



Auricula Queen Bee Credit: Brigitte Daniel

Gold Standard: Royal Horticultural Society Gold Medal Winners

Gillian Barlow
Brigitte Daniel
Annie Farrer
Regine Hagedorn
Fiona Strickland
Ann Swan

This exhibition is intended to show the range and quality of botanical art as it is practised today, using the work of six artists who have received Gold Medals for their work from the Royal Horticultural Society.

Botanical art has developed in many directions over the past 500 years, and has been effected by technological developments (the microscope, changes in pigments) and by botanical theory (which parts of the plant are relevant to its classification?). Botanical artists have extended their work into detailed plant anatomy, the study of germination, and the portrayal of plants in relation to their environment. Nonetheless, one consistent purpose has always remained central: identifying plants. The botanical artist should be able to depict a plant so that all the information needed to establish its identity can be found in its portrait.

The RHS has staged botanical art competitions for 80 years, and its Picture Committee awards a range of medals from Bronze to Gold to artists' presentations. The Committee looks, first and foremost, for accuracy of depiction and the ability to draw well. This means that everything that can be seen should be shown, that the features that distinguish one species from another should be visible, and that the colouring of all parts of the plant should be accurate. After that, the quality of composition and presentation are taken into consideration. It is here that botanical artists of the current generation differ most from their predecessors. The botanical art of the last quarter-century has shown a wide variety of experiments in displaying plants, and the works in this exhibition show some of the different approaches that have resulted.

The six artists – Gillian Barlow, Brigitte Daniel, Annie Farrer, Regine Hagedorn, Fiona Strickland, and Ann Swan have all received the highest award that the RHS can give for botanical art. This exhibition will give the visitor a taste of botanical art, using the best standard available today.

This exhibition runs until 12 April 2010.

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www.rhs.org.uk