

WSBI

ISSUE 7
August
2023

Welcome to your August Newsletter.

It has been a very busy year for WSBI to date. It will shortly be time for our annual exhibition so we are now planning and organising all aspects of this event.

We have been delighted to host artists, Cath Hodsman and Jackie Isard, who delivered highly successful workshops in March and April and you can read more about these later. This year we have welcomed new Society members with our Facebook page and WSBI website continue to attract great interest.

We continue with our long term plans concerning the Florilegium for the Llanfrechfa Grange Walled Garden and the Botanical Art Worldwide collaboration with the Association of Botanical Artists. We hope that both established and new members will be fully involved in these exciting opportunities over the coming months.

Unfortunately planned Workshops hosted by Penny Brown and Ros Franklin have had to be unavoidably postponed. We are currently looking at alternative presenters for workshops in autumn.

Our association with Tredegar House and the National Trust continues to attract many interested visitors (and often their dogs) to our painting days. During these sessions we have an open door policy to allow people to drop in and find out a little about botanical art. We have had many Interesting discussions in the last few months! Dates for our coming painting days can be found at the end of the Newsletter.

At our Annual Botanical Art Exhibition we will be including a section to include 'Work in progress and sketchbooks'. This will allow beginners and improvers an opportunity to show how they develop their skills and explore techniques and compositions.

It would be great if you could contribute even if you are not otherwise exhibiting. Let us know by 4th August if you would like to take part by e-mailing Linda at

lajoseph@yahoo.co.uk

This is how I'm trying to find the right yellow and greens for the flower and leaves. It helps to study the structure of the flowers, berries, stalk and leaves of this Hypericum - St John's Wort. *Sian Phillips*



Crop Diversity and the Botanical Artist Talk by Carol Woodin

Julia Trickey hosts regular talks by international botanical artists and botanists. On 22nd June this year, Carol Woodin was invited to discuss Crop Diversity in relation to the Botanical Art Worldwide Exhibition which will be held in May 2025. Carol is a freelance botanical artist and is currently the Director of Exhibitions for the American Society of Botanical Artists.

She explained that there are 4 categories of plants from which to select a subject to paint. These are:

Heritage Crops: these should have been in cultivation for a minimum of 50 years and are crops that are not in use in large-scale monocultural agriculture.

Crops Wild Relatives: these include wild species that can be hybridised with cultivated crops to impart a new characteristic to the cultivated crop.

Ancient Crops: these are crops that have been cultivated for hundreds or thousands of years, e.g. Sorghum, faro wheat, barley, cowpeas and nuts.

Foraged Foods: includes foods cultivated, gathered and selected by indigenous people from around the world, er. Taro, maize, amaranth and pumpkin.

As an example, Carol discussed the selection of apple varieties which would be suitable to paint for the exhibition and then continued to talk about her interest in this area showing some of her paintings of heritage food plants. She also displayed paintings by other artists as examples of suitable subjects for each of the 4 categories. These included:

Heritage Crops: 3 paintings of squash varieties and an aubergine. **Crops Wild Relatives:** wild fig.

Ancient Crops: Emmer Wheat. **Foraged Foods:** a painting of 4 foraged wild relatives of melons and cucumbers native to the Kalahari desert.

Carol completed her talk with a short video illustrating how she went about painting Peruvian Purple Corn, a watercolour on stretched vellum. The finished painting can be seen on her website.

Linda Joseph is on the steering committee representing the WSBI and has already given us an overview of our participation in the exhibition.

www.assocbotanicalartists.com

This is a particularly relevant website for the UK as it has very useful information about the British Exhibition criteria 'Looking Back for Our Future'.

There is a downloadable Artist Pack, 10 pages in all, which includes relevant dates, painting dimensions, colour of mountboard, materials etc. It also includes more examples of plants eligible for painting for this exhibition.

Useful websites include:

Botanical Art Worldwide information:

www.botanicalartworldwide.info

Carols' website:

www.carolwoodinart.com

Association of Botanical Artists:

www.assocbotanicalartists.com

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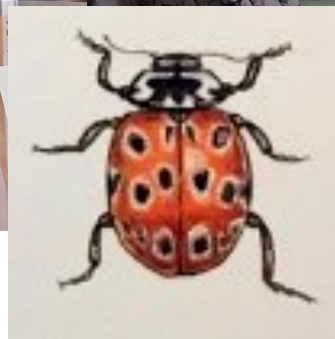
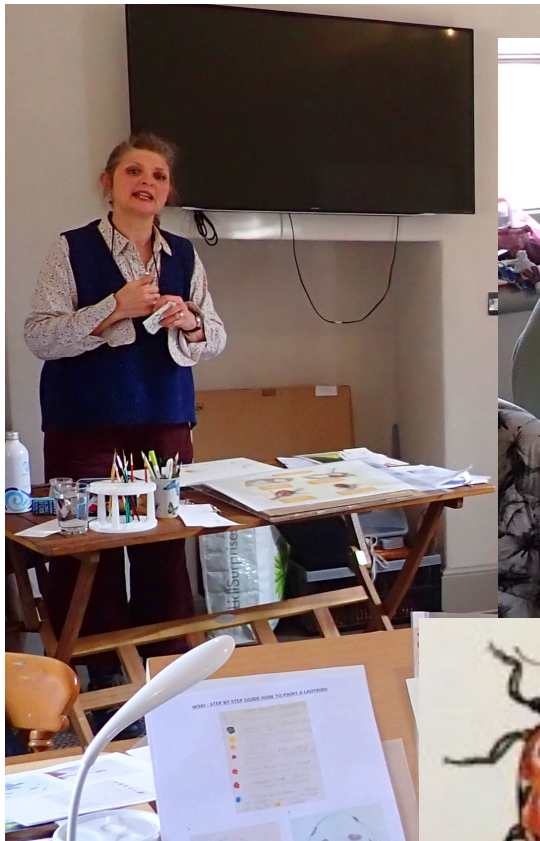
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Article by Barbara Barnett

Some examples of Victorian Botanical illustration

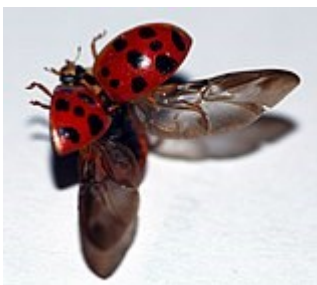


Ladybirds. A Cath Hodsman Workshop.



It was great to welcome Cath Hodsman back to Tredegar House last April. This time our subject was the ladybird. ***Coccinellidae***

It was fascinating to learn about this most complex creature. The variety of colours including red, yellow, orange and brown and different markings make them distinctive from other beetles. They, like many species are under threat from pesticides and invasive species but they remain one of the insects most beneficial to ecological growth.



They are also surprisingly difficult to paint. Using microscopes it was easier to understand the structure of the insect but even though we were painting or ladybirds much larger than life size they proved to be tricky to say the least. Fortunately Cath guided us step by step through the drawing underpainting and addition of detail sometimes using only the smallest of brushes.



Barbara B



Sian P

The paintings on the left by Barbara B and I are both unfinished but give you a good idea how building up layers of colour using small brush marks can give the ladybird carapace its depth and shine. The paintings were approx. 5 x 4 cms in size.

Sian Phillips

Botaniphoria: A Cabinet of Botanical Curiosities*(Reviewed by Linda Joseph)*

Author: Asuka Hishiki

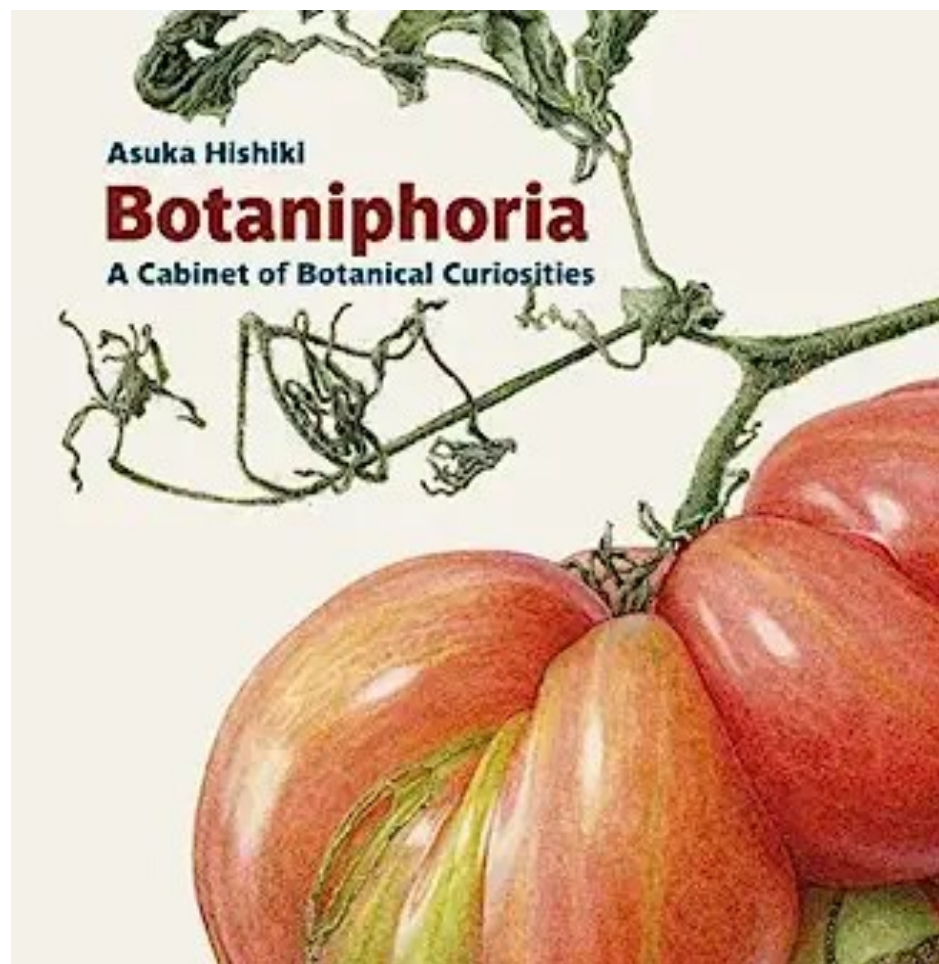
Publisher: Two Rivers Press 2023

ISBN: 978-1-915048-10-3

Cover price: £17.99

This book is nothing short of fascinating. If the title isn't enough to spark your interest, then I'm sure the contents will.

Asuka Hishiki is a renowned artist with collections held in the USA at The Huntington Library, Art Museum and Botanical Gardens in California and the Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation, Pennsylvania. Examples of her work can also be seen at the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, London.



The way the book is written makes it seem like Asuka is talking directly to you about her motivation, the subjects that interest her and how she approaches her work to produce wonderful representations of very complex fruits, vegetables, flowers, leaves roots and seeds. In fact, anything that caught her attention, sometimes the weird and wonderful that have 'grown differently'.

Among the many illustrations and narratives in this book, these are a few that caught my eye: a collection of cacti and I particularly liked the chapter on Working with Live Subjects. These are good

examples of what can go wrong in nature but somehow the subject carries on growing and thriving. Insects burrow into things causing scars and holes appear in leaves where larvae feed and grow. Still the plant carries on. Leaves curl as they age or become dehydrated. As Asuka calls in Part II: it's a 'Messy Business – badly scarred, desperately tangled and horribly bushy.'

Then, the book looks at the complex and vital relationship between plants and insects – how Insects need the plants for reproduction and food and how the plants fight back so that they can complete their reproductive cycles.

Throughout this lovely, colourful book Asuka brings to life subjects that could so easily be discarded and overlooked. She also picks live subjects that us lesser mortals would think: 'I can't draw or paint that!'

Finally, to prove that IT can be done she gives us insider knowledge about her Secret Weapons or What's on My Desk.

Here she lays out her travels through the trial and error of using equipment and techniques to inspire other artists at all levels and abilities to just give it a go. Asuka let's us into her physical, emotional, and sensory world to tap into the best equipment, feelings, and senses to produce an amazing, finished illustration. Enjoy!

Available from Amazon at £13.69

PIERRE-JOSEPH REDOUTÉ: THE BOOK OF FLOWERS (reviewed by Linda Joseph)

Author: H. Walter Lack

Publisher: Taschen 2021

(to celebrate their 40th anniversary)

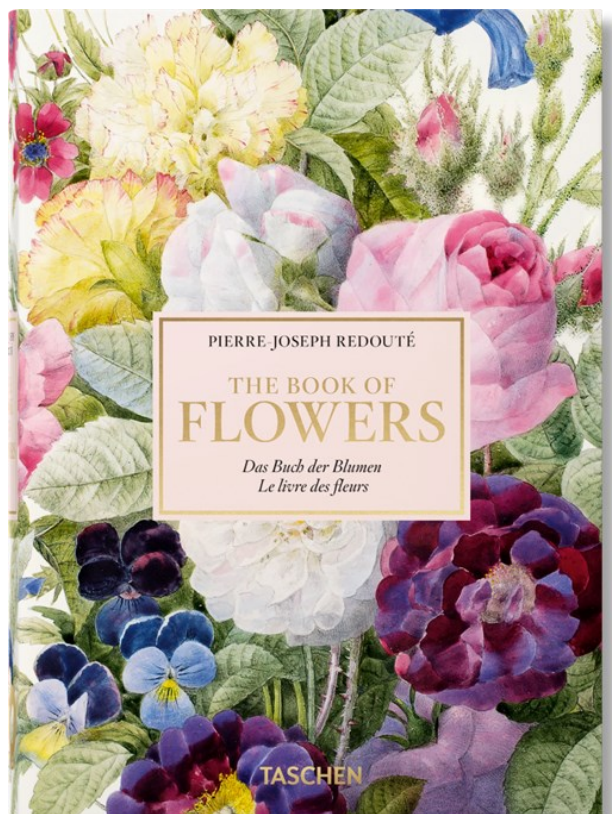
ISBN: 978-3-8365-5665-1

Cover price: £25

This book was published 2 years ago during the Covid pandemic – but I thought a review might be useful, in case anyone missed it (like me!).

This lovely book looks at the life, times, and illustrations of the man they call 'the Raphael of flowers': Pierre-Joseph Redouté. This book is an adaptation by Taschen publishers and gathers the finest engravings from his most important works such as: *Selection of the Most Beautiful Blooms* and *Branches with the Finest Fruits*, to produce this beautiful book to celebrate the publishing house's 40th anniversary.

Finest Fruits, to produce this beautiful book to celebrate the publishing house's 40th anniversary. And what a fitting way to celebrate! The images recall the greenhouses and gardens of Paris in the early 1800s, when the city was described as 'the Capital of botany', patronised by the Kings and Queens of France.



You can take a stroll through this book (parts are written in English, French and German) and imagine you are walking through those amazing gardens of the 17th and 18th centuries dressed in the latest fashions of the time – the very opulent, very rich aristocratic gardens that were not for the common people. This book opens that world to everyone – it has it all: history, language, plants, and art. What more do you need? For starters, how about: The Lilies, then



The Roses and finally, a Selection of the Most Beautiful Flowers. Then there's the historical references and pictures of the gardens themselves. Redouté and his Illustrations of plants and animals have fascinated me since I was a child and inspired me to study natural history, so having a portrait of the real man at the beginning of the book is very special indeed.



PIERRE-JOSEPH REDOUTÉ

By Louis Léopold Boilly

Available from Amazon at £21.61



Rosa moschata (musk rose)

Article by Louise Hodgson

I very recently visited The Ashmolean Museum in Oxford where I saw an intriguing exhibition. Two contemporary artists had been commissioned to look at the museum's historical collections and use these as inspiration for their own work.

Totally different aspects were chosen with completely different styles but both sets of work were very large.

I mention this exhibition because one artist took her inspiration from the Dutch/ Flemish flower paintings. Her works are full of vibrant colours and abstraction and so far away from our idea of botanical painting but this is how she was able to reimagine floral art. And her name, amazingly, is Flora!

You can see her four visually stunning works by visiting the Ashmolean Museum on-line.



Left: Detail from Flora Yukhnovich's Honey Trap, 2022, inspired by artworks in the Ashmolean's Still Life Paintings gallery, such as Willem van Aelst's A Vase of Flowers with a Watch (right)

Article by Sundari Sivagamasundari

I recently took part in a 2-day online Zoom class with DrawBotanical.com.

We were taken through lots of basic techniques for using colour pencils and also introduced to a technique called 'Grisaille' in which an artist uses a monochromatic palette in greys, or similar neutral grey colours as the base for subsequent drawing or painting. We were following Wendy Hollander's method of using water colour pencils as a base.

We completed spheres and a tomato with received plenty of positive critiquing from Sam and Pam our course Tutors. We also can go back and review the video as many times as we like. The only drawback to the class was that the course started at 3 pm EST which was 8 pm here and went on until midnight, however I enjoyed it and may get few more packages from their website.

DrawBotanical.com is an American based website offering a variety of courses with feed back from simple drawing techniques to more specific tutorials such as:-

How to draw flowers, fruits, and leaves. Single light source toning technique.

Principles of perspective for drawing flowers. The fundamentals of plant anatomy.

Coloured pencil and watercolour combined techniques. Colour Theory of the natural world

Fine detail and finishing with Jackie Isard
A-2 day workshop at Tredegar House.



This workshop, presented by renowned botanical artist Jackie Isard, was inspiring. It seems unlikely that painting such a small subject would prove so challenging but it was! The 2 days were quite intensive. After producing a line drawing of the small *Acanthus* bract we explored colour mixing and matching using the 8 colours Jackie recommended and demonstrated. We layered paint to build up shadow and highlight and used a magnifying glass to study the form of the bract closely. As you will see from these photographs we all learned so much.

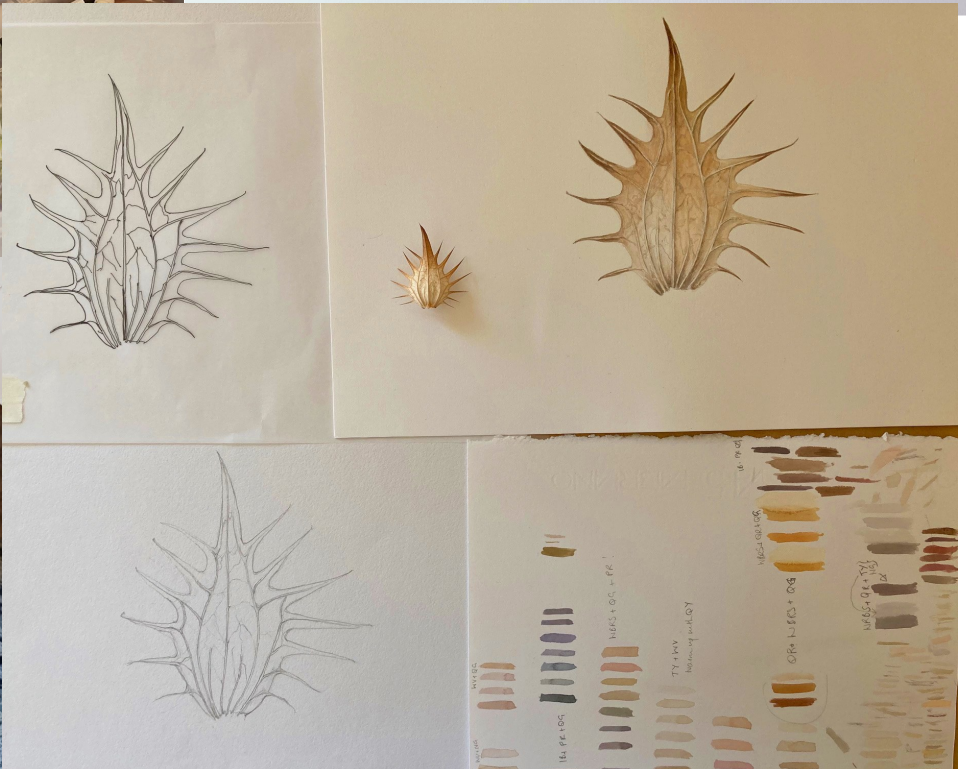


Jackie demonstrated her use of a limited colour pallet used to Paint the Acanthus bract. Her techniques for colour mixing and paint application methods were very helpful.

We all received some excellent advice and guidance throughout the workshop.

I'm sure I can speak for all of us when I say that we had a fantastic weekend and will be very pleased to welcome back Jackie to present another fascinating Workshop.

Sian Phillips



WSBI Programme 2023

August to December

AUGUST	12th	Painting day	10.30am—4.00pm
	26th Aug-2nd Sept	Exhibition week	10.30am—4.00pm
SEPTEMBER	9th	Painting day	10.30am—4.00pm
	23rd	Painting day	
OCTOBER	7th	Painting day	10.30am—4.00pm
	21st	Painting day	10.30am—4.00pm
NOVEMBER	4th	Painting day	10.30am—4.00pm
	18th	Painting day	10.30am—4.00pm
DECEMBER	2nd	Painting day	10.30am—4.00pm
	16th	Painting day	10.30am—4.00pm

Some of the above dates may be subject to change as our planning programme is in development.

To become a member of the Wales Society of Botanical Illustrators please use the following information:-

Annual membership is £45.00 (to join for the remainder of 2023 £20.00)

To pay by cheque please send the following information:-

Full name, address, email address, telephone and Mobil numbers to WSBI Treasurer, Barbara Taylor at:-

34 Poplar Avenue, New Inn, Torfaen . NP4 0EX

If you would prefer to pay by Bank Transfer, please forward your name, address, email, home and mobile telephone number to Barbara at:- **buntytaylor@yahoo.com**

Reference: Wales Society of Botanical Illustrators (WSBI)

Sort Code: 523056

Acc. No: 40032841

You will receive confirmation of payment by email.

For more information about meetings and courses or if you would like to put images of your own work on the WSBI website e-mail **phillips.carolyn@sky.com**