



Media only: Catherine Fraser (202) 633-2875

May 27, 2008

Smithsonian Libraries Receive *Botanica Magnifica*

Photographer Jonathan Singer and botanists John Kress and Marc Hachadourian recently presented SIL Director, Nancy Gwinn, with set number one of *Botanica Magnifica*, a five-volume, double-elephant folio-sized work of two hundred fifty photographic images of plants. Comparable in scale and scope to Audubon's *Birds of America*, the book presents scientifically identified species grouped in themes of horticulture, plant form, orchids (Hachadourian's specialty), gingers (Kress's specialty), and rare species.

Singer, a former podiatrist, developed a method of photographing single flowers on a large scale with exquisite detail. After meeting Kress, a curator and scientist at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History, Singer was invited to photograph specimens in the Smithsonian's research center, which houses some of the rarest plants in the world. Two of the volumes of *Botanica Magnifica* focus specifically on these living plant collections at the Smithsonian.

Hachadourian, curator of glasshouse collections at the New York Botanical Garden, says the work "embodies the different disciplines of botany and art and horticulture. Through Jonathan's camera, the layperson can see the world through the eyes of a botanist. The project captures these plants before they disappear...."

Only ten sets of double-elephant *Botanica Magnifica* will be produced. Each is printed on hand-made paper and is custom-bound in Japan by the renowned book-binder Tini Miura. The Smithsonian Libraries received set #1, inscribed by Singer, Kress, Hachadourian, Miura, and others involved in its production; housed in a custom-built case that was part of the gift, it will reside in SIL's Joseph F. Cullman 3rd Library of Natural History.

SI-222-2008

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION MRC 154 PO Box 37012 Washington DC 20013-7012 Telephone 202.633.1522 Fax 202.786.2866