



José Celestino Mutis Bosío
Joaquín Manuel Fernández Cruzados
1828
Oil painting on canvas
136 x 106cm
Museo de las Cortes de Cádiz
Inv. n° 3/30.2 ficha 35



Botanical House
Engraving by Adriana Espinosa
Private collection of the artist

In 1763, José Celestino Mutis requested permission from Charles III to perform a research on the natural richness of the Nueva Granada. In 1783, twenty years later, he received such authorization. From that moment on, the Spanish Crown assigned resources to support Mutis and his colleagues' pursuit.

The Royal Botanical Expedition settled down in Mariquita (Tolima). They collected samples to make herbaria, described the parts of each plant, recorded their traditional medicinal uses and, finally, made drawings of them giving special importance to flower anatomy. The former permitted to classify them according to the system developed by Linnaeus. During this first phase, Eloy Valenzuela, from Santander, was in charge of keeping the Expedition files.

In 1791, as per request of Viceroy José de Ezpeleta, the Expedition was moved to Santa Fe de Bogotá. Mutis died in September 11, 1808, and the Expedition started to weaken progressively, finally ending in 1811, after 28 years of work. In August 1816, as part of Pablo Morillo's reconquest campaign, all documents, drawings, and materials produced by this endeavor were sent to Madrid.

As a result of the Expedition, there were 5393 illustrations left. Currently, these documents are kept in the *Real Jardín Botánico* of Madrid. Since 1952 there is an agreement between Spain and Colombia for the promotion of the materials belonging to the *Flora de Bogotá*, of which 33 volumes have been published up to now.

The Royal Botanical Expedition of the *Nuevo Reino de Granada*



Abbot Antonio José Cavanilles
Salvador Rizo
1801
Oil painting on canvas
84 x 64,4cm
Museo Nacional de Colombia
Reg. 549