



DELAWARE ART MUSEUM

# PRESS RELEASE

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**Media Contact: Molly Keresztury**  
Manager of Marketing & Public Relations  
302.351.8515 • mkeresztury@delart.org

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **DELAWARE ART MUSEUM PRESENTS A SECRET BOOK OF DESIGNS: THE BURNE-JONES FLOWER BOOK**

**WILMINGTON, DE (January 10, 2012)** – Between 1882 and 1898, Pre-Raphaelite artist Edward Burne-Jones (1833-1898) periodically worked on a series of small, circular watercolor images, each inspired by the name of a flower. In 1905, after the artist’s death, his wife published these representations in an exquisite, labor-intensive facsimile edition limited to 300. *A Secret Book of Designs: The Burne-Jones Flower Book*, on view January 28 – April 22, 2012, will feature all 38 images from one of these rare un-bound books, recently acquired for the Museum’s Helen Farr Sloan Library & Archives.

#### **About *The Flower Book***

Edward Burne-Jones was profoundly inspired by the landscape surrounding his cottage in Rottingdean on the south coast of England, and he incorporated elements of the sea, the cliffs, and the downs into these images. He periodically retreated to this village to escape the social and professional demands of his life in London, seeking an opportunity to recharge both physically and creatively. Working on his “Book of Flowers” became an integral part of his routine there, and the peace he found is reflected in these pensive, dream-like illustrations.

The book was a deeply personal project for Burne-Jones; one that he shared with very few people. He collected hundreds of beautiful – and often obscure – flower names, choosing to illustrate only those that encouraged deeper reflection. Despite its name, the images in *The Flower Book* are not of the flowers themselves, but rather of subjects suggested by their names. “It is not enough to illustrate them,” he wrote, “I want . . . to wring their secret from them.”

In 1905, Burne-Jones' wife, Georgiana, worked with the Fine Art Society in London to publish a facsimile of her late husband's remarkable work. The images were faithfully reproduced by French printer Henri Piazza as collotypes with hand-stenciled watercolor additions in a technique called pochoir. The portrayals are so brilliantly printed that they are often mistaken for original watercolors. Only 300 copies of *The Flower Book* were published, most as bound books, though a small number were produced as individually matted plates housed in a clamshell box. The Museum acquired an unbound version of *The Flower Book* in 2009 and is fortunate to be one of the few public institutions in the world to have one in its collection.

### **Organizers & Sponsors**

*A Secret Book of Designs: The Burne-Jones Flower Book* was organized by the Delaware Art Museum.

This exhibition is made possible, in part, by grants from the Delaware Division of the Arts, a state agency dedicated to nurturing and supporting the arts in Delaware, in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts.

### **About the Delaware Art Museum**

The Delaware Art Museum, located at 2301 Kentmere Parkway, Wilmington, DE 19806, is open Wednesday through Saturday 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. and Sunday noon – 4:00 p.m. Admission fees are charged as follows: Adults (19 – 59) \$12, Seniors (60+) \$10, Students (with valid ID) \$6, Youth (7 – 18) \$6, and Children (6 and under) free. Admission fees are waived every Sunday. For more information, call 302-571-9590 or 866-232-3714 (toll free), or visit the website at [www.delart.org](http://www.delart.org)

Founded in 1912, the Delaware Art Museum is best known for its large collection of British Pre-Raphaelite art, works by Wilmington-native Howard Pyle and fellow American illustrators, and urban landscapes by John Sloan and his circle. Visitors can also enjoy the outdoor Copeland Sculpture Garden and a number of exhibitions throughout the year.

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