



The Art and Science of William Bartram

Judith Magee

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William Bartram's love of nature led him to explore the environs of the American Southeast between 1773 and 1777. Here he collected plants and seeds, kept a journal of his observations of nature, and made drawings of the plants and animals he encountered. The completed drawings were sent to his patron in London, and these make up the bulk of the collection held at London's Natural History Museum.

The Art and Science of William Bartram brings together, for the first time, all sixty-eight drawings by Bartram held at the Natural History Museum, along with works by some of the most well-known natural history artists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The volume explores Bartram's writings and artwork and reveals how influential he was in American science of the period. Bartram was an inspiration to a whole generation of young scientists and field naturalists. He was an authority on the birds of North America and on the lifestyle, culture, and language of the indigenous people of the regions through which he traveled. His work influenced Wordsworth, Coleridge, and other writers and poets throughout the past two hundred years, and his drawings reveal an ecological understanding of nature that only truly developed in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

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