

**An exhibition and accompanying catalogue
present the botanical legacy of Joaquim Conca
at the Botanical Institute of Barcelona**

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Joaquim Conca (Rubí, Barcelona, 1943) is an artist who, through direct observation of nature, represents the morphology of plants with great precision. He began his artistic practice at the age of 26, when he moved to Paris to further his training. During this period, he attended classes and established contact with the surrealist painter Leonor Fini, of whom he became a disciple—an influence that shaped his early development. In 1986, he returned to Rubí, where he set up his studio and resumed his artistic education. After exploring various techniques and styles, in 1991 he specialized in botanical illustration following a workshop led by artist and professor Patricio Vélez, in collaboration with the Botanical Institute of Barcelona (IBB from its initials in Spanish). Since his first exhibition dedicated to botanical illustration in 1993, his work has been shown in various exhibitions across Catalonia. Alongside his artistic activity, he worked in teaching for more than a decade, providing training in botanical illustration. Now retired, he remains active in drawing, maintaining his interest in representing nature from both artistic and scientific perspectives.

In 2008, Conca made an initial donation of his work to the IBB, consisting of 56 drawings from his collection of wild daffodils (*Narcissus* spp.) preserved in a greenhouse at the Botanical Garden of Barcelona. This donation was expanded in 2025 with an additional 134 plates, forming a body of work resulting from decades of effort and constituting a representative sample of his career. The legacy includes several series reflecting both the stylistic evolution and technical diversity of the artist, among which stand out 17 works produced during his stay in Ecuador—focused on tropical flora—11 illustrations of orchids, and 35 engravings that demonstrate his mastery of this technique.

In relation to the 2008 donation, the IBB published the catalogue *L'observació i el traç. Dibuixos botànics* [*Observation and line. Botanical drawings*], which included the complete collection of wild daffodils and a selection of drawings produced during the artist's training period at the Eina School in Barcelona. This volume, now out of print, has served as the basis for the development of a new catalogue, in which the chapter dedicated to daffodils has been restored as it originally appeared. In 2025, *Una mirada artística del dibuix botànic. Llegat de la seva obra a l'Institut Botànic de Barcelona* [*An artistic view of botanical drawing. Legacy of his work at the*

Botanical Institute of Barcelona] was published, edited by Neus Nualart, Inés Fuentes, Alfonso Susanna, and Patricio Vélez (Fig. 1). This new volume presents a selection of Conca's works chosen according to both botanical and artistic criteria, with the aim of offering a comprehensive view of his work. The texts adopt a dual complementary approach: from the botanical perspective, Alfonso Susanna provides an analysis of the species depicted and highlights their morphological accuracy; from the artistic perspective, the content is based on conversations between Inés Fuentes and Conca himself, addressing the artist's technique, inspiration, and creative process. This approach allows for a fuller understanding of his work and highlights his contribution to both the artistic and scientific fields.



Figure 1. Cover of the catalogue published in 2025.

Furthermore, since June 25, 2025, the IBB has hosted the exhibition *Joaquim Conca. La botànica feta art* [*Joaquim Conca. Botany made art*], which presents a selection of drawings and engravings (Fig. 2). This exhibition aims to be a representative showcase of his career and the variety of techniques he masters. The opening event, held at the IBB, was attended by the artist and Alfonso Susanna, and brought together more than 100 attendees in a gathering that highlighted the dialogue between botany and art. Initially scheduled to last three months, the exhibition has been extended and, during 2025, has received 5055 visitors. It is currently still open to the public and can be visited on weekends with admission to the Botanical Garden of Barcelona.



Figure 2. Poster of the exhibition on Conca's botanical drawings.

With this exhibition and the publication of the new catalogue, the IBB highlights a legacy that integrates art and science, reaffirming its commitment to an interdisciplinary approach to understanding the plant world.