

1994

Anna Heyward Taylor: The Beebe Period

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Publication Info

Published in *Collections*, Volume 6, Issue 4, 1994, pages 6-7.

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ANNA HEYWARD TAYLOR

The Beebe Period

AUGUST 26 - JANUARY 8

Anna Heyward Taylor, a native Carolinian, was born in Columbia in 1879. She is commonly associated with artists of the Charleston Renaissance, which was a period of flourishing regionalist art that occurred in South Carolina during the 1920s and 1930s. Her oeuvre includes wood block and linoleum prints, batiks, watercolors, pencil sketches, and lithography.

Important to Taylor was her acquaintance with William Beebe. Beebe was a botanist who established a laboratory in British Guiana, South America in conjunction with the New York Zoological Society. Taylor went to his research station for four months during 1916 and returned in 1920 for another nine months. These visits were vital to her artistic development.

During the latter visit, Taylor's analytical aptitude became evident. The precision she used in sketching South American botanical specimens contributed to her mastery of line, color, form, and composition and she moved from the role of student to that of a recognized, independent artist.

Anna Heyward Taylor returned to the United States in September, 1920 as an accomplished artist and, from that year



Anna Heyward Taylor, American, 1879-1956, *Untitled (Caribbean Scene)*, watercolor on paper. Gift of Mrs. Howard E. Manning. CMA 1986.56.2.



Anna Heyward Taylor, American, 1879-1956, *Red Howlers*, wood block print.
Gift of Mrs. Howard E. Manning. CMA 1967.24.

through 1931, was the topic of numerous exhibitions. She also wrote and spoke for a variety of museums and organizations including the *Christian Science Monitor*, the American Museum of Natural History, the Brooklyn Botanic Gardens, and the New York Zoological Society.

The goal of this exhibition is to bring the works reflecting Taylor's experiences with Beebe in British Guiana to the public's attention. This theme is especially enhanced by the use of objects reflecting her many media including rare batiks. These are especially important to the exhibition since none of Taylor's batiks have been on display since 1950. It can be said that her success did not come solely from printmaking, the medium for which she is best known, but from her textiles as well. Works inspired by the excursions with Beebe allow us to see her ability as an artist to make decorative, as well as faithfully executed, studies of tropical flora.

— Lana A. Burgess
Guest Curator