

## ***The Highgrove Florilegium at UJ***



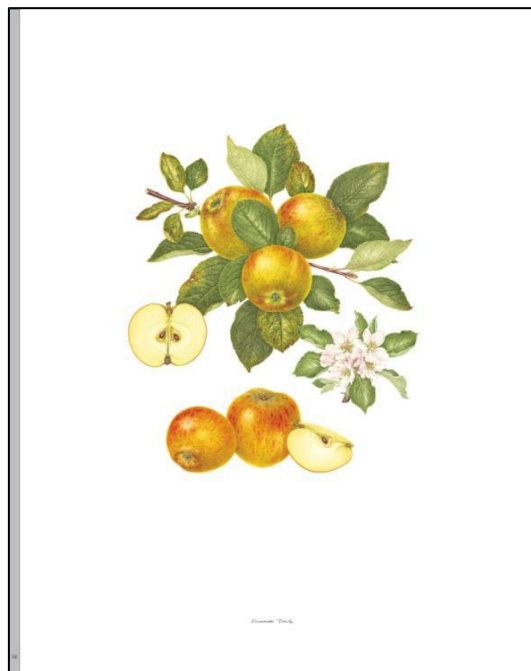
*The Highgrove Florilegium* was purchased for the Archives and Special Collections Department by the Faculty of Humanities in 2010. What, you may ask, is a "florilegium" and where and what is Highgrove? A florilegium is literally a gathering of flowers and when the term was first used in mediaeval times, it was used figuratively and meant a compilation of excerpts from other writings. From the 17th century onwards, the term florilegium has been used more literally to refer to a book of botanical illustrations from a specific garden, voyage or geographic area.

This brings us to the second question. What is Highgrove? Highgrove is an estate in Gloucestershire, England and is the family home of The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall. This begs a third question: What is a South African university doing with a florilegium of an English estate? In answering the third question a short history and description of the estate itself and *The Highgrove Florilegium* follows.



### **Highgrove Estate, Gloucestershire**

The Highgrove Estate was purchased in 1980 by The Prince of Wales from Harold Wilson's (a former British prime minister) son, Maurice, a Conservative Party MP. Prince Charles is passionate about organic and sustainable gardening. From the start he was determined that Highgrove would become entirely organic. He has overseen the Estate's development into one of the foremost organic gardens in Britain. Many British plants facing extinction, such as species of apples no longer cultivated for general consumption, are preserved on the Estate. Many foreign plants that have become part of the English garden including the arum lily, indigenous to southern Africa, and African hemp, indigenous to the Eastern Cape, are also cultivated.



**Ribston Pippin apples by Elisabeth Dowle**

The Estate serves as an example of sustainability and biodiversity; recycling everything possible and encouraging the proliferation of wildlife such as dragonflies and rare bumble bees. A reed-bed sewage system used to process the wastewater on the estate provides a marvellous habitat for wildlife. A wild flower meadow, instigated by Dame Miriam Rothschild, who was one of England's leading biodiversity champions, is another example of the way in which floral and faunal biodiversity is encouraged on the Estate.

The idea for a florilegium of the plants on the Highgrove Estate came out of a botanical illustration course taught by Anne-Marie Evans (an internationally renowned British botanical artist and teacher) at the English Gardening School. Over six years before the first volume of the *Highgrove Florilegium* was published on 21 April 2008, botanical artists from all over the world were approached to paint the plants of the Highgrove Estate and submit them to a panel of experts for selection. The Prince and the former Highgrove head gardener, David Howard, selected a representative sample of plants from which the artists could choose. Selection of the artworks was rigorous and from the submissions made, only 30% of the artists approached were chosen to have their works published in the *Florilegium*. Among the artists selected are four South Africans: Gillian Condy (artist in residence at the South African National Biodiversity Institute), Ann Harris-Deppe (a botanical and small fauna artist who also runs a botanical art and porcelain painting school), Vicki Thomas (a botanical artist and lecturer in botanical art) and Diana Carmichael (who died in 2010). All four artists have published extensively, have many awards to their names, have exhibited their works and have their works in international collections. It is small wonder that they were selected to have their work published in such a prestigious publication as *The Highgrove Florilegium*. (There is one other artist who has a South and southern African connection, namely Margaret King, MBE, who was born in Zimbabwe and studied art at Rhodes University, Grahamstown. She lives in London.)



**White Bleeding Heart by Yumi Kamataki**

Given the many artists involved, it is not surprising that the artwork varies in style and subject. Sometimes entire plants are painted and sometimes just one part, such as the leaves of the liquidambar tree. Trees and grasses, vegetables and fruit are interspersed amongst the flowers. As can be seen in some of the examples here, illustrations of perfect plants have often been avoided.



**Red Baron onion by Amanda Ward**

The making of the two volumes themselves on the other hand was a purely English affair. It is an example of printing and binding at its best. From the 100% cotton paper to the gold finishing, from the leather and marbled paper of the book's cover to the felt covers for the protection of the books, everything was made to the highest standards by some of England's top craftspeople.



**Working on the book's spine**

*The Highgrove Florilegium* published by Addison Publications in 2008 and 2009 is a two-volume work consisting of 61 plates of prints from original watercolours in the first volume and 63 plates in the second volume painted by 71 artists from Canada to Japan to Australia. It is not only a work of great beauty but contains scientifically accurate information on each plant provided by the Natural History Museum, London. Prince Charles wrote the preface and has signed every copy. The money raised by the sale of the books goes to the Prince's Charities Foundation. It is a celebration of international artistic talent, a garden that is seen as a shining example of organic and sustainable gardening and biodiversity, and of craftsmanship at its finest.

The University of Johannesburg is proud to own number 118 of the 175 sets that were published in which top South African botanical artists are represented as well as some of South Africa's flora.



**HRH Prince Charles being presented with volume 1 of his copy (No. 1) of the *Highgrove Florilegium***

**The South African Artists** (from Addison Publications website)

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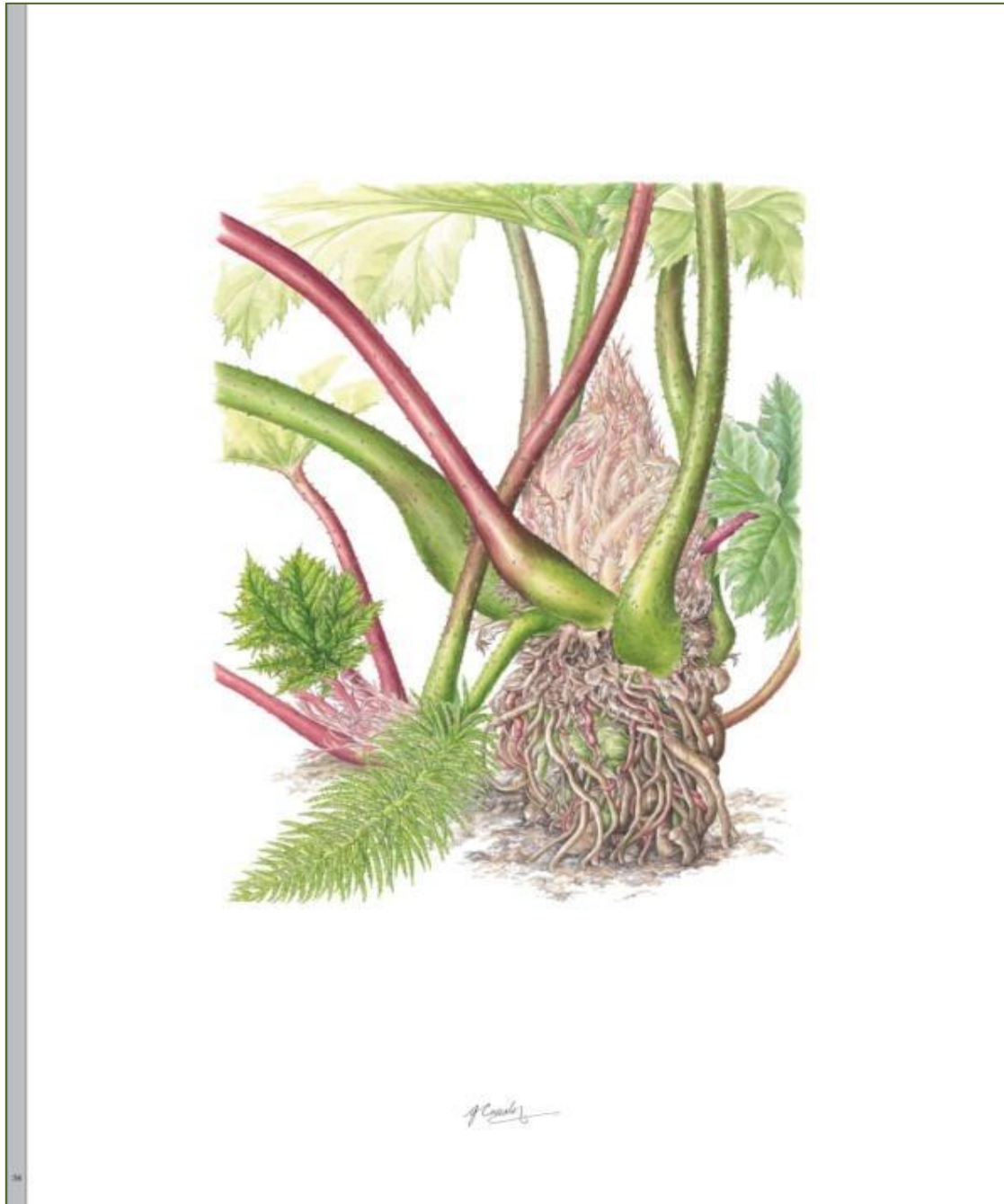
**The South African Artists** (from Addison Publications website)

**Diana Carmichael** b. Penrhyn Bay, Wales 1926. d. Johannesburg, South Africa 2010. Diana trained in Fine Art. She worked as an industrial designer and later became an art teacher, working in Zimbabwe. Diana moved to South Africa in 1985. She has attended Botanical Master Classes with Jenny Phillips, Siriol Sherlock and Katie Lee as well as Woodcut with John Moore. She also studied for six years with printmaker Phillipa Hobbs specialising in detailed dry point etching of natural history subjects. In 2008 Diana's painting of a *Lachenalia* won the Purchase Award in the Natural History Museum of New York State and she also exhibited at the Kirstenbosch Biennale and in the Oppenheimer Exhibition of Insects. Diana ran her own art studio in Riverclub, Johannesburg, teaching the application of all media. She passed away in October 2010.



**African Hemp by Diana Carmichael**

**Gillian Condy** b. Kenya 1952. Gillian trained as a scientific illustrator at Middlesex Polytechnic followed by completing a Masters from the Royal College of Art. After working in Botswana she took up a position as the Artist in Residence at the South Africa National Biodiversity Institute. Gillian has participated in over ninety group exhibitions worldwide, including those of the Royal Horticultural Society in London (seven Gold and four Silver-Gilt Medals) and the Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation. Her work is represented in the Shirley Sherwood Collection and she has won a Gold Medal at Kirstenbosch and a Jill Smythies Award at The Linnean Society of London. In August 1996 she presented then President Nelson Mandela with a painting of 'Mandela's Gold,' named after him.



**Brazilian Giant Rhubarb by Gillian Condy**

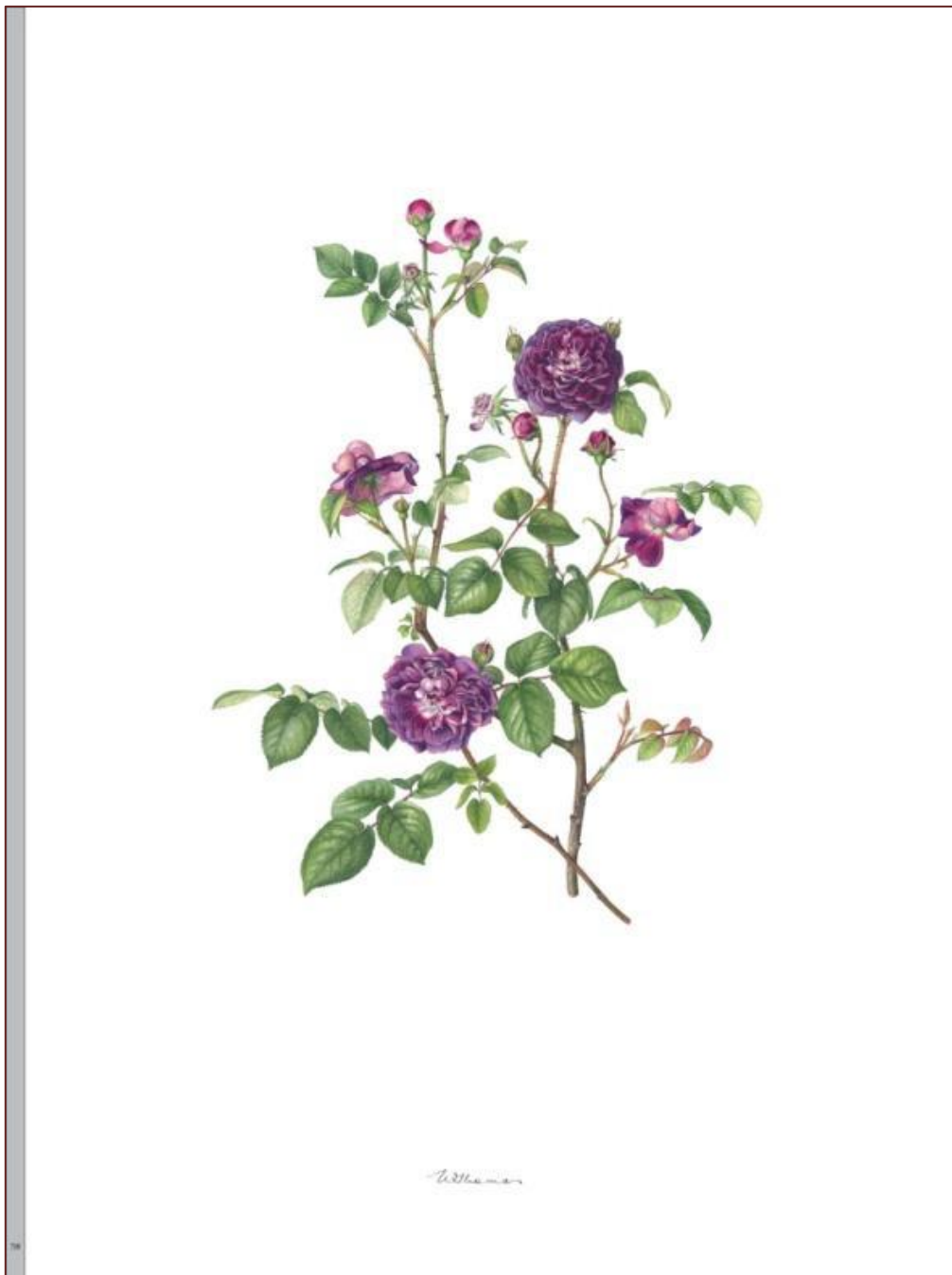
**Ann Judith Harris-Deppe** b. Accra, Ghana 1947. A porcelain painter and teacher since 1980, she began botanical painting in 1999. Her work is held in the South African National Biodiversity Institute and she has been awarded Silver and Bronze Medals at South Africa's Kirstenbosch Biennale. Ann's subjects include plants, pollinators, insects, birds and small mammals. She is intrigued by detail and has found that these subjects cannot be painted without acknowledging a Higher Being. Ann now lives in South Africa and opened a botanical and porcelain painting school in Johannesburg in 2003.



**Rosy-leaf Sage by Ann Harris-Deppe**



**Vicki Thomas** b. South Africa 1951. Vicki lives in Cape Town and has taught botanical illustration at the University of Cape Town and at Stellenbosch University. Vicki has had many artworks published in scientific journals and in two books dedicated to botanical illustration. She has Gold and Silver Medals from the Kirstenbosch Biennale and a Gold Medal for a group exhibition at the Royal Horticultural Society. Her paintings are in collections around the world, including several in the Shirley Sherwood Collection, and have been shown in exhibitions in the UK, USA, Japan and South Africa. She regularly holds courses in South Africa and is a founder member of the Botanical Artists' Association of Southern Africa and a past Chairperson.



**Cardinal Richelieu rose by Vicki Thomas**