

THE ALCATRAZ FLORILEGIUM

EXHIBITION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA BOTANICAL GARDEN AT BERKELEY—JANUARY 2016

Lyn Dahl, Sally Petru, and Catherine Watters

The Alcatraz Florilegium, a collection of seventy-eight botanical drawings and paintings of the surviving and re-introduced plants growing in the botanical gardens on San Francisco Bay's Alcatraz Island, was exhibited at The University of California Botanical Garden at Berkeley, thanks to Director Paul Licht and his wonderful staff. It was a fitting location as the island can be seen from the Garden.

For more than a century, the gardens on Alcatraz had been an important part of everyday life for the military, prison staff families, and prisoners. The prison was closed in 1963 and the gardens and their 145 species of plants were neglected. Forty years later, The Garden Conservancy, in partnership with the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy and with the support of the National Park Service, began renovating the gardens. Staff and volunteers removed the overgrowth and were amazed to find many of the original plants! They were dubbed "The Survivors."

Beginning in 2012, artists of the Northern California Society of Botanical Artists began to draw and paint them and other plants re-introduced to the gardens. The first forty-five works of *The Alcatraz Florilegium* were exhibited in the cellblock at Alcatraz from September 2013 to February 2014 as part of the restoration's tenth anniversary.

The Alcatraz Florilegium continues to grow with each regular specimen collecting trip to Alcatraz. We expect to have around one hundred images by the time our book is published in fall 2016. We have all found it fascinating to learn about the inhabitants of Alcatraz, to illustrate the plants that enhanced their lives, and to share their stories through exhibitions and the book. It's been a "labor of love" for all of us. 🌸

Lyn Dahl's love of gardening inspired her to study botanical art with Catherine Watters. Her paintings have been exhibited at the University of California Botanical Gardens at Berkeley, on Alcatraz, and at the Presidio in San Francisco.

Sally Petru is a botanical artist and art instructor who has supported botanical art as founding President of the Northern California Society of Botanical Artists and as a board member of the American Society of Botanical Artists. For more information about the artist, go to www.sallypetru.com.

Catherine Watters exhibits her paintings and teaches botanical art internationally. Her work is featured in several florilegia, books, and magazines. For more information, please visit her website www.catherinewatters.com.



images, clockwise from top:
 Polypodium californicum,
 Martha Bennett
 Rosa 'Bardou Job',
 Catherine Watters
 Echium candicans,
 Sally Petru
 Fuchsia 'Rose of Castile',
 Lyn Dahl
 Rosa gardenia,
 Leah Kaizer
 Pyracantha coccinea,
 Elaine Jek

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