Smithsonian’s National Museum of Natural History Presents
“Transitions: Photographs by Robert Creamer”

“Transitions: Photographs by Robert Creamer,” a new exhibition showcasing the remarkable photography of Robert Creamer, is now on view at the National Museum of Natural History where it will continue through June 24, 2007. The exhibition will be presented to other venues around the country through the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES) beginning in fall 2007.

Robert Creamer is renowned for using contemporary digital technology to convey a melancholy beauty. “I’m challenging the traditional notion of beauty as something perfect and flawless,” said Creamer about his photographs, many of which show flowers in various stages of decay.

In creating the works for this stunning exhibition, Creamer traded his usual camera for a flatbed scanner. His compositions use flora and fauna that are placed directly on the scanner in aesthetic arrangements or suspended over it. The resulting detail is eerily lifelike and incredibly expressive. Creamer’s subjects were drawn from the research collections at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of Natural History, the Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden in Florida, and the Echo Hill Outdoor School in Maryland.

“Robert Creamer’s alert eyes find beauty in the most unexpected places: in the graceful degradation of a flower or the bound and dried herbarium specimen with the enigmatic traces from the many curatorial hands that have pondered it over time,” said Robert Sullivan, former associate director of public programs. “It is a privilege to show his work here at the Smithsonian. Everyone who sees these images will fine their perception of the world around them enriched immeasurably.”
“Transitions” features 39 of Robert Creamer’s high-resolution images created exclusively for the exhibition. Many are paired to show a subject in transition. “My maturing imagination returns me again and again to botanicals. I enjoy exploring the transitory nature of beauty and am constantly enthused by the serendipitous understandings and new relationships that this technique reveals to me,” said Creamer.

This exhibition also features a video by Baltimore videographer Jeannie Yoon about Creamer’s scanning and printing.

Robert Creamer’s association with the Smithsonian began when he scanned a variety of objects and specimens at the Naturalist Center, an educational outreach facility of the National Museum of Natural History, located near Leesburg, Va. That experience led to scans of the scientific collections housed at the National Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C.

Creamer has transitioned multiple times himself during the 30 years of his professional photography career. His talents include botany, photography, natural history and teaching. He is also a widely published fine art and architectural photographer. He started using the scanner on a whim in 2002, when he found a dead hummingbird in his Maryland neighborhood. After experimenting with the bird, he continued to scan plants and animals from his backyard and those that were brought home to him by his children and even his cat. Those initial scans inspired his artistic vision catapulting him to a new realm of visual art. He began selecting material based on his intuition of how it would develop in the short time ahead and how it would look scanned. He monitored his specimens closely looking for the exact moment that some new point of view was revealed.

The Smithsonian’s National Museum of Natural History, located at 10th Street and Constitution Avenue N.W., in Washington, D.C., welcomed more than 5.5 million visitors in 2005. The museum is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Admission is free. For further information, call (202) 633-1000, TTY (202) 357-1729 or visit the museum’s Web site at www.mnh.si.edu.