

THE GARDEN ON PAPER

From August 3 through September 18, 2006, The Drawing Room in East Hampton is pleased to present *The Garden on Paper*, an installation juxtaposing historical and contemporary drawings, plans, and vintage photographs inspired by gardens and horticulture.

The Garden on Paper is a salon style exhibition of garden plans, drawings, watercolors, photographs, and a model for a sunken garden, works that reflect upon the role of the garden as an enduring source of inspiration across three centuries and two continents. Photographs by Charles Jones (1866-1959) and L. Blok (1895-1986), as well as the botanical collages by William Booth Grey (1773-1852), were made to document species they grew in their gardens. The European garden designs by architects are renderings of lavish visions for formal gardens. Esther Pullman's photographs of greenhouses in France and England present the dynamic glass spaces in which succulents and orchids are raised. New work from the studios of contemporary artists Linda Etcoff and Peter Dayton focus on flowers, while Jill Musnicki is enamored with insects.

The earliest European garden plan in watercolor and ink dates from 1764, and is a grand design for the Villa Pisani formal gardens in Venice. The Pisanis were the wealthiest family in Venice at the time this drawing was made, and the Palladian plan villa and elaborate French style gardens were built to commemorate the election of the first Pisani to be the Doge of Venice. The grandiosity of this design and the symmetry of the villa caused 18th century travelers to call it "little Versailles." This plan serves as the centerpiece of the exhibition, set among other French and German garden designs such as an 1830 German Biedermeier plan proposing two versions for an ovoid public park.

Other historic works in the show demonstrate a simple but elegant aesthetic of regional artists who until recently, worked in relative obscurity. The vintage gold-toned gelatin silver prints by Charles Jones, gardener at Ote Hall in Sussex at the turn of the 20th century, present each variety of vegetable and flower he cultivated - such as "Dwarf Bean Masterpieces" and "Pea Glory of Devon" - as a way of recording their forms and size. Another horticulturalist growing tulips in Holland, L. Blok, is represented with prints of black tulips, dating from 1905. The delicate photomicrographs of snowflakes by Wilson A. Bentley (1865-1931), who discovered that every snowflake is unique, are floral forms that add sparkle to the natural world in winter.

The installation also includes charcoal and pastel drawings of sunflowers by contemporary Boston artist Linda Etcoff, startling for their botanical truthfulness depicting flower heads in various states of decay. The mixed media collages on canvas by East Hampton resident Peter Dayton are vividly colored arrangements of lilies and butterflies. Jill Musnicki, a lifelong East End resident, paints bees in a diffused world of their own which make the gallery come alive with the sights and sounds of the garden.

In juxtaposing 18th and 19th century works, The Drawing Room seeks to relax conceptual boundaries between images made in different times for different purposes and open a dialogue on the cultural context for art.

For further information or reproductions, please contact Susan Papa at 631.324.5016 or info@drawingroom-gallery.com.