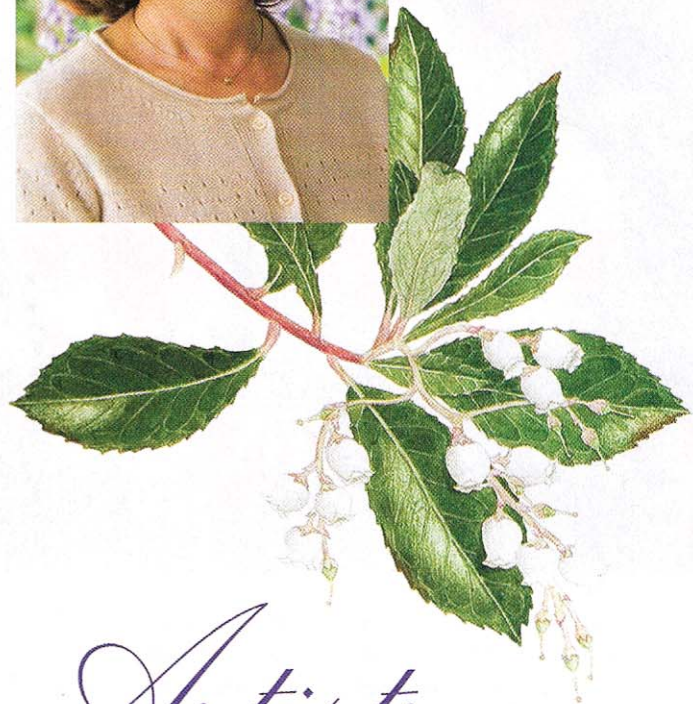


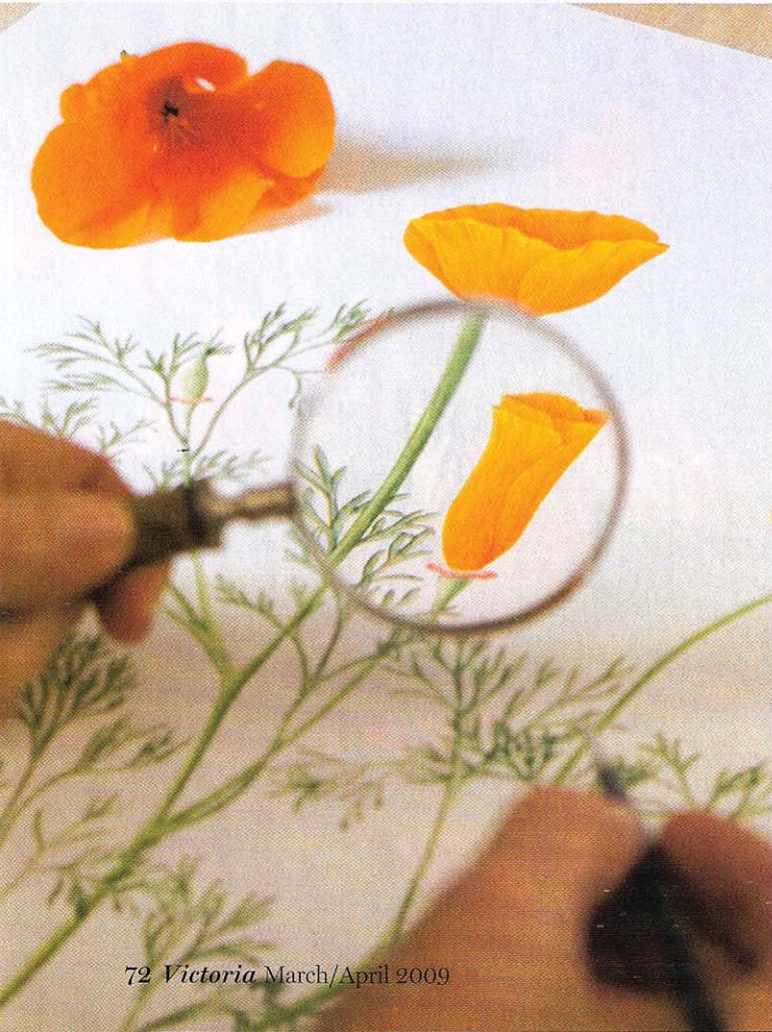
BY HAND



# Artistry IN BLOOM

FROM THE SIMPLEST CURVE OF A ROSE TO THE CRIMPED PETALS AND INTRICATE HUES OF A FRILLY TULIP, CATHERINE WATERS CAREFULLY STUDIES THE COMPLEXITIES OF NATURE'S MOST PRE-POSSESSING CREATIONS. DIPPING HER BRUSH IN VIVID WATERCOLORS, SHE PAINTS IMAGES SO LIFELIKE, THEY APPEAR TO BE THREE DIMENSIONAL.

PHOTOGRAPHY KATE SEARS



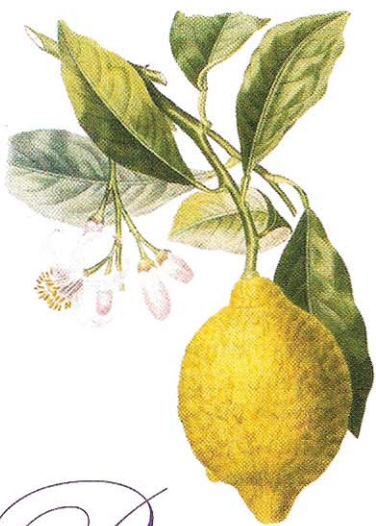
## BY HAND

*In her light-filled studio, Catherine Watters meticulously captures the fine shading and coloration of plants, flowers, and fruits. By using several different paintbrushes in varying widths, she is able to create beautiful, lifelike renderings.*





*Catherine's favorite aspect of botanical art is the observation she does before her brush even touches the paper. "Most people look at flowers and plants, but they never truly see them," she says.*



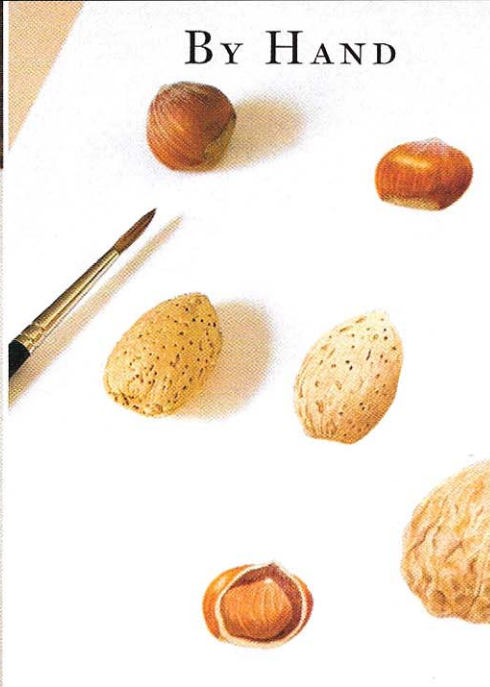
Born and raised in Paris, Catherine Watters began taking art lessons at a very young age. She continued her studies throughout high school and college, but never concentrated on a particular type of art. “After being an artist for years, I started thinking I wanted to find something specific to focus on,” Catherine explains. “I sort of stumbled into botanical art; after taking one class on the subject, I was inspired. From there, I studied the old masters and taught myself.”

The high level of detail that characterizes botanical art was born of a desire in the days before photography to accurately portray every nuance of flora. In the seventeenth century, as members of European royalty began collecting plants they acquired from worldwide expeditions, they commissioned artists to document the new exotic specimens in their gardens. These drawings and paintings were combined into florilegia, anthologies of illustrations depicting living collections of flowering plants. Great significance was placed on the sheer beauty of the specimens. “As an art form, botanical art went dormant for most of the twentieth century as a result of the modern camera,” Catherine says. “But in the 1980s, there was a resurgence of interest, and it came back into popular view.”

Catherine credits much of her inspiration to Pierre-Joseph Redouté, who many



## BY HAND



consider to be the most well-known and celebrated master of botanical illustration. Born in Belgium, the painter worked with—and for—some of France's most notable royal women. He was the official court artist for Marie Antoinette and later painted the lush gardens of Château de Malmaison, the country home of Empress Joséphine, Napoléon Bonaparte's first wife. The roots of the art form are firmly planted in French soil, where Catherine spends time each summer leading a garden tour. "Eight years ago, I started taking small groups of women to visit the gardens of Normandy," she says. And although the ten-day trips focus mainly on beautiful private and public gardens, Catherine says she also enjoys showing off the unique French culture. "We visit museums and explore the countryside," she adds. "We stay in châteaux and manors and savor the local cuisine."

Even though she doesn't have time to cultivate a painting-worthy garden of her own, Catherine's husband, Bob, tends a plot filled with inspiring blooms, apples, nectarines, pears, persimmons, pomegranates, figs, and citrus, as well as a summertime patch of tomatoes.

Professionally, Catherine is a celebrated master of her craft. She is a member of the Brooklyn Botanic Garden Florilegium Society, a group of the country's most accomplished botanical artists who document just some of the garden's 250,000-specimen herbarium. Catherine is also a participating artist at the florilegium at the Fioli estate in her home state of California, as well as at the Gardens at Heather Farm and Quarryhill Botanical Garden florilegia she established. But perhaps her most notable achievement is her painting that hangs in the Museum of Natural History in Paris.

What Catherine enjoys most about botanical art, she says, is the awe-inspiring attention to detail. "The most wonderful part is what you see—what you *really* see—when you study the details of plants. It's magical."

