Cambridge, Massachusetts from 1989 to 1993. She has also taught photographic history classes at Carnegie Mellon University, the Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh Filmmakers, Harvard Extension School, Massachusetts College of Art and Northeastern University. A graduate of Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Master's Degree Program in Visual Studies, Benedict-Jones has worked as a practicing photographer and photographic historian.

Paul g. Wiegman was a Vice President for Science & Stewardship with Western Pennsylvania Conservancy for 28 years. His work there focused on protection of rare and endangered plants and plant communities in Pennsylvania. He is now semi-retired as a freelance naturalist/writer/photographer. Wiegman's photography has appeared in *Time-Life* and *Readers Digest* books as well as many other publications. He has regular columns in the *Pittsburgh Tribune Review*, *Focus Magazine* and *Pittsburgh Quarterly*. Recent photographic work focuses on flora, local natural history, and Phipps Conservatory in Pittsburgh. He has exhibited regionally and his images are in many private collections.

To request an interview with the co-curators and/or artists, please call Amanda Bloomfield at 412/431.1810, ext. 12 or email her at abloomfield@silvereve.org.

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The mission of Silver Eye Center for Photography is to serve the public through exposure to a wide range of work by locally, nationally and internationally recognized photographers. A Pittsburgh institution since 1985, Silver Eye Center for Photography is the oldest non-profit organization in Western Pennsylvania dedicated solely to the understanding, appreciation, education, and promotion of photography as an art form and as an expressive form of visual communication.

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