

About this print

Botanical prints became popular in the 18th century with new knowledge of the natural world and its workings.



This information was widely disseminated through books with illustrations. Many of the botanists were also artistically gifted and created beautiful drawings and paintings of specimens

that could be translated into multiple prints.

Robert John Thornton (1768-1837) was such a man. He became obsessed with cataloging rare species and hired pre-eminent artists to create renderings of them. The project bankrupted him halfway through, but the 33 plates he completed became known as *The Temple of Flora*, one of the most beautiful sets of botanicals ever created.

Taschen recently published reproductions of those prints in full size (about 17 inches by 21 inches) in a handsome presentation box. The prints are in a portfolio, unbound, and ready for framing. The set also comes with a large-scale booklet giving information about Thornton, each print and the artists who worked with him.

The prints are on heavy archival paper and made from one of the original books, now at the Missouri Botanical Garden. *The Temple of Flora* is listed at \$150, so each print is about \$5 (not for sale individually), a real bar-

gain, though bear in mind you're purchasing something lovely but with no inherent value.

The one my friend selected from the portfolio for framing is the lotus, pictured with an elaborate background (in this case the pyramids) that is part of each print.

For more information, go to taschen.com.

Lennie Bennett, Times art critic

