

Exhibit pays tribute to father of taxonomy

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Contributor/Jakarta

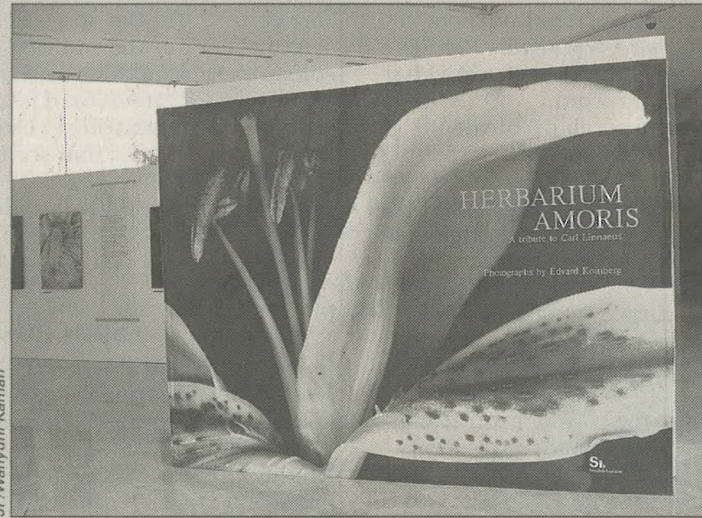
A rare photo exhibition called *Herbarium Amoris: A Tribute to Carl Linnaeus* is being held by the Swedish Embassy in cooperation with Swedish Institute and the National Museum Jakarta.

The 36 images by Swedish photographer Edvard Koinberg in this so-called photographic herbarium, displayed in the museum's right wing, are too few in number to expose to the public the potential beauty of botany as a science — which is what Swedish natural scientist Carl Linnaeus considered.

Linnaeus (1707-1778) classified plants according their sexual organs, of which he counted the stamens and pistils. Although the classification is easy to learn and use, it was controversial in its day.

What is more controversial perhaps his astonishing parallel between plant sexuality and human: "The flowers' leaves serve as a bridal bed where the stamen and pedicularis engage in union. The strands are the sperm tubes, the pistil stylet the mother passage or vagina, the plant ovary the human female ovary, the seed capsules the mature human ovary and the seed the egg."

Botany is a highly interest-



A poster of the *Herbarium Amoris: A Tribute to Carl Linnaeus* entices visitors to explore the beauty of botany through close-up photography of flora by Edvard Koinberg.

ing and intriguing study of plants as viewed through in the outspoken and poetic writings of Linnaeus on plants, and this is what inspired Koinberg, a 1964-born freelance photographer, to begin collecting photographs of plants a few years ago.

In his photographs, Koinberg tries to interpret Linnaeus' idea about the sexual organs of plants, as cited in the botanist's *Sponsaliorum Plantarum: The Nuptials of Flowers* (1746): "Yet in the plant kingdom, these parts are not hidden but rather displayed for all to see. Of all

the constituent parts of the plant, these are the loveliest and most pleasing, to which our inclination, fancy and gaze are heartily attracted."

The exhibit includes photos of the sexual organs of both flowering and non-flowering plants, such as the fern (*Dryopteris filix-mas*), lily (*Lilium martagon*) and sunflower (*Helianthus intermedius*).

The glossy, close-up color photos expose their inner beauty, the amazing creations of nature and the mystery of flowers in an artistic way.

The different kinds of flowers, with their various

forms and colors of stamens and pistils, are captured clearly as if to portray Linnaeus' descriptions in *Praeludia Sponsaliorum Plantarum*.

Linnaeus is a very familiar name among biology students, and his great contribution to biology is the method of binomial nomenclature he developed for both plants and animals — the basis of modern taxonomy. He designated the first Latin name to indicate the genus and the second to identify the species.

The oldest plant names that are still used today are those published in his *Species Plantarum* of 1753, while the oldest animal names appear in the 10th edition of his *Systema Naturae* (1758).

Linnaeus' attraction and subsequent attachment to plants had started as early as when he was 5 years old, when he had his own garden to tend. And instead of entering the priesthood as suggested by his father, a parish priest and a devoted amateur botanist and gardener, Linnaeus went on to study plants.

In 1762, as a result of his great academic reputation and achievements, Linnaeus was bestowed knighthood and a noble title from King Adolph Fredrik of Sweden and took the name von Linné; therefore, he is also known as Carl von Linné. Later, the King and Queen of Sweden,

as well as Swedish East India Company (SOIC), became the benefactors of his biology projects.

While Linnaeus was a professor in Uppsala, students came from all over Europe to be his pupils. He even sheltered and fed some of the poorest students, the same way he was treated by several professors during academic residences in Paris and Holland.

Among Linnaeus' students was a small group that demonstrated great enthusiasm to learn in nature.

These pupils, whom he called "apostles", traveled to

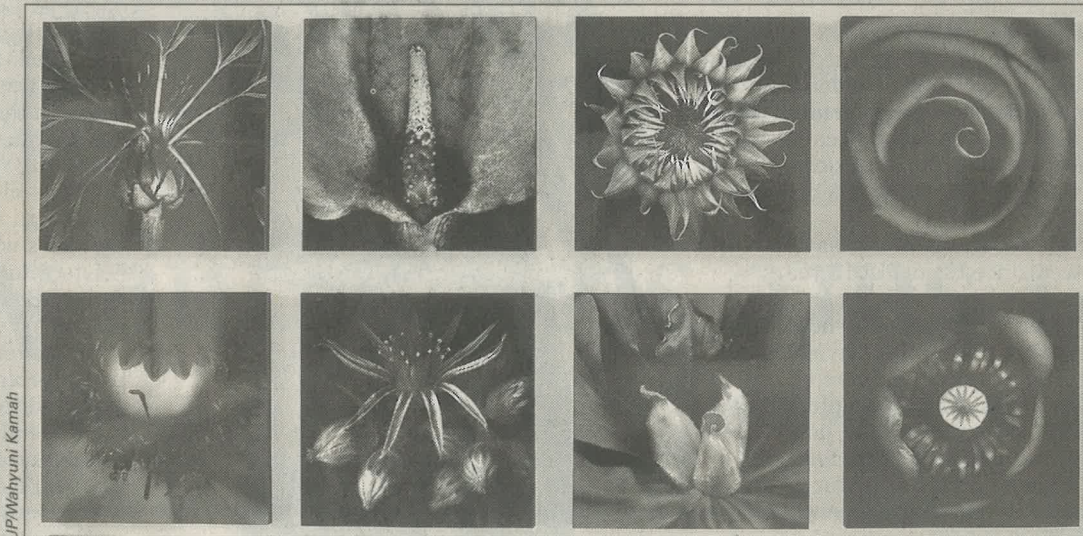
foreign countries as doctors or priests by the SOIC's ship, the *Göteborg*, to study plants and animals in Linnaeus' spirit. They collected assorted flora and fauna from around the globe, described them and sent specimens to Sweden, and also wrote about the culture and natural world they experienced.

Supported by this effort, Linnaeus was able to name around 7,700 plants and 4,400 animals during his lifetime. Linnaeus himself never traveled to exotic lands, only to European countries such as Denmark, Germany, Holland, England and France.

Many of his "apostles" perished in the course of their contributions to science, including Carl Fredrik Adler (1720-1761), who died in Java.

The reviewer is a biology graduate of the University of Indonesia.

Herbarium Amoris: A Tribute to Carl Linnaeus runs from June 3-July 2, at the National Museum, Jl. Medan Merdeka Barat 12, Central Jakarta. Tel: (021) 3868172. Open Tues-Sun 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Fri 10-11:30 a.m. and 1-5 p.m. Closed Mondays. www.herbariumamoris.se



A panel of images by Koinberg captures the fascination and poetry Swedish botanist and biologist Linnaeus felt in exploring the natural world.