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THE HOFT EXAMINER

ISSUE №4

THE HOUSE OF FAIRY TALES

TULIP ART MANIA!

THE Turkish Tulips EXHIBITION OPENS at THE BOWES MUSEUM

Around the beautiful Victorian halls of The Bowes Museum, winding up grand staircases into its picture galleries and opulent rooms, tulip artworks have been placed like clues to a treasure hunt or a detective mystery. As a timely and enlightening exhibition celebrating 125 years of The Bowes Museum this engaging trail meanders through the history, culture and science of the last 1000 years from Central Asia to Western Europe and back again.

PAUL SAKOILSKY, *Flower Fool (Kunst Clown series)*, 2017

In this unique Museum created by Joséphine and John Bowes the familiar tulip becomes un-familiar, as its role in history chronicles a greater play. When the plot on the world stage gets confusing, we need a simple tale to walk us through it. Thus our floral court jester steps through the fourth wall to guide us through our past and help us to understand how to navigate our future.

HOW TULIP MANIA TRAVELS THROUGH TIME

Imagine talking to friendly aliens and trying to explain why we humans grow billions of tulips. These flowers are of little use as food or a medicine. Most tulips don't have a fragrance either, so we tell our alien visitors that we grow tulips simply because we love to look at them. But that only lasts for a week or so because before you know it the petals fall off and they die! Then we throw the cut flowers away, or wait months while the sad-looking plants retreat back into their bulbs. Well, that was nice! Same time next spring?

Our relation with tulips is... complicated. Tulips can represent love and passion as well as the sacrifice of martyrs and the brevity of human life. It has been both an extravagant luxury and the cheapest bunch of blooms in the supermarket; tulips have been held responsible for economic disasters and revolutions while being revered as a divine flower; they've been painted more than any other flower for their uniqueness, yet are now grown on every continent. Tulipmania is an historical fact and a modern reality – there are dozens of tulip festivals from Japan and Korea to the USA, India and Australia. Even so, no tulip displays are quite as massive as those in Holland.

Holland inevitably looms large in this tale. It was there that Gavin Turk came up with the idea for the *Turkish Tulips* exhibition while visiting his artist friend Philippa van Loon in Amsterdam. The Museum van Loon glories in the arts and

...CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 »

DID YOU KNOW?

A tulip was once the most expensive flower in the world!

A single tulip bulb sold for 5,500 guilders in 1633 – the equivalent of £800,000 today.

SEE PAGE 15

Oops! The name 'tulip' is a lost-in-translation mistake!

When a traveller in Turkey asked what the flower was called, he was told it was a *tülbent*, or turban, which the flower resembles.

SEE PAGE 6

The Tulip Revolution led to a new government in Kyrgyzstan.

Tulips have been central to the Islamic revolution in Iran since 1979.

SEE PAGE 12

» CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

achievements of the Dutch Golden Age, so taking tulip artworks from Britain to be displayed there in spring was perhaps a little crazy: rather like selling coals to Newcastle. But it worked. The tulip is a humble flower that somehow deserves all the attention it gets.

The tulip has been celebrated in decorative arts too, especially on gorgeous ceramics and textiles, on elegant furniture and Old Master paintings that feature in the wonderful collection of The Bowes Museum. This Turkish Tulips exhibition will present the contemporary artworks alongside a trail of beautiful tulip-inspired treasures that wends its way all through the galleries there.

The tulip's tale is also a story about migration from east to west and about how much we owe the middle east and central Asia – lands where tulips originated and refugees are fleeing from now – lands steeped in the culture, mathematics, science and philosophy of the Islamic Golden Age and the heyday of the Ottoman (Turkish) Empire.

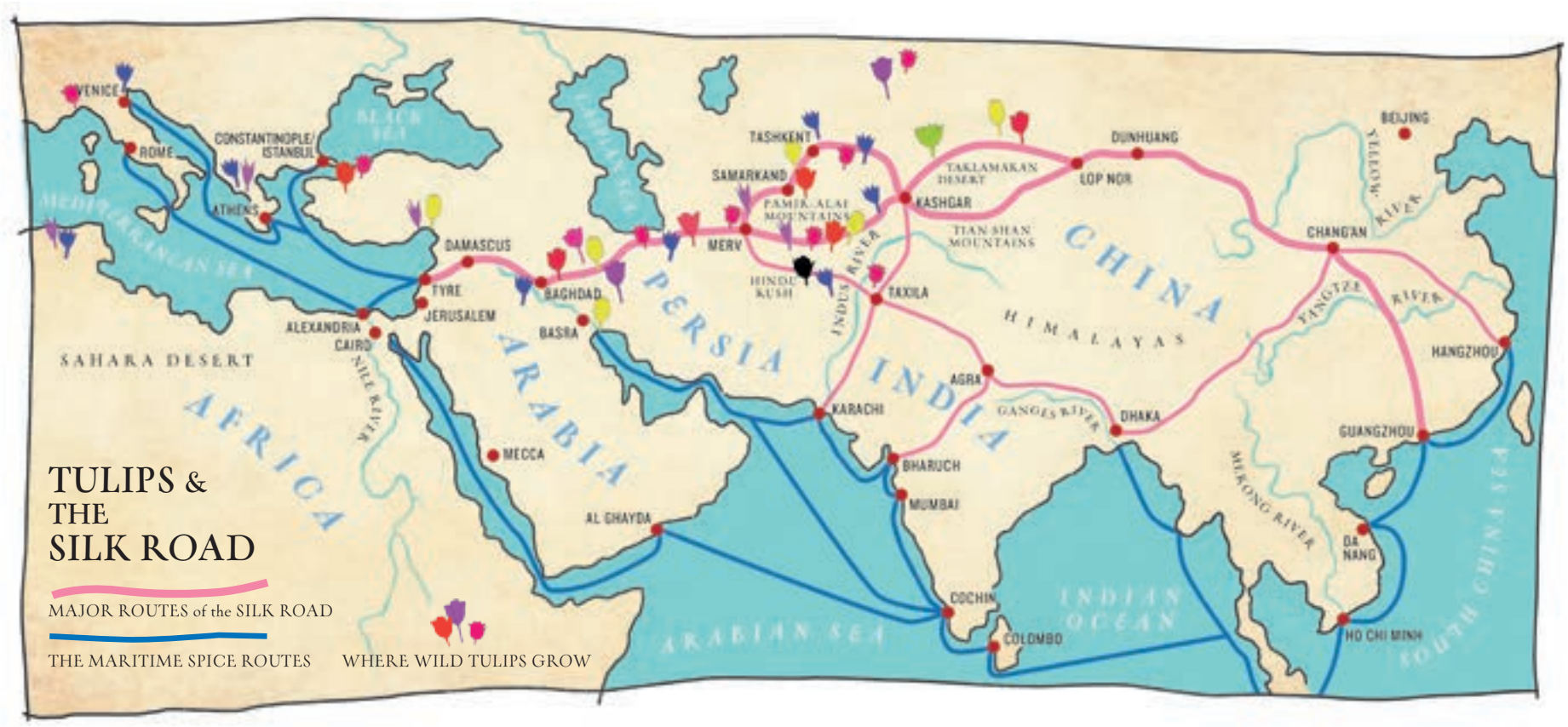
This is also an allegory about aesthetics and science; about the beauty of the world, both natural and man-made. The tulip as a symbol connects both – sometimes we can learn the most from the humblest of teachers.

CONTENTS

TULIPS IN THE EAST

More than five hundred years before tulips were first seen in western Europe, the flowers were cultivated and admired in beautiful Islamic gardens in Persia (now called Iran). Tulips grew wild right across Central Asia, blooming alongside the ancient Silk Road, the first major trading route of world history. It's very likely that merchants and nomads took tulip bulbs with them on their journeys, speeding up the natural migration of the flowers. Wild tulips flourish in Anatolia (modern Turkey) too; where nomadic Turkish tribes settled and established the Ottoman Empire.

WHERE THE WILD TULIPS ARE



It is ironic that Europe's most low-lying and flat country should now be so closely associated with the world's favourite mountain flower.

Wild tulips first appeared in the remote and desolate mountains of central Asia.

The Tian Shan Mountains range across the borders between northwest China, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, and the tulips that grew there were hardy, ground-hugging plants with short stems that could withstand snowdrifts and high winds.

The Tian Shan are known as the Celestial Mountains by the Chinese, as they are so enormously high that they reach up to Heaven. They may look celestial from a distance, but there's nothing heavenly about their fierce, freezing winters that drag on into April or temperatures that sear the tulips' leaves in the summer, forcing the flowers to retreat back into their bulbs.

The tulips spread south and east into Kashmir and the Himalayas, but mostly they moved westwards, first into the Pamir-Alai Mountains and from there further west towards the Hindu Kush and Turkmenistan. Almost certainly they were helped on their way by nomadic tribes and merchants who were also travelling along the Silk Route to reach Persia (modern Iran) and the Caucasus, which we now know as Turkey. Their westward migration continued into the Balkans and skirted all around the Mediterranean to Spain before somehow straddling the Straits of Gibraltar to reach the Atlas Mountains of Morocco.

Bounded by deserts to the south and the Atlantic to the west, there was nowhere else to go that had the cold winters that tulips require. That was until human beings began to cherish these flowers that welcomed the spring and heralded the summer, and to appreciate their beautiful and unpredictable blooms. These were usually red but could also be lemon-yellow, white or amber. With a little help from humans, tulips were about to conquer the rest of the world...

TRADING PLACES

For two thousand years the world's richest and most important trade routes were the 'Silk Roads' across Asia and the Indian Ocean. In the 21st century the 'New Silk Road' is likely to be just as significant...

GO EAST, YOUNG MAN! Marco Polo's camel caravan crossing the mountains of Afghanistan, illustrated in the *Catalan Atlas* produced in 1375

Every spring for hundreds of years, as snowdrifts melted and merchants set out to travel with their spices and luxury goods, they must have noticed myriad little tulips blooming in mountain meadows. We cannot be certain, but it's highly likely that travellers often took tulip seeds or bulbs with them on their journeys, helping the wild flowers to spread more rapidly.

The Silk Roads weren't really roads made of silk, were they?

Er, no. The Silk Roads is a modern name given to a network of trade routes that stretched 4,500 miles (7240km) right across the mountains and steppes of Asia from China to the Mediterranean. Originally it connected the empires of China, India, Parthia (Persia) and Rome, with maritime routes linking the Indian Ocean to the Red Sea. Most merchants would have been transporting their goods (which did include a lot of silk!) to the nearest market or port, not all the way.

So were these Silk Roads like ancient motorways across Asia?

Far from it. There weren't any 'Silk Road' signs at Jerusalem stating 'Tehran 960 miles (take a left turn at Baghdad)'. These 'roads' were rarely nicely-paved highways. Mostly they would have been unmarked routes, tracks and mountain passes linking the chain of markets that made up a 'Silk Road', along which huge groups of merchant traders would travel together in a 'caravan' of camels and horses, often with many guards to protect them from attack by thieving bandits.

I told you there were lots of mountains! The landscape along the Silk Road in Kyrgyzstan

What goods were traded along the Silk Roads?

Spoiler alert: it wasn't only silk and textiles. In fact, it was almost anything that could be sold for a profit, from pepper to precious stones and horses to slaves. Chinese and Persian ceramics, Roman glassware, Indian brassware; metals, tea, spices, dyes and oils were among the items traded, while silk was used as a currency too. It was mostly 'luxury' goods, because otherwise the transportation costs and the taxes that had to be paid along the way wouldn't have made it worthwhile.

What else travelled along the Silk Roads?

Wherever goods travelled, knowledge, ideas and culture travelled too. The Silk Roads helped enable the spread of religions (Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam); of scientific ideas (mathematics, astronomy, geometry, algebra, medicine); of new technologies (paper, silk and gunpowder manufacture); and new artistic and architectural styles (Greco-Buddhist art, Islamic-Persian design). Oh, and ghastly diseases like Bubonic plague (the Black Death!), which moved west along the Silk Roads in the 1340s.

Why were the Silk Roads so important?

The Chinese (during the Han dynasty,

202 BCE–220 CE) went to great efforts to establish these trading routes, and even extended the Great Wall of China to ensure the safety of the merchants who travelled along them. Trade brought wealth and taxes to the peoples engaged in it, and consequently many of the cities along the Silk Roads – places with magical names like Samarkand, Bukhara and Isfahan – became richer than any medieval cities in Europe, except perhaps for Venice (which made its money by enforcing a monopoly in the spice trade).

The Romans didn't trade directly with the Chinese, but they loved silk...

The Roman Senate passed laws trying to stop people buying and wearing silk, which was regarded as being decadent and far too revealing, as well as costing too much. In the first century CE Pliny the Elder resented the cost 'simply to enable the Roman lady to shimmer in public.' During the height of the Empire, up to 100 million sesterces (silver coins) per year was spent on silk, spices and luxury imports, and the Romans worried that they might run out of silver.

Was it dangerous to travel on the Silk Road?

Oh yes! You might think crossing hundreds of miles of mountains was hard enough, but it was even tougher to get around the Taklamakan Desert. It's the second largest shifting sand desert in the world (after the Sahara), so sandstorms are a frequent hazard. It's boiling during the day and freezing at night, and did we mention the poisonous snakes? Its name means 'Place of No Return', so it's no wonder the routes skirt the northern and southern edges of the desert, and that merchants looked forward to stopping at an oasis town to rest and recover.

So was it a little safer when strong governments were in charge?

Always, because empires profited from trade, so strove to make their roads safe. Trade really prospered between 750–1000 CE during the Islamic Abbasid Caliphate. The wealth this created was spent on a fabulous new capital, Baghdad, where learning, science and culture flourished. Bachdad was the largest city in the world until it was sacked in 1258 by ruthless Mongol warriors. The upside was that Genghis Khan established an enormous Mongol empire stretching from China to Turkey, so uniting the Silk Roads under one rule of law.

Bactrian camel in front of the mausoleum of Khawaja Ahmed Yasawi in Turkestan

Even so, merchants rarely travelled the entire length. Marco Polo, the famous Venetian traveller, was one of the exceptions. His travels lasted 24 years (1271–95) and he worked in China for another legendary Mongol emperor, Kublai Khan.

Which was more important, the land or sea routes?

Big ships could transport far more goods; the wreck of a ninth-century Arabian dhow sailing ship was recently found to have carried 60,000 ceramic items in addition to silverware, gold, and bronze mirrors. Imagine loading that lot on to camels! Many such dhows went back and forth between Abbasid Persia and China, just as they cross between Iran and Dubai today.

Back in the first century CE the Greek geographer Strabo reported that 120 ships left for India each year from a single Egyptian port on the Red Sea. Hoards of Roman gold coins and statues of Roman Gods found in southern India also indicate the thriving maritime trade between Roman Egypt and India.

What caused the decline of the Silk Roads?

The Black Death killing well over 75 million people across Eurasia certainly didn't help, but the gradual break-up of the Mongol empire, the fall of Constantinople (Istanbul) to the Ottoman Turks in 1453, and the isolationist approach of Ming-era China also contributed to less trade. Meanwhile, sky-high prices for spices charged by Venetian and Genoese merchants made it more important for other Europeans to find new ways to get the spices they craved. In 1488 the Portuguese navigated around the southern tip of Africa, the Cape of Good Hope, and in 1497 Vasco da Gama finally reached India via that route. The balance of power and wealth in the world had started to shift towards Europe…

But doesn't China have plans for major 'New Silk Road' routes?

These are more than just plans. China has contributed many billions of dollars to building new railways and massive pipelines across Asia and to building closer economic relationships with the hugely wealthy (oil, gas, gold and mineral-rich) central Asian republics such as Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. Millions of laptops, shoes and clothes are being transported by rail from Chongqing in China to Duisberg in Germany, a journey that takes just 14 days, so it's far quicker than the sea route. China expects the economic, industrial and cultural contacts along the New Silk Roads to boost productivity in each country. Watch this space!

The New Silk Road will mostly transport goods on giant container ships and thousands of miles of new railways being built across Asia

Throughout this newspaper we have used the abbreviations BCE and CE for 'Before Common Era' and 'Common Era'. Earlier, the Judaeo-Christian-centric BC ('Before Christ' and 'Anno Domini' [the year of our Lord]) would have been used.

An introduction to the Iranian and Ottoman Empires

The green area shows the Ottoman Empire at its greatest extent in 1683

Iranians were celebrating tulips in poetry and miniature paintings in the 12th century. Iran (Persia) had existed as a series of mighty empires since the sixth century BCE, but in the 12th century the Turks were still nomads, moving west before establishing the Ottoman Empire where they would cultivate tulips in enormous numbers. It's time we introduced these remarkable empires…

IRAN (FORMERLY KNOWN AS PERSIA)

For many centuries Iran was known as Persia in Europe and the western world, but in 1935 Reza Shah asked the world to call his country Iran, rather than the westernised version. Reza Shah had been appointed the monarch of Iran in 1925 and thus founded the Pahlavi dynasty, creating a constitutional monarchy that lasted until the Iranian Revolution of 1979.

Iran is heir to one of the world's oldest and most influential civilizations and has had a succession of powerful and influential empires dating back to the Achaemenid Empire of 550-330 BC, which was founded by Cyrus the Great. Want to really test your memory? Try this: the Archaemenids were followed by a succession of Persian dynasties, namely the Parthian, Sasanian, Samanid and Saffarid Empires of the first millennium and then the Abbasid, Safavid, Afsharid, Zand, Qajar and Pahlavi Dynasties of the second millennium (not including the Mongol invasion in the 13th century). Got that? Good! During these two millennia the geographical empire known as Iran (or Persia) expanded and contracted through much of what we now know as the Middle East, as well as central Asia.


The Janissaries were infantry troops that formed the Ottoman Sultan's household bodyguard

THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

The Ottoman Empire was created by Turkish tribes in Anatolia at the end of the 13th century, taking its name from Osman, the nomadic chief who founded the dynasty. Ruthless Sultans and fearsome armies expanded the Empire rapidly. They crossed into Europe in 1354 and conquered the ancient city of Constantinople in 1453, which ended the thousand-year history of the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Empire. Constantinople was renamed Istanbul, as the Ottoman Empire grew into one of the most powerful states in the world during the 15th to 18th centuries, twice advancing to besiege Vienna.

At the height of its power under Suleiman the Magnificent (1520-1566), the empire held sway over a huge territory, as the map shows. With control of all the lands around the eastern Mediterranean, the multi-ethnic Ottoman Empire was central to trade and cultural exchange between East and West for at least six centuries.

The Ottoman Empire came to an end in 1922, when it was broken up into independent nation states following the First World War. The Republic of Turkey was established in 1923.


Breaking the fast during Ramadan

LOST IN TRANSLATION

The tulip acquired its name by accident. The flower was first mentioned by the Austrian diplomat Ogier Ghiselion de Busbecq in his *Turkish Letters* of 1554, recording his travels in the Ottoman Empire. Struck by the beauty of the tulips he saw there, he asked his interpreter for the flower's name. The Turkish name is *lâle*, but the interpreter likened it to a turban (well, the shape is similar), for which he gave the Turkish name *tülbent* – which is actually the name for the cheesecloth a turban is made from. De Busbecq mistakenly assumed this was the flower's name, which he wrote in Latin as *tulipa*, and the name has stuck.

Khosrow sees Shirin Bathing, Bukhara, Uzbekistan 1648

Tulip stories, myths and legends

Was it the tulip's blood-red colour that made it such a symbolic flower for the peoples who first saw it? Many stories – such as the legend of Farhad and Shirin – were told to explain the tulip's beauty, in which it was often synonymous with perfection or eternity.

The most famous fairy tale associated with the tulip is the legend of Farhad and Shirin. The story goes that in sixth-century Iran a young Prince named Farhad was love-struck by a beautiful maiden called Shirin. Farhad demonstrated his love for her by many heroic acts and was so deeply devoted to Shirin that when he was (falsely) told that she had died of a sudden illness, he was overcome with grief and he killed himself by hacking at his own body with an axe.

Where each drop of his blood fell on to the barren ground, a scarlet tulip sprang up, a symbol of his perfect and undying love.

Well, that is one version. Different variations of this story appear time and again in every culture from Turkey to India (where five different films entitled 'Shirin Farhad' were made between 1926 and 1975!). It is not only because it is a tragic tale of pure and selfless love that this story is known and retold by Iranians and Kurds, Georgians, Afghanis, Parsis, Pashtuns and many others, but also because it appears in two of the most famous works of Iranian (or Persian) literature, which influenced every people and culture which came into contact with it.

Elements of this story are based in reality. Farhad is a famous character in Persian mythology and literature, appearing as a minor character in the poet Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh* or King of Kings, the most renowned poetic work in Persian. This epic poem was written between 977 and 1010 and consists of around 50,000 couplets – if you're wondering how long that is, the most recent scholarly edition was in eight volumes.

Farhad has a more significant 'best supporting actor' role in Khosrow and Shirin, a famous tragic romance by the lyrical poet Nizami Ganjavi (1141–1209). The latter is an elaborate fictional version of the life of Khosrow Parviz (the last great King of the Sasanian Empire, who reigned from 590 to 628), which made him into one of the greatest heroes of the culture, both as a lover and as a king.

In India five different films entitled 'Shirin Farhad' were made between 1926 and 1975

This is the story of Khosrow's love for the Armenian Princess Shirin, whom he first sees when she is bathing and washing her hair in a river. She finally becomes Khosrow's queen after a long courtship strewn with mishaps and difficulties. In this tale Farhad is a sculptor who becomes Khosrow's love rival. Khosrow hates Farhad, so he tricks him by telling him

Poster of the film *Shirin o Farhad*, Iran, 1935

The seventeenth-century French traveller JEAN CHARDIN wrote of tulips and his travels in Persia:

'When a young man presents one to his mistress, he gives her to understand, by the general colour of the flower, that he is on fire with her beauty; and by the black base of it, that his heart is burnt to a coal.'

Shaikh Zada, *Farhad Carves a Milk Channel for Shirin*, 1524, Herat, Afghanistan

Farhad carries Shirin and her horse on his shoulders, 1648, Bukhara, Uzbekistan

that if he carves a giant staircase on the side of Mount Behistun, Khosrow will withdraw his claim to Shirin.

It is a near-impossible task, but Farhad (who is incredibly strong – in one scene he carries Shirin and her horse on his shoulders!) proceeds with great vigour, working night and day in the hope that Khosrow will let him marry Shirin. He works so tirelessly that finally he succeeds, but as he completes the stairs Khosrow sends a messenger to tell him the news that Shirin has died. Hearing this false news, Farhad throws himself from the mountain top and dies.

Centuries after these stories were first written wild red tulips remain a favourite Persian token of undying love, the flowers which are given when lovers propose.

Khosrow listening to music, 1539–43, Iranian Azerbaijan

Persian poetic genius

No other culture in the world reveres poetry and poets as much as the Iranians (or Persians). Poets were especially celebrated in Iran during the Islamic Golden Age (from the eighth to the 13th centuries), when every scholar was expected to write in verse. Tulips have appeared in the best-known verses by world-renowned poets like Omar Khayyam and the Sufi philosopher-poet Rumi.

RUMI

Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī, more popularly known as Rumi (1207–1273), was a 13th century Persian Sunni Muslim poet, jurist, Islamic scholar and Sufi mystic. He has transcended national boundaries and ethnic divisions; the Muslims of South Asia have greatly appreciated his literary-spiritual legacy for seven centuries.

His philosophical poetry has been translated into many of the world's languages and he is now the most widely-read poet in America; his poems have also inspired western celebrities from Chris Martin to Madonna. And of course, Beyoncé and Jay-Z. But in translation by non-muslim scholars his poetry has often been deliberately manipulated to remove the Islamic references that peppered the original sonnets. As an Islamic scholar, Rumi would have known the Koran by heart.

Some fragments of Rumi's poetry:

If your face has become saffron pale through death,
Become a dweller among tulip beds and Judas trees.

Maybe you are searching in the branches
for what only appears in the roots

Spring is Christ,
Raising martyred plants from their shrouds.
Their mouths open in gratitude, wanting to be kissed.
The glow of the rose and the tulip means a lamp is inside.
A leaf trembles. I tremble in the wind-beauty
like silk from Turkestan.

Rumi

Raise your words, not voice.
It is rain that grows flowers, not thunder.

December and January, gone.
Tulips coming up. It's time to watch
How trees stagger in the wind
And roses never rest.

Very little grows on jagged rock.
Be grounded. Be crumbled so wildflowers
will come up where you are.

OMAR KHAYYAM

The Persian-born genius Ghiyath al-Din Abu'l-Fath Umar ibn Ibrahim Al-Nisaburi al-Khayyami, better known as Omar Khayyam, was studying, teaching and writing sophisticated and influential texts in the eleventh century.

He was a polymath, scholar, mathematician, astronomer, philosopher and poet who lived from 1048 to 1131. He wrote numerous treatises on maths, mechanics, geography, mineralogy and astronomy which have been read by intellectuals throughout the world.

He is widely considered to be one of the most influential thinkers of the Middle Ages. He was introduced, and made famous, to an English-speaking audience, by Edward FitzGerald's free translations of *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*, first published in 1859.

From **The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam:**

In the flaming light of the morning sky
the wine in your cup looks like a tulip in spring.
Drink, and forget that the hammer of fate
can bring you down at any moment.

They said to me: 'Stop drinking, Khayyam'
and I replied: 'When I have been drinking I can
hear what roses, tulips, jasmine say to one another.
I even hear the things my loved one cannot say to me.

The sophistication of the Sultans

Tulipmania in Turkey: how the Sultans adored their tulips!

JEAN-BAPTISTE VANMOUR , *An Ambassador's Audience with Sultan Ahmed III*, 1727–1730, oil on canvas

Nobody does tulip obsession quite like the Ottoman Turks! The eighteenth century Tulip Period in Istanbul was so extreme and extravagant that it led to an Anti-Tulip Revolution...

Long before tulip bulbs were first shipped to Holland from Istanbul in 1562 the flowers were revered throughout the Middle East, both for their beauty and as semi-divine flowers within Islam.
The tulip is the national flower of modern Turkey, but even so it's hard to overstate the obsession for the tulip in the Ottoman Empire. The craze among the elite at the court of Sultan Ahmed III in the 18th century was so great that an historical era is named after it: it's called *Lâle Devri*, or the Tulip Period.

However, while some Sultans were passionate about tulips, collecting new varieties even as they travelled on their military campaigns, others showed no interest in their flowers or gardens, so this is anything but a neat linear story about the ardour for tulips growing steadily over the centuries.

THE AWESOME TOPKAPI PALACE

The conqueror of Constantinople, Mehmed II, was clearly a fan of horticulture. Following the conquest of the city in 1453 he began building the awesome Topkapi Palace which was decorated with thousands of tiles featuring a profusion of tulip motifs. He planned pleasure gardens around the palace, with streams and fountains, pavilions linked by rows of poplars and, of course, masses of flowers.

Topkapi Palace gardens

A century or so later it was not unusual for Sultan Selim II (who reigned from 1566-74) to order subordinates across the empire to deliver up to 300,000 bulbs at a time for the twelve palace gardens where 900 gardeners worked, maintaining the orchards, kitchen gardens and creating elaborate displays of tulips – alongside hyacinths, roses, crocuses, narcissi and many other blooms.

The 17th century featured a succession of sultans who were perceived to be either libertines or madmen. There was Ibrahim the Crazy, for example, who on one terrible occasion had 280 concubines from his harem tied into weighted sacks and drowned in the Bosphorus as he suspected they were plotting against him. Mehmed IV, who ruled for 40 years from 1648, was the first Sultan for decades to be interested in horticulture, although as his nickname is Mehmed the Hunter, it wasn't his principal passion.

THE COUNCIL OF FLORISTS

Nevertheless, it was he who established a formal council of florists and a Florist-in-Chief to register and judge new cultivars of tulips and to describe their special features – all this was three hundred years before the Dutch bulb growers of Holland and the Royal Horticultural Society in England came together to compile their first

Classified List of tulip names. The Florist-in-Chief also gave names to the newly-registered-blooms which aimed to do justice to their beauty.

And what evocative names they were! 'Those that Burn the Heart', 'Star of Felicity', 'Matchless Pearl', 'Increaser of Joy', 'Light of the Mind,' 'Diamond Envy', 'Delicate Coquette' and 'Beloved's Face'. Some of those names, like 'Pomegranate Lance', indicate that the tulips which were most highly valued by the Ottomans were

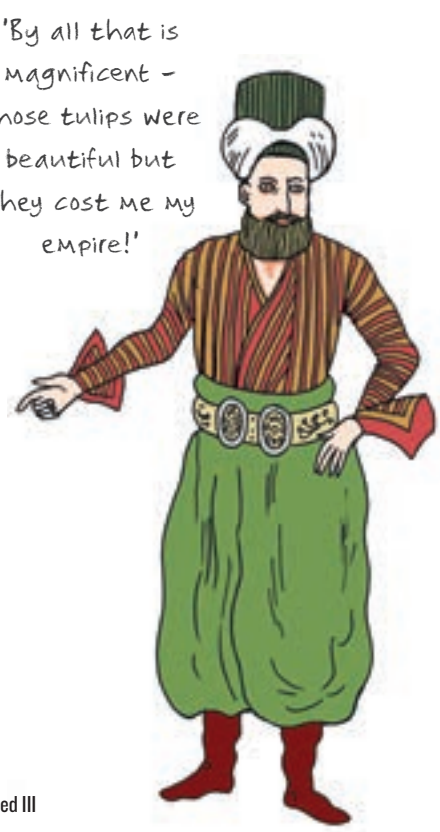
Ahmed III's passion for tulips was fuelled by having spent the first 29 years of his life in the 'cage'

not the wineglass-shaped Dutch blooms that we're so familiar with today, but altogether slimmer, elongated, almond-shaped flowers with petals that looked like daggers.

Tulips were often worn in the folds of turbans and displayed as single stems in special laledan vases. Pierre Belon, a renowned French botanist who visited the Ottoman Empire in the 1540s, had never seen a tulip (he first described it as a 'red lily') although he soon grasped its popularity; writing later that there were 'no people who delight more to ornament themselves with beautiful flowers, nor who praise them more than the Turks.'

But when it came to tulip-obsessed Sultans, none could compete with Ahmed III, whose particular passion was fuelled by having spent the first 29 years of his life in the harem and in the 'cage'. The cage was a peculiarly Ottoman solution to the problem of how to ensure the royal succession while avoiding civil war. Up until 1607 it had been normal for all the brothers of a new Sultan to be strangled upon his accession (19 brothers were killed upon the accession of Mehmed II in 1595), but thereafter the Sultan's sons and brothers were locked up in the cage, a suite of rooms which overlooked the palace gardens but allowed no access to them, with only servants and concubines for company.

It's hardly surprising that some would-be Sultans went mad or committed suicide while in the cage, but Ahmed III's peculiar madness was for a plant, and when he became Sultan he finally had the money and power to indulge his desires. The Turkish historian Ahmed Rafik subsequently gave the name *Lâle Devri* (Tulip Period) to this era. It's a term that is particularly associated with the years between 1718 and 1730 when the whole court followed the example of the Sultan in celebrating the flowers in verse, miniature paintings and embroidery, as well as in spectacular tulip festivals. Each spring the blooms were fêted in candle-lit 'tulip illuminations' in gardens throughout the capital, or in processions featuring thousands of tulips mounted on towers or shaped into pyramids.



Ahmed III

A NEW BLOOMING ERA

The French Ambassador to the Empire, Jean Sauvent de Villeneuve, described one such event in the garden of the Grand Vizier, which continued each night as long as the blooms were in flower:

'Beside every fourth flower is stood a candle, level with the bloom, and along the pathways are hung cages filled with all kinds of songbirds. The trellises are decorated with an enormous quantity of flowers, placed in bottles and lit by an infinite number of glass lamps of different colours and reflected by countless mirrors. The effect is magnificent.'

This was very unlike the warlike behaviour which the Ottomans had been famous for (they had been besieging Vienna in 1683), as the Empire pursued a policy of peace and diplomacy with Europe while indulging in hedonism and pleasure: 'Let us laugh,' wrote Ahmed's closest companion, the court poet, Nedim, 'Let us play, let us enjoy the delights of the world to the full.'

THE TULIP PERIOD & FLOWER POWER

Everyone from barbers and butchers to the Sheikh-ul-Islam (the most senior imam or bishop) cultivated bulbs, and the

The Sultan Ahmed Mosque

Popularly known as the Blue Mosque because of the tiles adorning its walls, the Sultan Ahmed Mosque was built between 1609-16 to feature five main domes, six minarets and eight secondary domes in a magnificent synthesis of size and splendour. The interior is decorated with more than 20,000 hand-made ceramic tiles made at Iznik in over 50 different tulip designs

Istanbul Tulips

During the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent (between 1520–1566), the Turks began to cultivate the tulip and breed more varieties. These became known as Istanbul Tulips and looked much more elegant than their wild predecessors. The most sought after tulips were almond shaped with six slender petals. To enhance their beauty the tulips were given evocative names such as 'The Light of Paradise' and 'The Matchless Pearl'. Many of these varieties were fragrant (unlike contemporary tulips) and sadly are now extinct.

demand led to the most prized specimens changing hands for hundreds of gold coins. Grand Admiral Mustafa Pasa, son-in-law of the Grand Vizier during the Tulip Period, is remembered for forty-four new tulip breeds! The obsession with novelty and quality in tulips led to ever-greater demand and a dramatic rise in prices which peaked in 1726-7. History does repeat itself: this was 90 years after Tulipmania in Holland but in the Ottoman Empire the state successfully intervened to regulate prices, with harsh consequences for anybody who overcharged. Even so, the Empire could no longer satisfy the Sultan's own demands for tulips, and millions of bulbs were actually imported from Holland and France.

The Tulip Period did not merely describe the preoccupation with this particular flower, as this was also a time of relative political tranquillity when the Grand Vizier (who effectively ran the government) expanded diplomatic relations with Europe and oversaw a flowering of all aspects of Ottoman culture, artistically, commercially and technologically.

All good things come to an end. The Tulip Period, as you've probably realised, didn't end well, at least not for the infatuated tulip fanciers. In 1730, when the Persian General Nader attacked Ottoman possessions in western Persia, the Ottoman leadership was clearly unprepared. The inordinate luxury enjoyed by Sultan Ahmed III and the excesses of court may well have infuriated his subjects. But it was Grand Vizier Ibrahim Pasha's apparent indifference to state affairs and the Sultan's hesitation in defending the empire that led to an insurrection – the Anti-Tulip Rebellion – led by a former Janissary soldier, Patrona Halil.

'Let us laugh,' wrote the court poet, Nedim, 'Let us play, let us enjoy the delights of the world to the full'

BACK TO THE CAGE WITH HIM

Both Grand Vizier Ibrahim Pasha and Grand Admiral Mustafa Pasa were strangled and decapitated, their heads presented to the mob by Ahmed III in order to save himself. He was forced to abdicate (and obliged to return to live in the cage), while his successor, Mahmud I, all but closed the Tulip Period's cultural openings and European links. The tulip festivals carried on for a while but the flood of manuscripts listing hundreds of varieties of the Istanbul tulip was soon reduced to a trickle, while the renowned blooms gradually disappeared into extinction. It wasn't until the creation of Turkey after the First World War that the tulip was reinstated as the national flower

The Istanbul Tulip Festival with the Sultan Ahmed Mosque beyond (thanks to vegetariantraveller.com)

Suleiman the Magnificent

Tulips and revolution!

Tulips have played symbolic roles in revolutions from Iran to Kyrgyzstan

Laleh Park, Tehran

THE AYATOLLAH'S TULIP

Since 1979 the tulip has played a vital symbolic role in the Islamic Revolution in Iran. The Tulip has been celebrated for centuries in Persia in poetry, miniature paintings and in legends, and it is the divine flower in Islam, so it should come as no surprise that it became one of the main symbols of the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

In Iran the tulip – *laleh* in Farsi – is everywhere. Its flowers are on the national flag as well as on its coins and postage stamps; it adorns every billboard featuring Shiite martyrs, and 72 stained-glass tulips decorate the dome above the tomb of Ayatollah Khomeini, the Supreme Leader and founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Hotels, parks (like Laleh Park in Tehran, above), hospitals and restaurants are named after the flower and the new flag of the republic features a sword surrounded by four-crescent-shaped red tulip petals (forming the word Allah in Arabic script), symbolising the five pillars of Islam: faith, prayer, charity, fasting during Ramadan and the pilgrimage to Mecca.

The spring flower is a very potent symbol of martyrdom in Shiite Islam. The Prophet Muhammad's grandson AlHusayn Ibn Ali, the third Shiite Imam, fell in battle fighting the Umayyad Dynasty near Karbala, along with 72 other martyrs (hence the 72 tulips above Ayatollah Khomeini's tomb). According to tradition, tulips sprang from AlHusayn's blood, (it's not hard to see the similarity to some versions of the Farhad and Shirin story) and ever since then has been associated with martyrdom. Fifteen centuries later, the tulip is even

now used on Facebook as a logo for a website that commemorates the martyrs of the Iran-Iraq war.

So it may seem surprising that the tulip also became the symbol of opposition to the government and clerics after the June 2009 presidential election. At the peak of the Green Movement opposition, millions took to the streets of cities across Iran to challenge the re-election of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. After a brutal government crackdown, the tulip became the metaphor for the Green Movement's struggle to survive – and to fight for justice.

On her blog, activist Melody Moezzi compared the opposition to tulips. 'Tulips are delicate flowers by nature. A mild wind properly timed can prove fatal. But tulips do not die. They are perennial. Between blooms, they prepare.'

Thanks to iranprimer.usip.org/blog which provided the source for this story

THE TULIP REVOLUTION IN KYRGYZSTAN

Every flower should have a revolution named after it

It had to happen. The world had already witnessed a Carnation Revolution in Portugal in 1974, the Velvet Revolution (Czechoslovakia, 1989) and the Rose Revolution in Georgia, so it was only a matter of time before the tulip had its turn.

The place was Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan on the border of western China, and the date was March 22 2005. Following parliamentary elections in February which were criticized by European observers, protests began in regional cities like Jalalabad and Osh and soon spread to the capital. Protesters occupied government buildings there and demanded the resignation of President

Akayev. It could have ended in a massacre and widespread repression, but in fact the President fled the country on March 24 (he was later granted exile by Vladimir Putin). An interim government was formed and in the subsequent Presidential election Kurmanbek Bakaviev and fellow opposition leader Felix Kulov teamed up to lead the country forward.

As it happens, this might have been dubbed the 'Pink' or 'Lemon' or even the 'Daffodil' Revolution (all terms which were used in the media at the time), but Tulip makes much more sense as so many wild tulips are native to Kyrgyzstan.

لاله
الله

A DIVINE FLOWER

To Muslims, gardens and flowers are regarded as sacred. Paradise is thought to be an extraordinarily beautiful garden. The tulip was considered the holiest of flowers. It literally meant the Flower of God in Arabic script, as *Laleh* – the Turkish word for tulip – is written in exactly the same letters as *Allah*.

What have the Persians ever done for us?

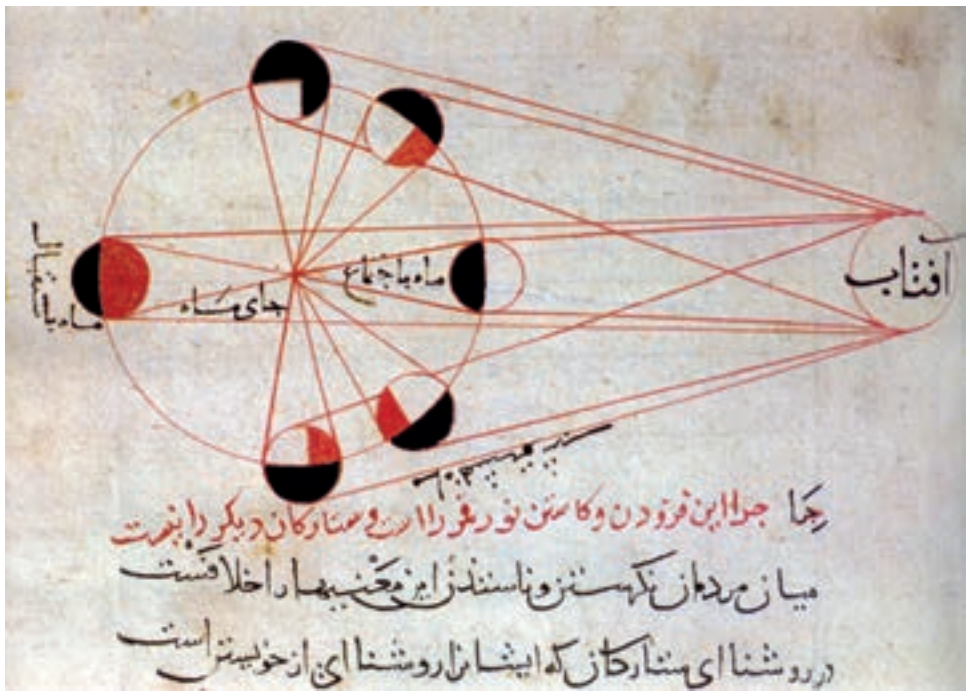
In the medieval world the centre for scientific research wasn't in Europe or China – but Baghdad

One thousand years ago, the largest most cosmopolitan city in the world was Baghdad. It was the capital of a vibrant Persian empire and the centre of the Abbasid Caliphate, with a population of well over one million people – at a time when London's population was just 20-25,000.

Its size was a direct consequence of the riches that could be earned as a major hub on the Silk Road – the other megatropolis of that era was Chang'an (now called Xi'an), the Chinese capital which was the gateway city to the Silk Road.

What was more impressive than its size was that Baghdad was also at the beating heart of the Islamic Golden Age, the era between the eighth century and the 13th century when scientific discoveries, intellectual research and cultural works flourished in the Islamic world.

Some people reading this may scoff that science was a western concept that was developed in Europe during the Age of Enlightenment in the 17th and 18th centuries. Well, they're wrong. If it hadn't been for the Persians, Arabs and Muslims scientific concepts may have been even slower in reaching Europe. It was the Persians in Baghdad who concentrated on gathering all the knowledge they could find from the Ancient Greeks and contemporary Persian and Indian books. They translated this knowledge into Arabic and then used their library as the basis for new and innovative research, some of which was even funded by the state.



Al-Biruni charts the phases of a lunar eclipse

The Abbasid Caliph Harun Al-Rashid and his successor al-Ma'mun are credited with kickstarting the Islamic Golden Age when they established the wonderfully-named House of Wisdom. There, Muslim, Jewish and Christian scholars shared information and ideas collected in the largest library in the world.

As Professor Jim Al-Khalili argues in *The House of Wisdom: How Arabic Science Saved Ancient Knowledge and Gave Us the Renaissance*, Arabic became the international language of science for at least 600 years: 'Although the Muslim world is often now seen as ill-equipped for scientific discovery, we can look back to Baghdad and see the origins of the modern scientific method, the world's first physicist and the world's first chemist; advances in surgery and anatomy, the birth of geology and anthropology; not to mention remarkable feats of engineering.'

Astronomical observatories were set up, and the House of Wisdom became an unrivalled forum for the study of mathematics, medicine, zoology, geography, cartography and philosophy by scholars who were often polymaths (experts in many different disciplines).

Islamic Golden Age geniuses include:

al Kwarezm (780–850)

The word "algebra" is derived from the title of this book: *Kitab al-Jebr* (The Book of Completion) in which al Kwarezm lays out for the first time the rules and steps of solving algebraic equations, as well as introducing the Hindu decimal system to the Arab world, and thence to Europe.

Ibn Sina aka Avicenna (980–1037) (left)

Avicenna's great work, the *Canon of Medicine*, was to remain the standard medical text both in the Islamic and Christian worlds until well into the 17th century.

Ibn al-Nafis (1213–1288)

A Syrian from the late 13th century, al-Nafis is credited with giving the first correct description of blood circulation in the body, hundreds of years before the work of William Harvey.

Jabir Ibn Hayyan aka Geber (721–815)

The word 'alchemy' derives from the Arabic *alkimya*, which means 'chemistry'. Geber developed alchemy into an experimental science and wrote hundreds of studies on chemistry and many other subjects.

Ibn al-Haytham aka Alhazen (965–1040)

Alhazen developed the scientific method, based on observation and measurement, in the tenth century, even though it is now credited to Francis Bacon and René Descartes. Has been called 'the greatest physicist in the 2,000-year span between Archimedes and Newton.'

Al-Biruni (973–1048) (above)

Having developed the mathematics of trigonometry, Al-Biruni was able to calculate the radius of the earth and thus measure the circumference of the Earth to within a few miles.

The mood in Europe during the 16th and 17th centuries was one of insatiable curiosity, mixed with an appetite for private trade and commerce. Amsterdam in Holland was initially the beating heart of this financial and cultural growth during the Dutch Golden Age. But England and France, Portugal and Spain were also competing to conquer new colonies around the worlds. The by-product of their rapidly growing wealth was a blossoming of intellectual, cultural, scientific and military knowledge. It was against this backdrop that our humble little flower, the tulip, was first seen blooming in Europe. Remarkably, the tulip was soon to become the most valuable and popular flower the world had ever seen.

TULIPS IN EUROPE

The multi-talented Conrad Gesner records the first tulip in Germany

Tulips were first recorded in Western Europe in the spring of 1559, when the flower was painted and described by the Swiss naturalist and polymath Conrad Gesner. He saw it in the famous garden of a Magistrate called Herwart in Augsburg, Germany.

How it arrived there is uncertain, but Gesner named it *Tulipa Turcarum* so he must have been told about its Turkish origins. That flower was short, bright red and waisted like the lily-flowered tulips of today. Later it was crossed with other wild tulips to produce the vast range of tulips that we now have in our gardens. One can still read Gesner's scribbled notes about the flower which was reproduced as a wood block print in his book, *De Hortis Germaniae Liber Recens*, in 1561, the first European illustration of the tulip.

Born in 1516 in Zurich, Gesner attended the Cathedral School in his hometown where his best friend was Georg Joachim Rheticus. Gesner was poor and could not afford an education but his great intelligence and abilities led a series of prominent scholars to act as his patrons. This enabled him to study at the universities of Zurich, Strassburg and Bourges. His friend Rheticus would go on to gain everlasting fame as the man who persuaded the astronomer and mathematician Nicolaus Copernicus to publish *De Revolutionibus* – it was a revolutionary book in which Copernicus described his controversial theory that the earth revolved around the sun, not the other way around. The two remained lifelong friends and Gesner provided a refuge for Rheticus when he suffered a mental breakdown later in life. Gesner became a naturalist, botanist, physician, classical linguist and bibliographer, as well as a fine plantsman. He is also a serious contender as the father of modern mountaineering.

'What joy... to marvel at the mighty masses of the mountains, and lift up one's head... among the clouds... strangely excited at the amazing altitude... carried away to the contemplation of the Great Architect of the Universe.'

Conrad Gesner

As a bibliographer (a person who describes and lists books and other publications), Gesner published *Bibliotheca Universalis* (1545-55) in four volumes, in which he attempted to include all known literature. He feared that this knowledge would be lost to posterity, especially after the Ottoman Turks had sacked Buda (the capital of Hungary) in 1526, and the famous Royal Library of Matthias Corvinus (who was King of Hungary from 1458 to 1490) had been dispersed. Ironically, Gesner's Bibliotheca was used as a primary source for the Vatican's *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*, (the Pauline Index of banned works of 1559), and... was itself banned!

THAT *Tulipmania* MOMENT

The earliest recorded stock market crash... or was it?

A still from the forthcoming film *Tulip Fever*

And now we get to the most popular and well-known chapter in our story of the tulip. Although it's almost 400 years on, the story and myths of the Tulipmania in Holland between 1636–37 continue to fascinate. So much so that films such as *Wall Street* featured Tulipmania as a perfect lesson in the astonishing riches – as well as the potentially massive instability – that go hand in hand with human behaviours within rampant capitalism.

In the early 17th century, the newly established Dutch Republic was one of the richest countries in Europe, and tulips were the most fashionable flower, widely grown and hugely appreciated for their incredible variety. Beautiful and dramatically-striped cultivars such as 'Semper Augustus' and 'Viceroy' were the most valuable of the new varieties. Their rarity – and the ever-increasing prices paid for their bulbs from 1623 onwards – gradually led to an unprecedented inflationary bubble which finally burst in the spring of 1637.

'He who considers the profits made by some every year from their tulips will believe there is no better Alchemy than this agriculture.'

JEAN FRANEAU, botanical illustrator

It is often referred to as the first economic or stock market bubble and it is said to have crashed the Dutch economy. The story is retold as a moral warning of the dangers of greed and unbridled capitalism. A forthcoming film, 'Tulip Fever', shows the ongoing potency of that story and the era as a setting for a tumultuous tale of a love triangle. Based on the novel of the same name by Deborah Moggach, with a screenplay by Tom Stoppard, the cast features Judi Dench, Alicia Vikander and Christopher Waltz and we're looking forward to its release.

JUST LIKE TODAY, MYTHS & FACTS COLLIDE

But the real story is perhaps even more interesting. As Anne Goldgar revealed in her painstakingly researched book *Tulipmania: Money, Honour, and Knowledge in the Dutch Golden Age*, the Dutch economy did not crash as a result of tulip speculation. Whereas some people did lose a lot of money, she could not find one verified case of a merchant bankrupted purely due to the tulip trade.

Nonetheless there was a crisis, and highly prized varieties did reach absurdly inflated prices, especially at a notorious auction in Alkmaar on February 5, 1637. But the record bids recorded at the auction were never actually paid. When the 'stock market' prices for tulips collapsed in the spring of that year buyers simply did not honour the high prices they had offered.

TRUST AND BUSINESS (AND WINE)

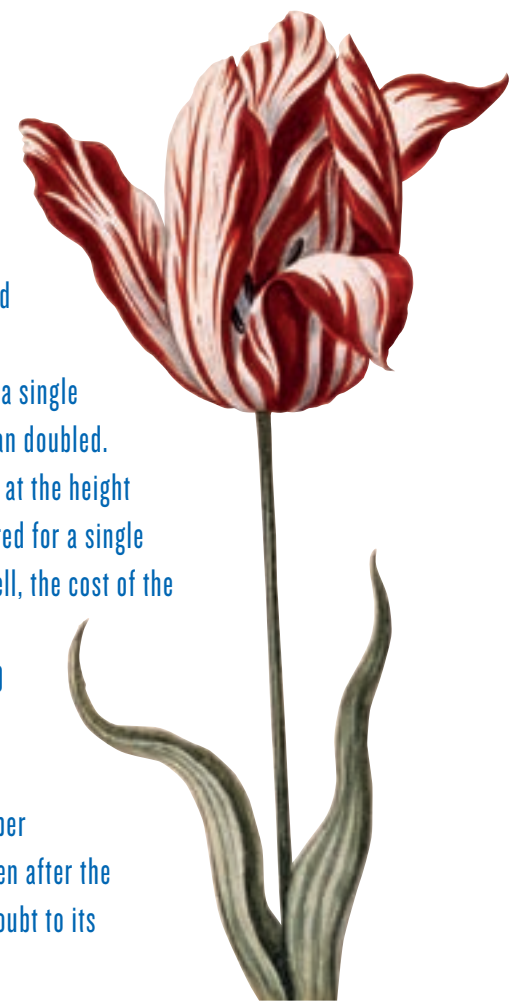
The tulip trade operated a little differently from other more immediate markets because the tulip bulb had to grow in the ground for a whole season. So the buyer and seller would agree a price, often with a notary as witness, and at that point a 'wine fee' (a nominal deposit) would then be paid – often spent in the tavern on entertaining.

The price agreed upon would not be paid until delivery, after the flower had been inspected in the spring, and the bulb handed over in the summer. After the tulip market crashed, the agreed sums were never actually paid.

The crisis that happened was largely one of trust. In highly-religious protestant Holland, where honour was fundamental to good business practice, Tulipmania led to a cultural and social crisis concerning the vital issues of Value, Honour, Trust, and a person's standing in society. 'How do we know what is real?' 'How do we know what is valuable?' were among the questions that were frantically asked, alongside significant others such as 'What use is money?' 'What use is art?' 'How should our society work?' and 'Whom can we trust?'

The crisis was real enough, even if it didn't match the myth that has been handed down of a huge financial crash – which was broadcast by pamphleteers and songsters at the time who were critical of the trade. It revealed a deep sense of disorder and disruption in what Goldgar describes as the 'fragile bonds of honour and trust that ultimately held society together.'

Semper Augustus



No tulip tells the story of the tulipmania better than Semper Augustus. This legendary flower stood as the most valuable of all the red-and-white flame and feathered tulips of the 17th century and held its high price over a long period.

In 1624 the price was 1,200 guilders for a single bulb. By 1625 the asking price had more than doubled. In 1633 the price had gone up to 5,500 and at the height of the tulipmania 10,000 guilders was offered for a single bulb. How exorbitant were these prices? Well, the cost of the most expensive houses on the canals of Amsterdam in that period was about 10,000 guilders. Nowadays a similar such house would be worth at least £3 million.

What is most remarkable about the Semper Augustus is that its price remained high even after the collapse of the market in 1637, thanks no doubt to its extreme rarity.

THE GODDESS FLORA

Flower-fools and pamphleteers

There is a symbolic heroine and villainess in this story. One on whom all glory, resentment and wrath was targeted. Flora was the ancient Roman fertility goddess of flowers, youth, nature and springtime. Her cult was instituted in 240 BCE; her festival, the Floralia, took place April 28 - May 3rd, and symbolised the renewal of life, fertility, drinking and flowers.

Ironically, she actually achieved more prominence among neo-pagan humanists during the Renaissance (15th-17th century) than she ever had in ancient Rome.

Taken out of her Roman setting, and replanted into the largely Calvinist Dutch Republic, the image of the Goddess Flora was bound to be ambiguous; a symbolic deity that could just as easily serve as a positive or a negative image.

THE VIRTUOUS FLORA

In the Dutch Republic she came to personify the tulip and the flower trade itself, her image often positively presented in contemporary culture, as with Rembrandt's loving first portrait of his beloved wife as Flora in the first year of their marriage in 1634. One finds her gracing the covers of florilegia (flower books) and tulip catalogues of the time, and while the trade was going well her virtues, charm and grace were extolled. It was said she smiled on the land, and made it bloom with flowers and with tulips.

Taking into account her pagan origins and her attributes, it is not surprising that some were critical of the way she was presented even before the crash of the Tulipmania of 1636-37.

FLORA GOES BAD

After the Tulipmania crash, Flora came in for particular abuse. She was seen as the personification of the tulip trade and the speculators were now often being referred to as her 'Flower-Fools'. She came to be viewed, similarly to the Tulip itself, as someone who was lacking substance, a thing of questionable morals, of little or no true value. To believe in her promises, was to believe in lies.

In the famous print, *Floraes Mallewagen* (Flora's Fool's Chariot) of 1637 by Crispijn van de Passe, Flora holds aloft prized tulips, whilst looking behind her rather than in the direction of travel. The craft, with its crew of fools, heads into a stormy sea, where it will sink. Behind her, the foolish wealthy burghers of Haarlem are saying 'we want to ride with you!'

REMBRANDT van RIJN, *Flora*, 1634, oil on canvas, 100 x 92cm

In literature, pamphlets and songs of February and early March 1637, the crash is often likened to a death: Flora has become ill, with various diseases, or is said to have died, with her disciples – the Flower-Fools – mourning at her grave. But, as the author Anne Goldgar points out, this was not the whole story. For instance, the 1637 pamphlet, *Toonel van Flora* (Theatre of Flora), argues in favour of the flower tulip trade after the crash. The title page of this late pamphlet broadcasts a sense of weariness in the face of earlier productions.

This pamphlet, and others like it, points out that the trade in tulips is surely not so very different from the trade in tobacco, coffee or cloth. If it was madness to trade in tulips, it was madness to trade at all. Most of the attacks, the authors implied, were actually based either on Schadenfreude or envy.

However one looks at the critical pamphleteers making use of the image of Flora as the personification of the tulip trade, they give voice to a social disruption. If the Tulipmania, contrary to the myth, did not actually crash the Dutch economy, it was nonetheless truly a cultural crisis in which the whole nature of value and truth, honour, and the structures of a fast-evolving society were questioned at a fundamental level. This is a familiar story: inequality leads to a perception of extravagant indulgence by the elite.


Toonel van FLORA.

Grondelijcke Redens-onderfoekinge,

HANDEL DER FLORISTEN.

A SATIRE OF TULIP MANIA

JAN BRUEGEL the YOUNGER, *Allegory of Tulipmania*, c.1640, oil on panel, 33 x 44cm

This brilliantly satirical commentary is by Jan Bruegel the Younger, the grandson of Pieter Bruegel. The latter was one of the first artists to immortalise the life of the peasant farmer or villager in expensive oil paint and on a grand scale. You can therefore see why his grandson might have made such a political lampoon.

The 'Flower-Fools' or tulip speculators are depicted as monkeys blindly obsessed with their industry. Bulbs are weighed, money is counted, a lavish business dinner is enjoyed.

The monkey on the left writes up a bill of sale for the rare tulips he has on offer; the owl on his shoulder witnesses the foolishness and ignorance that he is exploiting. Two wealthy trader monkey shake hands over the deal; the one on the right bears a sword denoting his upper class status. The monkey in the centre foreground weighs bulbs; behind him, a colleague scrutinises a contract.

Bruegel is not only ridiculing tulip speculators as brainless monkeys, the work is an object lesson for the folly of speculating to such an extent in such a transient thing as a mere bloom.

In the denouement at right, a monkey urinates on the now-worthless tulips; fellow speculators in debt are brought before the magistrate or weep in the dock. A frustrated buyer brandishes his fists, while at the back right a speculator is carried to his grave.

Unknown artist of the Dutch School, *The Tulip Trade*, c.1650,Musée des Beaux Arts, Rennes.

A fool and his money are easily parted

The merchant on the left weighs his tulip bulbs while the buyer who is dressed like a jester empties his well filled purse on the table. The painter clearly pokes fun at the tulip madness.

Flora's Fool's Cap

This 1637 engraving by Pieter Nolpe depicts an inn made in the shape of a fool's cap with tulip traders sitting inside, weighing tulip bulbs with goldsmith's scales. The name of the inn, written on the banner, reads 'At the Sign of the Fool's Bulbs' To the right of the inn we see the goddess Flora seated on a donkey (the symbol of stupidity), being beaten by disappointed florists. in the foreground, separated from the mayhem, a group of three tulip growers hold the tools of their trade: a rake and a wicker basket. On the left, bulbs are taken to the rubbish heap.

ROOMS OF WONDER

Cabinets of Curiosity were all the rage in the Dutch Golden Age

All kinds of new products and strange objects arrived in Europe during the Age of Discovery in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. These unusual and wonderful things inspired a taste for the exotic across Europe – kings, the nobility and wealthy merchants collected antiquities, artworks and natural history specimens in their 'Cabinets of Curiosity' or *Wunderkammer* (Room of Wonders), mirroring the craze for tulips and rare plants that they indulged in their gardens. *Wunderkammer* were especially appreciated during the Dutch Golden Age (1588-1700) as the Dutch experienced an explosion in riches and ideas, commerce and exotica from the East and West Indies, Africa, the Ottoman Empire and the Americas.

Look into this painting and your eye will be drawn to a strange mix of natural and man-made wonders. Here are fabulous shells, precious gems, landscape paintings, and much more besides – can you see the seahorse and statues? And can you find some worry beads, a puffer fish, a padlock and a picture of a man in a big black hat?

This is clearly a collection, but it's not the kind of carefully-classified and thoughtfully-described displays that we've become used to in museums. Yet many great public museums were established from private collections of diverse objects just like this one. The British Museum in London, The Ashmolean Museum in Oxford and Peter the Great's Kunstkamera Museum in Russia were all originally Cabinets of Curiosity which were gradually enlarged and organised into the amazing museums you can visit today.

Frans Francken II, *Room of Art and Rarities*, 1636, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

THE CREATION OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC: TRADE, ART, TULIPS & EXOTICA

In 1568 when Holland was still ruled by the Spanish Catholic Kings, the Dutch rebelled against Philip II of Spain, leading to the Eighty Years' War or the Dutch War of Independence (1568–1648). The Protestants of the Dutch Reformed Church (founded in 1571) fought against heavy taxes, and for self-rule and the freedom to practise their faith. This was impossible under the Counter-Reformation and Spanish Inquisition, as any religion other than Catholicism was outlawed as heresy.

Antwerp was the most important trading port in Europe when it was retaken in 1585 by Spanish forces. Protestants were given four years to reconvert to Catholicism or leave the area. By 1589, 60,000 people (half of the city's population prior to the siege), had fled to the Protestant-controlled Dutch Republic of the north.

This massive transfer of wealth and expertise from the south to the northern provinces laid the foundations for the Dutch Golden Age. By 1630, Amsterdam, previously a small port, had been transformed into one of the most important commercial centres in the world.

The political independence, religious tolerance and prosperity of the northern provinces made it a destination for refugees. Not only Protestant immigrants from the south, but also Jews, Huguenots and many others who helped create a vibrant economy and rich 'trade' of

DAMIEN HIRST, *Forms Without Life*, 1991, fibreboard cabinet, melamine, wood, steel, glass and sea shells, 183 x 275 x 31cm

ideas in natural philosophy and the arts. The famous Jewish philosopher Baruch Spinoza and his family fled intolerance of Jews and became merchants in Holland. Descartes, 'the father of modern philosophy', found greater freedom from the Catholic censor but also (among other things) access to displays of public dissection of human corpses, which was banned in Catholic lands.

The Dutch Republic attracted similar talents from across Europe and came to be pre-eminent in the realms of trade, science, finance and the military, as well as art and culture. Leiden University was founded in 1575 and developed rapidly to become one of the most highly regarded universities in Europe, with its renowned anatomy department and famous Hortus Botanicus gardens.

The greatest botanist of the era, Carolus Clusius (1526-1609), oversaw these gardens and in 1593 planted his extensive collection of tulips there. This colourful, rare flower became the exemplar of the mania for collecting all things exotic and 'foreign', which was to result in the famed Tulipmania of 1636-37.

Many historians believe the Netherlands to have been the first capitalist society in the world; in the 17th century it had the first full-time stock market and Amsterdam was the richest trading city in Europe. The Dutch Republic was at the vanguard of modernity – socially, economically and politically. Dutch burghers were fabulously rich, with an unprecedented accumulation of capital based on banking and trade.

Carolus Clusius

In the 1620s there are records of apothecaries and specialist shops selling '...antiquities, rarities, coins, shells, vessels, jewels ... paintings ... Brazilian spiders' teeth, rattles of Indian snakes, the rind of an Indian apple...'

THE KUNSTKAMMER, CAROLUS CLUSIUS AND THE CURIOUS WONDERS OF THE GARDEN

It is hard to imagine the excitement and 'shock of the new' that people would have felt in the 17th century when faced with the dizzying array of exotic goods flooding into the trading ports. In the Age of Discovery new worlds were opening up not only via trade routes but also via the new optics of the telescope and the microscope. In the botanic area, twenty times as many varieties of botanical plants were recorded in the 1620s alone compared to the previous century.

Botanical and zoological specimens, textiles, coffee, tea, porcelain, ethnographic goods and a host of other curious items were discovered and imported in greater quantities than ever before. These were eagerly acquired and exchanged by merchants, the nobility, scholars and artists alike. Collections of such artefacts in *Wunderkammer* – Cabinets of Curiosities – were made right across Europe.

THE RISE OF THE MIDDLE CLASS

Once the province of Kings and Emperors, nobles and only the richest burghers, collecting art and exotica now became much more widespread, especially among the newly-wealthy in the Netherlands. Travellers of the time remarked that pictures seemed to be everywhere, even in the Inns and houses of more humble citizens where, if not oil paintings, one would still find prints and engravings and objets d'art.

The *Wunderkammer* and related art and botanical collections of the period conferred an elevated social status on their owners. But they also gave voice to their fascination with the world in its infinite variety.

Many involved in Natural Philosophy had collections geared toward new-fangled science, discourse and knowledge. The renowned botanist Carolus Clusius is an eminent example of this. Clusius was against trading in flowers, and instead gave gifts of or swapped his famous tulip bulbs with correspondents across Europe. But even he was not immune to the desire for rarities and novelties. It was the exotic nature and intense variegated beauty of the colours of the ever-changing tulip, as well as their rarity, that he so admired.

TULIPS AND COLLECTORS

To read contemporary writings of the *bloemisten* (tulip collectors) is to witness the joyful exhilaration that these strange, foreign flowers gave them. These flower and plant lovers were often the same people who were collectors or dealers in paintings and other exotica, and some gardens became rather like outdoor *Wunderkammer*.

It might seem odd to speak of flowers and art in the same breath, or of oil paintings and monkeys, lizards and things such as bezoar stones (gallstones and the like which were believed to have miraculous medicinal qualities). Art historians have generally overlooked the fact that many important fine art collections of the time also contained a host of other elements: naturalia, exotica, artificialia, as well as paintings and more obvious objets d'art, artefacts and rarities.

Trade, art and science, natural philosophy and a desire to catalogue the changing world are all entwined in this first era of globalisation. The *Wunderkammer* collections depicted in contemporary realist art and still life paintings reflect the consumerism of Dutch (and the wider European) culture, as they gave importance to objects based on their ability to be classified, inventoried, priced, owned and displayed.

'Cultural heritage is part and parcel of a lineage... which owes its existence not only to the toil of the great geniuses who created it, but also to the nameless drudgery of its contemporaries. There has never been a document of culture which is not simultaneously one of barbarism.'

WALTER BENJAMIN, *ON THE CONCEPT OF HISTORY*, 1940.

THE GLOBALISED CABINET OF CURIOSITIES: HYPER-CONSUMERISM AND THE INTERNET

by PAUL SAKOILSKY

Natural History Museum of Ferrante Imperato of Naples, 1674

Writing and researching at a friend's house in Hackney, London, I had a gestalt, a kind of epiphany. It appears absurd, but sometimes it is the very obviousness of something just being there, so much a part of our world, that stops you from having any true understanding.

I looked at the multitude of objects in the kitchen, the curiosities on shelves by the table, art on the walls, all the perishable goods: food stuffs, various cooking oils, sauces and condiments; books here and there, the cooker, dishwasher, kitchen furniture in general; crockery and cutlery; the fish tanks and the axolotl, the computer I was typing on.

It suddenly hit me: nearly all the objects we take for granted had found their way into this house via trade of one sort or another. It made me reassess the idea of trade, capitalism and globalisation. If nothing else, and this is something Karl Marx saw in a positive light, it has dynamism.

The Cabinet of Curiosities, the *Wunderkammer*, is now curated before us: within our homes, our cities, our towns, within our shops, our high streets, across our computer screens, on our shelves and our mantelpieces. 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year.

MARK DION, *Cabinet of Marine Debris*, 2014, mixed media

We no longer experience the shock of the new. The exotic has become commonplace.

WUNDERKAMMER & THE INTERNET

At first the internet seemed a cabinet of curiosities, in digital form. People still use it to find and share curiosities and oddities. But it's a far cry from the excitement and exhilaration of the exotic flora and fauna, goods and artefacts, and stories of strange and distant lands that sailors and merchants brought into 17th century Dutch ports.

The Dutch Golden Age is a thrilling part of world history: the birth of modernity and the Age of Discovery brought new ideas and practices, disciplines in law, democracy, trade, art and science. This society was essentially liberal in its freedom of thought. But there was also a dark side: the ruthless religious persecution and inquisition; decade after decade of war and the constant fear of sudden death from the plague. It was also a time of brutal colonisation, and the slave trade – which was not abolished in the Dutch colonies until 1863.

We know the effects of hyper-consumerism and continual hankering after novelty and the new. The problems of our neo-liberal model of capitalism have become ever more apparent; the idea of constant growth and ever-greater profits leads to massive over-production which in turn helps to fuel anthropomorphic climate change.

The early system of capitalism in the Netherlands was based on trusting your fellow citizen and a sense of honour, balanced by a Christian critique of material wealth. The latter found its expression in the Dutch Realist 'Vanitas' paintings that take as their motto 'Vanity, all is vanity.' In our age of hyper-capitalism and the insane proliferation of new products, another religious saying attributed to Solomon might be more appropriate: 'Nothing is new under the sun.'

Our consumer society still tries to make us believe in the intrinsic value of novelty, the importance of having the newest commodity for satisfaction; although we know this is most often a gimmick. Trade, power and knowledge are neither good nor bad; it is their distribution and use that should concern us.

DOCTOR FREDERIK RUYSCH succeeded Nicolas Tulp (see page 49) as Professor of Anatomy and later in life was appointed head of the Amsterdam Hortus Botanicus. In his lifetime Ruysch researched many areas of human anatomy and assembled one of Europe's most famous collections of curiosities. In large cabinets, he displayed all kinds of animals and human body parts as well as embalmed children, preserved in a secret *liquor balsamicum*.

His daughter Rachel, a renowned painter (see page 46) helped to decorate her father's collection with flowers, fishes, seashells, and for the more human body parts, with lace.

In 1697 Peter the Great of Russia visited Ruysch in his house of on the Bloemgracht. The Tsar was so impressed with what he saw that he bought Ruysch's whole collection for 30,000 guilders. The precious cargo was shipped to St Petersburg, where it is still on view today.

YOUR GUIDE TO WORKS & ARTISTS

Turkish Tulips

THE BOWES MUSEUM

Turkish Tulips is an exhibition of colourful and crazy tulips displayed as a 'flower trail' around the galleries of The Bowes Museum. As you have read in this newspaper this symbolic flower has obsessed people from the east to the west for hundreds of years. It has fascinated artists too – the tulip has appeared in paintings, sculptures, furniture, ceramics and textiles, representing so many things to different peoples. The internationally-renowned artists invited to be part of the *Turkish Tulips* exhibition have presented tulips in very diverse ways, from a straight portrait to an 'exploded' tulip.

Nineteen of these artists have also created prints which together form *The House of Fairy Tales' Turkish Tulips Portfolio*, sold to benefit the charity's work with children and education. This is published in an edition of 25 and will be on show at the exhibition.

RORY McEWEN, *Tulip 'Helen Josephine' (rose breeder)*, 1975, watercolour on vellum

Sir PETER BLAKE

Tulip
after Blancour, *A Bowl of Flowers*
1995–96, acrylic on canvas, 21 x 21cm

Tulip
after van Os, *Fruits and Flowers in a Terracotta Vase*
1995–96, acrylic on canvas, 21 x 21cm

Tulip
after Walscapelle, *Flowers in a Glass Vase*
1995–96, acrylic on canvas, 21 x 21cm

Tulips
after van Huysum, *Flowers in a Terracotta Vase*
1995–96, acrylic on canvas, 21 x 21cm

Tulips
after Van Brussel, *Flowers in a Vase*
1995–96, acrylic on canvas, 21 x 21cm

Sir Peter Blake is one of the most loved artists of his generation, alongside his contemporaries David Hockney and RB Kitaj.

Playing a crucial role in the emergence of Pop Art in Britain, his work draws on a wide variety of sources, ranging from fairgrounds and comic books to playfully referenced images from the history of art.

During his residency as associate artist at The National Gallery from 1994 to 1996 the artist painted portraits of tulips isolated from a series of famous European flower arrangements (see below). These very specific portraits were shown at Tate Liverpool in 2007 in *Peter Blake: A Retrospective* and have been loaned to us for the *Turkish Tulips* project. Can you find tulips above in the paintings below?

Turkish Tulips

HELEN CHADWICK

Wreath to Pleasure No.1

1992-93, cibachrome print on aluminium-faced MDF in a glazed powder-caoted steel frame, 110 (diameter) x 5cm

This pioneering female British sculptor, photographer and installation artist was one of the first women artists to be nominated for the Turner Prize. Sadly she died unexpectedly in 1996. Chadwick was known for 'challenging stereotypical perceptions of the body in elegant yet unconventional forms'.

Her work draws from a range of sources, from myths to science, grappling with a plethora of unconventional, visceral materials that included chocolate, lambs' tongues and rotting vegetable matter, not to mention urinating in the snow to make her cast *Piss Flowers*.

Helen Chadwick taught both Gavin Turk and Philippa van Loon at Chelsea School of Art and her work has been influential for the next generation of British Artists.

For the *Turkish Tulips* exhibition we have on loan an hypnotic tulip work that is a kind of ocular or anus reflecting back our own fecund desires.

ADAM DANT

Tulip Fever (detail)

2017, lithograph on Zerkall-Butten 150gsm, 102 x 74cm

Dant studied at the Royal College of Art, London and the Maharaja Sayhajirao University of Baroda, India and now lives and works in East London.

Dant creates dense, elaborate narrative drawings that examine and depict contemporary public life, space, mythologies and histories. These works are thoroughly researched, with the artist drawing on a deep well of historical and visual sources to create his wittily perceptive and detailed drawings.

Dant has been described as someone who 'delights in serious craziness that pokes fun at our contemporary media by proposing charismatically strange alternative perspectives'. Between 1995 and 2000, he acted as an 18th century style pamphleteer, producing and distributing some nine hundred editions of the *Donald Parsnips' Daily Journal*. Since then he has focused on museums (as in his early series of 'mockuments'), city maps, or individual historical characters and events.

Dant's work can be found in numerous public and private collections including the Arts Council Collection, The V&A, The Museum of London and The Government Art Collection in the UK, and MoMA (New York), Deutsche Bank (Germany), The Musée d'Art Contemporain (Lyon) and the San Diego Museum of Art (US).

For the portfolio and the *Turkish Tulips* exhibition Adam has illustrated a contemporary allegorical map of the history and stories which are linked by this iconic flower.

MAT COLLISHAW

Tulipmania

2017, Giclée print on Somerset paper with screen print varnish, 30 x 42cm

Central to the famous generation of British artists who emerged from Goldsmiths' College in the late 1980s, Collishaw has produced dozens of solo exhibitions including at The New Art Gallery Walsall and *Magic Lantern* at the Victoria and Albert Museum. His work is in many public collections including Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego; and Tate, London.

For the Portfolio the artist has made an image of what looks like an exploding tulip, with all the exquisite beauty shattered in space against a dark, almost medieval, backdrop. The title refers to the mythologised economic bubble of 1636–7 when the price of tulips escalated and flower traders allegedly became destitute, fortunes were lost and families torn apart due to the gambling and greed inflamed by this insouciant beauty.

Turkish Tulips

DAMIEN HIRST

Tulip Varieties

2016, inkjet on Somerset Satin 330gsm with UV varnish and screen printed text, 42 x 30cm

Hirst is a pioneering art collector and curator as well as Britain's most successful contemporary artist. As a leading member of the YBAs (Young British Artists) who gained an international reputation for British art during the 1990s, he has exhibited in many of the major art museums throughout the world.

Mortality, collecting (in the form of 18th-century Cabinets of Curiosity) and museums are each major themes in Hirst's work. His infamous series of animals (including a shark, a sheep and a cow) are preserved – often dissected – in formaldehyde. His spin paintings and his spot paintings have become iconic design symbols of the turn of the millennium.

For the *Turkish Tulips* project Hirst has made an image echoing a seed packet or a tulip bulb sales sheet, showing a selection of exotic tulip varieties which highlight the obsessive relationship between western and eastern civilisations and the humble tulip, as well as his own iconic branding.

From
Tulips by SYLVIA PLATH

'The tulips should be behind bars
like dangerous animals;
They are opening like the mouth
of some great African cat'

RORY McEWEN

Tulip 'Helen Josephine' (rose breeder)

1975, watercolour on vellum (ABOVE)

Old English Striped Tulip 'Sam Barlow'

1974–76, watercolour on vellum

Rory McEwen's exquisite red tulip has become the face of the exhibition at the Bowes Museum and shares the name of the Museum's founder, Joséphine.

McEwen was born in Scotland in 1932, the fourth of seven children, and was educated by a governess who 'instructed us in drawing from nature. I still have some of those drawings... They conjure up freedom and fine weather, tickling trout, bare feet in cool water.'

A renaissance creative, this contemporary botanical artist made several major contributions to 20th century British culture. The first was as a folk musician and impresario who introduced many forms of American folk music to the UK.

He always had a passion for making art which culminated in an impressive body of horticultural and botanical inspired works that increasingly took up all of his time. His watercolours on vellum are as exquisitely done as any over the last few hundred years, as well as being strangely contemporary.

For the *Turkish Tulips* exhibition his family have kindly loaned two tulip works, of many he painted of this symbolic flower.

LILIANE LIJN

Tulip Mine

2017, inkjet on Somerset, 29 x 29cm

American-born, London-based, Liliane Lijn has worked across a range of media, including kinetic sculpture, film, performance and collage, for over five decades.

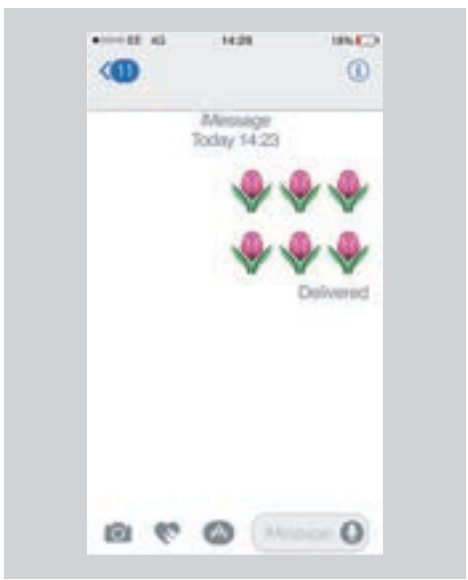
At the heart of her working practice is an aesthetic investigation of science and technology revealed in a playful series

of works drawing on the semantics of language, mythology, light and matter.

Lijn's practice has been enriched by collaborations with scientists – as in her ACE/NASA residency (2005) at the Space Sciences Laboratory, University of California, Berkeley.

In 1974 Lijn was invited to participate in the International Festival for Democracy in Chile at the Royal College of Art, London, where she originally staged her seminal *Power Game*. This has been restaged many times subsequently, including at the ICA in 2009 and The Festival Hall in 2016, as a sociopolitical live performance set in an imaginary casino.

For *Turkish Tulips* Lijn has introduced a new tulip card for *Power Game*. Her print for the Portfolio is a layout from her Poem Game, the intention of which is to free players from preconceived ideas of what a poem might be.



SARAH STATON

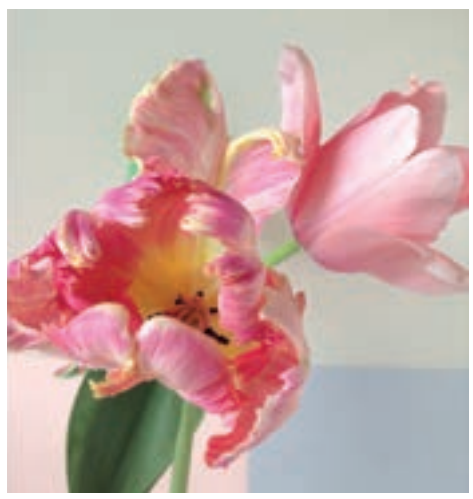
iTulips
2017, inkjet on paper with UV varnish, 42 x 30cm

Sarah Staton makes commissioned sculptures for specific sites in addition to creating exhibitions, and publications. Her sculptural belvedere *Edith and Hans* (2016) sits in a high meadow at Bristol University; *Steve*, a monument to all 'Steves' now and going forward into the future, was commissioned for the 2014 Folkestone Triennial, where it is installed, looking out towards mainland Europe.

The tactile qualities of materials in her work are exploited in a variety of ways, as are ideas, colours and formal relationships. References to politics and history float effortlessly amongst design and aesthetic considerations.

Staton uses the richness of the English language as a further space for invention, quotation and appropriation. Exhibitions and bodies of work that she has developed in the past two decades include *Harold and Maude*, *Spiders on Drugs*, *Anti-Paintings*, *How the West has Won and Lost*, *A Clump of Plinths*, *SupaStore* and *The Schtip*. Collaboration is a vital aspect of her activity.

For the Portfolio Staton brings the tulip forward into the digital era with an emoji print, aesthetics subsumed into liquid crystal, recalling the English cartoonist George Cruickshank's incisive wit, immortalising the manners and modes of England's ruling classes. Some two hundred years on, in the age of rapid-fire politics by tweet, tech and statesmanship blur into one. For *Turkish Tulips*, the transitory nature of the real space cut flower is represented in the contemporary language of emoticon exchange – six pink tulips harvested from the ether, preserved in a screen sized print.



GEORGIE HOPTON

Two Tulips with Blue Square
2013, giclée print, 42 x 30cm

Exhibiting her multimedia work for over 25 years, Hopton's celebratory, joyful and exuberant practice has echoes of craft and the handmade. Her work, which combines the instinctive design of Corinne Day with the dazzling allure of her namesake Georgia O'Keefe of has been shown internationally and is included in a wide range of collections worldwide. Preoccupied with a botanical and vegetable world largely cultivated by herself for more than a decade now, she works in collage, sculpture, photography, textiles and print. The flower is the perfect vehicle for sublimating the gamut of human emotions and for *Turkish Tulips* she has contributed one of her many tulip 'portraits'. The explosive quality of the flowers caught here is harnessed by a blue square – a nod to Constructivism and a compositional nudge by the artist to inform you that the depiction of beauty is not the only thing that concerns her.

Wounded Tulip Room Divider
2016, mixed media, 210 x 73 x 15cm

ANYA GALLACCIO

Steep
2017, inkjet print with silkscreen varnish, 30 x 30cm

Anya Gallaccio creates site-specific, minimalist, epic installations, often working with organic matter, including chocolate, sugar, flowers and ice. Her use of organic materials results in natural processes of transformation and decay: her installations are unpredictable and often chaotic. The pleasurable start of an exhibition, with the scent of flowers or chocolate, inevitably becomes increasingly unpleasant over time.

Her work challenges the traditional notion that an art object or sculpture should be a monument within a gallery. Instead her work lives through the memory of those that see and experience it – or is in the concept of the artwork itself.

For the *Turkish Tulips* exhibition the artist has compressed tulips into a frozen block, packed with individual blooms, musing on their value and rarity as specimens. The colour of the petals was heightened and the flowers became soluble, like a lollipop leaking its colour: as if the bleed of the pigment from the flowers was used to make the print. Freezing is also a way of slowing down decay, stabilising a material and keeping its agency.

WOOL

HERRING

PITCH

TIMBER

AMSTERDAM

NEW NETHERLANDS

TOBACCO

SUGAR

CURACAO

STABROEK

MAURITSSTAD

GORÉE

ACCRA

CAPE TOWN

SLAVES

MADAGASCAR

1

1500'S OTTOMAN EMPIRE. SULTAN SULEYMAN THE MAGNIFICENT CULTIVATES HIS BELOVED TULIPS IN 'THE ABODE OF BLISS' (INNER SANCTUM OF TOPKAPI PALACE).

2

DURING 'THE TULIP PERIOD' SULEYMAN'S SON AHMED III ISSUED A ROYAL DECREE FIXING TULIP PRICES TO AVOID TULIPMANIA.

5

OGIER de BUSBECQ, THE AMBASSADOR OF FERDINAND I TO THE SULTAN OF TURKEY SENDS TULIP BULBS TO VIENNA IN 1554

6

1590'S FLEMISH BOTANIST CAROLUS CLUSIUS PLANTS HIS COLLECTION OF TULIP BULBS IN HARLEM, HOLLAND AND LATER TAKES THEM TO LEIDEN UNIVERSITY

7

FLORA

FLORIST MARCUS CORNELISZ ADOPTS THE GODDESS OF THE FLOWER, 'FLORA' AS HIS SURNAME (THE NAME FOR HIS HOUSE)

41

THE IDEA OF 'TULIP MANIA' IS POPULARIZED IN 1841 BY CHARLES MACKAY IN HIS BOOK 'EXTRAORDINARY POPULAR DELUSIONS & THE MADNESS OF CROWDS'

3

1648 MEHMED IV ESTABLISHES A COUNCIL OF FLORISTS TO REGISTER NEW CULTIVARS OF TULIP.

4

1730 GRAND VIZIER IBRAHIM PASHA & ADMIRAL PATRONA PASHA ARE DECAPITATED BY THE ANTI-TULIP REBELLION

FLORA.

40

QUICKLY AFTER THE COLLAPSE OF THE TULIP MARKET IN HARLEM, SEE THE PRICE OF THE RARE 'SEMPER AUGUSTUS' REMAINED HIGH

39

'THE TOONEEL' BY CORNELIS VAN DER WOUDE CRITICISED ANTI-TULIP PAMPHLETS AS JEALOUS OF THE PROSPERITY OF OTHERS

38

'ALL THOSE WHO BUILD THEIR HOPE ON THIS, BUILD ON SICK FOUNDATIONS' ADVISED ONE SING

37

THE TULIP-CURSE

JAN BEST 'THE WIFE OF QUARELOUS' TELLS WAGHENAER 'I WISH THESE HAD NEVER BEEN FLOWERS IN THIS COUNTRY'

10

BUBONIC PLAGUE

1636 IN THE MIDST OF A BUBONIC PLAGUE (7,193 DIE IN AMSTERDAM, HARLEM'S HALLS HOUSING 'TULIP SALES ARE CANCELLED

36

ARBITRATION

THE KLEINE BANK VAN JUSTITIE WAS ESTABLISHED AFTER THE TULIP PRICES SOMEHOW RISE

31

FLOWER BOOKS PUBLISHED

IN STEVEN VAN DER LUST OF THE WIJNGAERTRANCEERS PLAY 'VERBLIZA' 10,000 FLORISTS DIE IN ONE WEEK.

29

DARK COMMENTS

ONE PAMPHLET BLAMES 'HOSTILE MENNONITES FOR 'FALSE' ARTFUL TRADE, THE REST BEING JEWS' BANKRUPTS

35

RENEGING

JACOB VAN DER PEEK (THREE YEARS TRYING TO GET 150 FLORINS FROM WILLEM LOURISZ ON ADULTERATE AFTER THE CRASH)

34

'SPOTDICHTEN' (SONGS) SATIRIZE THE TULIP CRAZE TO THE TUNE OF 'HOE LEGH EN HIERIN DEES ELLENDE?' (WHAT A MESS I'M IN)

33

REFUGE FOR BANKRUPTS

'NO CREDIT, NO HONOUR' IN 'SPEERN' SOCIETIES BANKRUPTS ARE FORCED TO WEAR GREEN HATS

32

TULIP TEMPERS

1635 JOOST VAN HAVER BEECK QUARRELS OVER THE WEIGHT OF HIS PARCELS OF BULBS, HAVING EARLIER DESTROYED ALL OF HELT'S FLOWERS IN A RAGE

TULIP

TULIP FEVER

DANZIG

COPPER

IRON

FUR

RYE + WHEAT

PORCELAIN

SANDALWOOD

CAMPHOR

SILK

NAGASAKI

AMOY

CANTON

LUXURY GOODS

PORT ZEELANDIA

MANILA

SPICES

TEAK

TEA

MALACCA

BATAVIA

MACASSAR

PEPPER

CALCUTTA

COCHIN

COLOMBO

CLOTH

CLOVES + CINNAMON

1 ARISTOCRATISATION

2 GARDEN AUCTIONS

3 UNEXPECTED CREDIT

4 FLORAL BIZARRENESS

5 GREED + DECEIPT

6 UNDERGROUND PROFITS

7 DEALS OVERSEEN

8 SUSPICION OF FOREIGNERS

9 FALSE FLOWERS

10 ACCIDENTAL CONSUMPTION

11 SPECULATIONS AMONG

12 FLORAL INHERITANCE

13 LOTTO FEVER

14 CODES OF HONOUR

15 CARNIVAL

16 BETTING EPIDEMIC

17 WHAT OF GOLD?

18 FAILS ASPIRATION

19 OFFICIAL SATIRE

20 EASY MONEY

21 TRADERS IN WIND

Turkish Tulips

CHARLES JONES

Tulip Single Yellow
1895–1910, silver photograph print, 10 x 14cm

Born in Wolverhampton in 1866, this outsider artist became a gardener, working on a number of private estates in England from the 1890s, including Great Ote Hall, near Burgess Hill, Sussex. His gardening was admired for the quality of his flowerbeds and cultivation of fruits and vegetables.

As a photographer, Jones was eventually widely acclaimed for his documentation of the fruits of his gardening labours. Within his lifetime Jones offered his services as a photographer to other gardeners. He died in 1959, aged ninety-two.

For the *Turkish Tulips* exhibition we have a photograph borrowed from the van Loon Family collection.

FIONA BANNER

That Damned Elusive Black Tulip
2017, digital print, silkscreen print and hand-applied varnish, 42 x 30cm

Much of Fiona Banner's work explores the problems and possibilities of written language. Her early work took the form of 'wordscapes' or 'still films' – blow-by-blow accounts written in her own words of feature films, (whose subjects range from war to porn) or sequences of events.

Banner's current work encompasses sculpture, drawing and installation but text is still at the heart of her practice. Working with traditionally male subject matter such as war, power and aircraft, Banner juxtaposes the epic and brutal with the sensual and poetic, performing paradoxical choreographed feats of intimacy and alienation.

For the Portfolio the artist has channelled the elusive romance and fascination of this most symbolic of flowers. With visual handwritten text reminiscent of poetry or love letters, this contrary ode to the legendary black tulip chases its own elusiveness in an impassioned splash of ebony ink. The title is a nod to *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, an adventure novel by Baroness Orczy, seen as a precursor to the spy fiction and superhero genres of the next century.

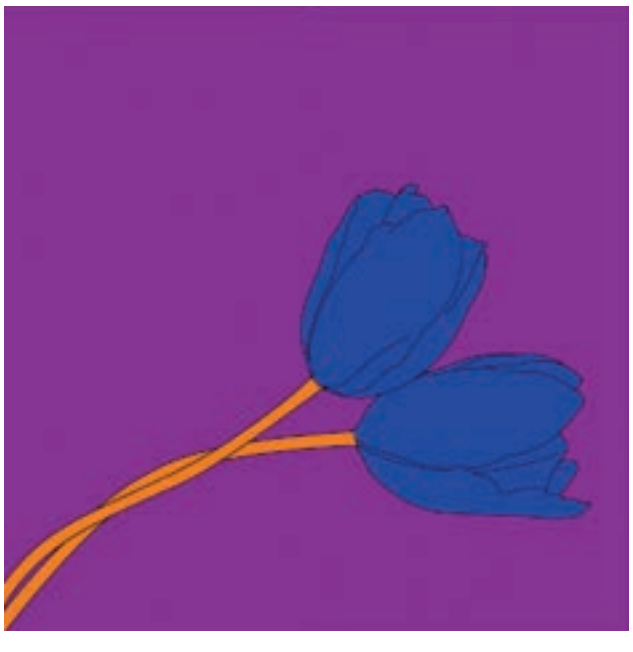
GORDON CHEUNG

Unnamed Tulip 20 (Tulipbook)
2015, archival inkjet, acrylic paint on *Financial Times* collage

Born in London of Chinese parents, Cheung's multi-media art captures the hallucinations between the virtual and actual realities of a globalised world oscillating between utopia and dystopia. Spray paint, acrylic, pastels, stock listings and ink collide in his works to form epic techno-sublime vistas. Cheung has exhibited internationally since graduating from the RCA in 2001.

Crucially for the *Turkish Tulips* show at Bowes, in 2015 he showed work in a solo show in London, at Alan Cristea, called *Breaking Tulips* which explored this very flower. For the Bowes the artist has digitally corrupted or 'pixelsorted' two flower paintings from the Bowes collection, *Flower Piece (after Gerrit van Bloclant c.1578–1650)* and *Flower Piece (after Moise Jacobber, 1828)*. He has also contributed to the portfolio a pixelsorted image of a Dutch flower painting with tulips. These explore the corrupting influence of technological digital world on our past. Finally he has loaned another of his tulip works painted in impasto acrylics onto printed pages of stocks and share price listings from *The Financial Times*.

Flowers in a Glass Vase (after Rachel Ruysch)
2017, archival inkjet on Hahnemühle Photo Rag 308gsm, 30 x 40cm



MICHAEL CRAIG-MARTIN

Tulips (after Mapplethorpe)
2016, silkscreen on Somerset Tub 410gsm, 25 x 25cm

Born in Dublin in 1941 and educated in the United States (where he studied at Yale University), he returned to Europe in the mid-1960s and was a key figure in the first generation of British conceptual artists. As a tutor at Goldsmith's College from 1974–88 and 1994–2000, he had a significant influence on two generations of young British artists.

Throughout his career Craig-Martin has explored the visual, linguistic, and referential character of everyday objects which he has realised through a variety of media including paintings, sculpture, prints and computer animations. His work is held in numerous museum collections around the world including Tate, London; Victoria & Albert Museum, London; National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; Kunsthalle Bremen, Germany; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris and MoMA, New York.

For the *Turkish Tulips* exhibition the artist has found a way to maintain his artistic proposition of only making images of fabricated, non-natural objects by taking his picture of tulips from the well-known photograph by Robert Mapplethorpe, rather than from actual flowers.

GAVIN TURK

Cave (Edition)
1995, silkscreen on plastic, 48cm (diameter)

Portrait of the Sailor Gentleman Jim
2009, oil on canvas, 58 x 45cm

Box
2002–03, painted bronze, 32 x 31 x 46cm

Turkish Tea
2017, giclée print, 30 x 42cm

Tulips
2017, painted bronze, 14 x 99 x 39cm

H.M.S. Pequod
2014, painted bronze, 1.5 x 3.7 x 3cm

Spent Match
2005, painted bronze, 2 x 3 x 3cm

Odyssey
2005, painted bronze, 5 x 5 x 70cm

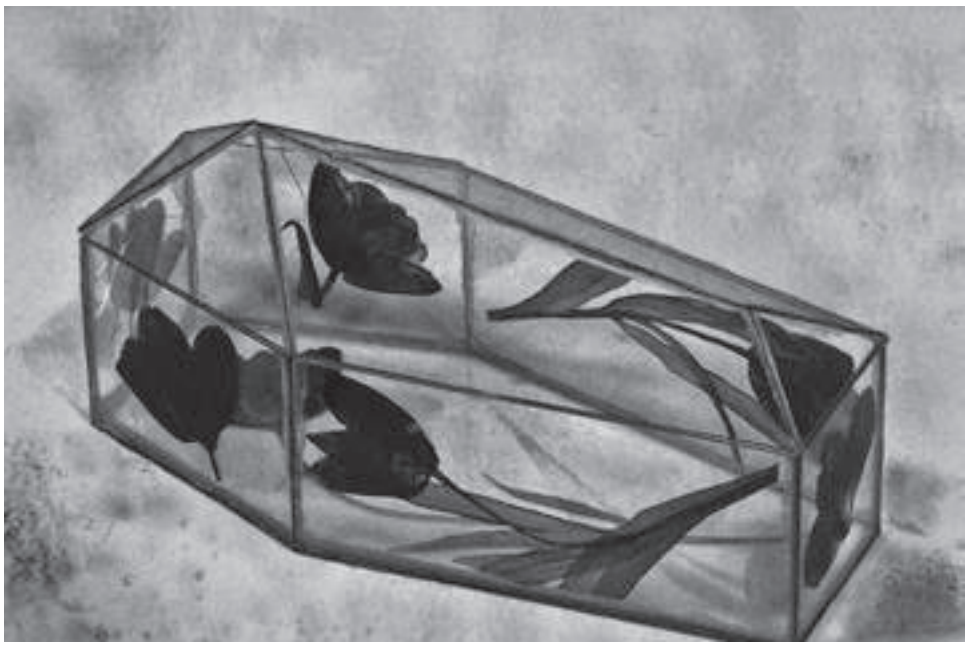
Gavin Turk is a British artist born in 1967. He has pioneered many forms of contemporary British sculpture now taken for granted, including the painted bronze, the waxwork, the recycled art-historical icon and the use of rubbish in art.

With an active international career spanning over 25 years, the artist first came to public attention in 1991 with his degree show from The Royal College of Art. His work is a series of assisted readymade objects that seem commonplace but are détourned or transformed in often unexpected ways.

Turk's installations and sculptures deal with issues of authorship, authenticity and identity. Concerned with the myth of the artist and authorship, Turk's engagement with this modernist, avant-garde debate stretches back through the lineage of art history. His work is held in important collections around the world and he has exhibited widely, with more than 50 solo shows alone as well as dozens of group museum shows in America, Asia, Australasia and Europe. The artist lives and works in London.

As the inspiration for the exhibition Gavin Turk has placed *Tulips*, a painted bronze facsimile of a tulip box, perhaps full of tulips about to be displayed in the Museum. There is also a small collection of art and artefacts placed around the gallery including his portrait sculpture of *Gentleman Jim* (after Van Gogh) and some painted bronze objects including *Odyssey* (a dried poppy referencing John Keats's poem *The Lotus Eaters*), bronze cast of 'Ship' matches and a painted bronze used match. These last few are high-art representations which call to mind both human ingenuity and the vast distances travelled in the name of trade by the Dutch East India Company and other more contemporary organisations.

Turkish Tulips



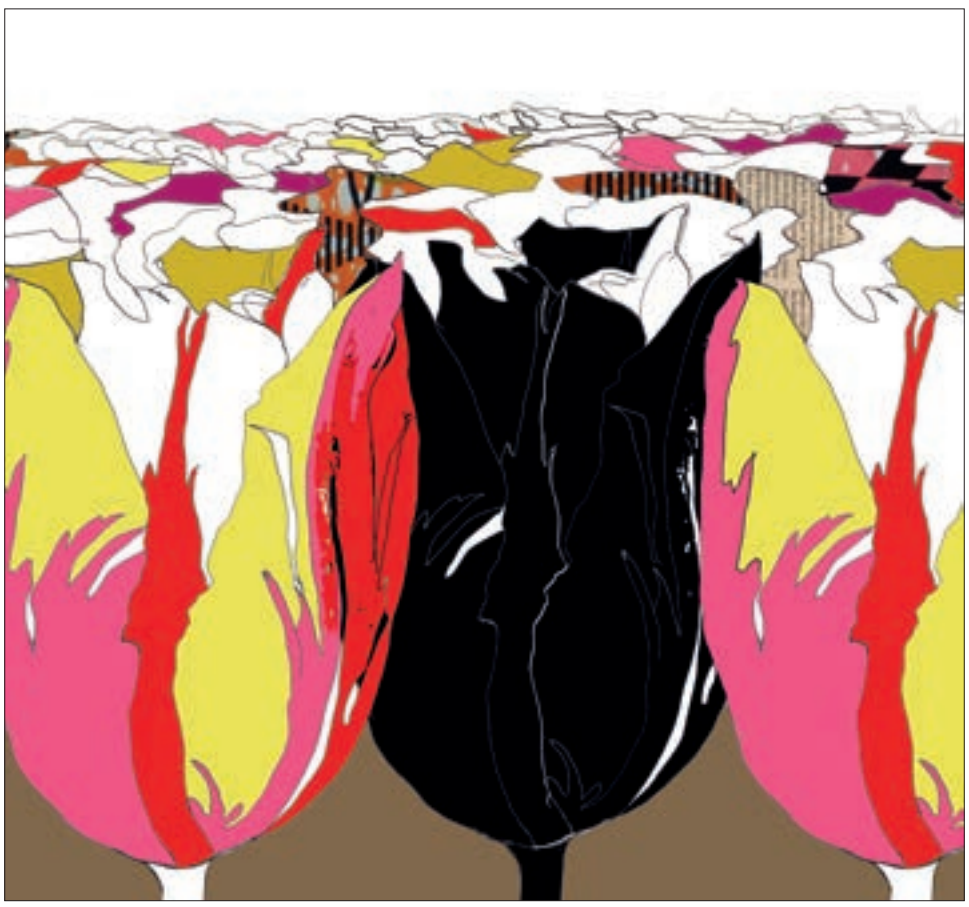
Coffin
2017, etching print, 11 x 17cm (image size)

Gilded Tulip
2017, gilded tulip, 40 x 20 x 8cm

PHILIPPA van LOON

As a direct descendant of the family, Philippa van Loon is the Chair of the Board of Museum Van Loon in Amsterdam. As an artist she was at Chelsea College of Art with Gavin Turk so the *Turkish Tulips* exhibition has evolved out of a form of reunion with her British artist friend and their peer group. She is showing her glass tulip coffin in the exhibition, originally made in the 1990s, as a response to the fragile relationship between life and death, using the reference of an emblematic symbol of her fatherland. This appears in the Portfolio as an etched image.

Especially made for the exhibition is her uprooted wilted tulip, which has been dipped in a gold bath. This Dutch tradition of dipping a precious object in gold or silver, for remembrance, is a metaphor for the opulent esteem with which the tulip has been held throughout history and its ephemeral nature as a collectible.



YINKA SHONIBARE MBE

Tulip Field
2016, digital print with hand-applied gold foil, 42 x 30cm

Yinka Shonibare was born in 1962 in London and moved to Lagos, Nigeria at the age of three. He returned to London to study Fine Art, first at Byam School of Art (now Central Saint Martins College) and then at Goldsmiths College, where he received his MFA.

Shonibare's work explores issues of race and class through the media of painting, sculpture, photography and film. Shonibare questions the meaning of cultural and national definitions. His trademark material is the brightly coloured 'African' batik fabric he buys in London. This type of fabric was inspired by Indonesian design, mass-produced by the Dutch and eventually sold to the colonies in West Africa. In the 1960s the material became a new sign of African identity and independence.

Shonibare was awarded the MBE and notably commissioned by Documenta 11, Kassel in 2002 to create 'Gallantry and Criminal Conversation' that launched him on to an international stage. He has exhibited at the Venice Biennale and internationally at leading museums. Shonibare's works are included in prominent collections internationally, including the Tate Collection, London; Victoria and Albert Museum, London; National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institute, Washington, DC; Museum of Modern Art, New York; National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; National Gallery of Modern Art in Rome and VandenBroek Foundation, The Netherlands.

For the Portfolio the artist has set an intense graphic image of the elusive black tulip amongst the gaiety of other more common varieties, some of which include a hint of African-Dutch batik.

NANCY FOUTS

Match Tulip
2017, inkjet print, 42 x 30cm

American-born, Nancy Fouts has lived and worked in London most of her life. After leaving the RCA in the 1960s, she made a reputation as a visionary advertising image-maker before focusing on her art practice, which is playful, witty and provocative.

The artworks of modern-day surrealist and prankster Nancy Fouts frequently explores with humour themes of time, religious iconography and nature. The artist works typically with everyday objects, manipulating them in such a way that we seem to recognise them for the first time.

During the 1960s Fouts co-founded the pioneering design and model-making company Shirt Sleeve Studio, creating seminal ad campaigns for Tate Gallery and album covers for significant bands including Jethro Tull and Steeleye Span.

Examples of the artist's works are to be found in established collections across the globe, including the Victoria & Albert Museum in London.

For the *Turkish Tulips* exhibition at the Bowes the artist has carefully constructed a light-up match with tulip shaped flames that attracts humans like moths to a flame. She has reproduced this piece as a photographic print for the Portfolio.

Turkish Tulips

MUSTAFA HULUSI

Cyprus Black Tulip
4 Blue Gold Expander
2016, inkjet print on Somerset Satin 330gsm with blocked gold foil, 42 x 30cm

Hulusi graduated from Goldsmiths College and the Royal College of Art. Hulusi's work addresses the dominant socio-political hegemonies and weaves a re-enchanted space that counters contemporary social and cultural life.

Hulusi is of Turkish-Cypriot descent and his work was chosen to represent Cyprus at the 52nd Venice Biennale in 2007. He has taken part in group exhibitions in the UK including at BALTIC, Gateshead, Millennium Galleries (Sheffield) and Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art (Sunderland), and internationally including at PS1/MoMA (NY) and Kunst-Werke Institute for Contemporary Art (Berlin). His works are included in prominent international collections including the Pinault Collection and Tate Collection.

For *Turkish Tulips* Hulusi is presenting a striking diptych of a tulip and a spacey optical graphic in gold leaf.

TOM GALLANT

Lâle Devri
2016, cut magazine paper, gold leaf, glass, framed, 32 x 43cm

This British artist appropriates images and motifs that connect to man's inhumanity and its influence on visual culture. His background in illustration and printmaking has influenced his fascination with the didactic image and the dissemination of ideas through the various industrial revolutions, from the industry of organised religion to the printing press and the loom.

Gallant has constantly placed research and the analysis of literature at the core of his practice and the psychological, social and cultural influences on the narrator and the reader. He explores collector culture such as etymological collections of moths, gothic rose windows, and Victorian wallpaper. Gallant's work has been widely collected and he has shown in several major museums internationally. He currently lives and works in Sussex.

For *Turkish Tulips* Tom Gallant has created *Hortus Conclusius*, an experimental interactive shadow-puppet Cabinet of Curiosities.

His contribution to the Portfolio an exquisitely layered paper cut collaging the filigree of William Morris tulip pattern onto Islamic imagery. The artwork is in the form of a dung beetle; symbolic of the land of the Ottomans where tulips originally flourished.

The dung beetle buries itself and its offspring underground, like a bulb. Its abundance is tied closely to trade routes; to animal and human traffic. It is exported to the US to help livestock farmers as it is the best way to deal with their manure – an interesting migrant from Muslim countries which navigates by the stars.

CORNELIA PARKER

Black Tulip
2017, photopolymer print on Fabriano Tiepolo 290gsm, 42 x 30cm

Born in Cheshire in 1956, Parker studied at Gloucestershire College of Art and Design, Wolverhampton Polytechnic and at Reading University. She lives and works in London.

Parker is best known for a number of large-scale installations including *Cold Dark Matter: An Exploded View* (1991), and *The Maybe* (1995), a collaboration with actress Tilda Swinton, who appeared sleeping inside a vitrine at the Serpentine Gallery. In 2015 *Magna Carta (An Embroidery)*, was exhibited at the British Library, London, The Whitworth, Manchester and The Bodleian Library, Oxford. In 2016 she was commissioned to make a site-specific work, *Transitional Object (PsychoBarn)* (2016), for the Roof Garden Commission at The Metropolitan Museum of New York. Her work reflects an enduring fascination with found objects which she physically and allegorically transforms.

As well as many solo shows, Parker's works are held by numerous public and private collections in Europe and the USA, including the Tate, London; British Museum, London; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris and MoMA, New York.

Over the centuries the search for a black tulip has become legendary; since the 16th-century Dutch growers had tried to cultivate one unsuccessfully. Thanks to a novel written by Alexander Dumas in 1850 called *La Tulipe Noire* its mythology has spread throughout the world, causing the black tulip to become a byword for that which is unattainable.

Parker's contribution to the Portfolio was made by placing a glass tumbler containing a white tulip onto a photogravure plate then exposing it to a raked UV light. The underside of the glass is in direct contact with the plate therefore is captured in fine detail, while the tulip being further away, becomes a cast shadow. The art-making process becomes an act of transubstantiation, turning the humble white tulip into a valuable black one.

ROB AND NICK CARTER

Five Tulips in a Wan-Li Vase
2016, framed iPad, 38 x 43cm

Rob and Nick Carter's work is housed in the collections of the Mauritshuis, The Frans Hals Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum, The Stadel Museum, and Foundation Custodia.

As artists they are interested in design and the potential for engaging an audience in an unconventional way. The film of the wilting tulips is part of their *Transforming* series which aims to inspire visitors to look for longer at an artwork – to slow the viewer down, draw them in and make them look and look again. This digital work films a vase of tulips over a 10 day period with a stop frame technique that compresses the overall duration to 25 minutes, reducing the duration of periods where nothing significant occurs, while preserving moments of 'action' – such as when a petal falls or a stem buckles – in real time.

Black Tulip is a bronze cast of a 3D digital model made from Judith Leyster's iconic watercolour image of 1643. By casting this photocopied reproduction of an archetype into 'art-gold', they relate the frenzy of tulipmania to contemporary art consumerism.

Chinese Whispers, Tulip after Andy Warhol (c.1955)
2013, 30 drawings by 30 different artists, pen on paper, 135 x 218 cm

JACOB de GHEYN

Still Life with a Fritillary and Three Tulips in a Terra Cotta Vase, a Snail and Four Insects
1600, oil on panel

ROB AND NICK CARTER

Still Life with a Fritillary and Three Tulips in a Terra Cotta Vase, a Snail and Four Insects, after Jacob de Gheyn (1600)
2016, cibachrome print mounted on aluminium and framed behind glass

JUDITH LEYSTER

FROM Tulip Book
c.1643, watercolour and silverpoint on vellum, 40 x 12 x 5cm

ROB AND NICK CARTER

Black Tulip
2012, black-patinated bronze, 33cm high

Whatever happened to English tulips?

Hundreds of Tulip Societies bloomed all over Victorian Britain. One survives in the North of England...

Tulips are the most famous example of Dutch horticultural success, so it's easy to forget that for at least two hundred years tulips have been grown with (almost) the same obsessive enthusiasm in France and Britain as in Holland.

But in Britain tulips were to be appreciated quite differently. In Anna Pavord's book *The Tulip*, she explains: 'In the 17th and early 18th century the tulip had been mostly a rich man's plaything, a toy expensively acquired from the Netherlands or Flanders to be shown off as proof of the owner's good taste.' By 1740 the tulip was no longer a novelty, and while it was by no means cheap, bulb prices had become much more affordable. Tulip-growing became more egalitarian as it became a 'hobby flower' grown by specialists called 'florists' who were as likely to be artisans as wealthy merchants.

Just as significantly, the growers in Britain began to favour different characteristics in their tulips that did not conform to Dutch or Flemish ideals of beauty. These new 'English tulips' had a flower that was rounder than the Dutch ones, revealing both sides of the petals and producing a bloom which looked like a perfect half-sphere. Although these were dubbed 'English tulips' (the first breeders were mostly based around London), tulips were grown throughout the British Isles, and dozens of Tulip Societies were established from the south of England to Paisley in Scotland.

Members of these societies held regular competitions to show off their finest flowers in which three standard colours of bloom were displayed: 'The Bybloemen (deep purple markings on a white ground), the Rose (red or pink markings on a white ground) and the Bizarre (red or brownish-black markings on a yellow ground) were the hallowed triumvirate of the English florists' tulips' – only flowers that conformed to these standards could be shown in competition.

Tulips from Robert Thornton's *Temple of Flora*, published between 1798 and 1807

In the digital age of instant information and quick fixes it's hard to credit what an immense labour of love it was to grow tulips. As Pavord notes, 'patience was important. After the seven years of breeding, growers might wait ten or twenty years for the tulip to "break" [i.e. for the Tulip Breaking Virus to infect the plant, introducing spectacular patterning – see page 43] and still have nothing to show for their labours.'

In 1849 the Royal National Tulip Society was formed, but gradually trouble arose because florists in the north of Britain preferred symmetrical flowers with beautiful flaming patterns, while those in southern England tended to breed for flower shape alone. Tulip societies in the south slowly disappeared in the later 19th century, but in the north of England they carried on, with artisans and factory workers breeding and developing new cultivars until, 'having bought the English tulip to the peak of perfection, they dumped it,' writes Pavord, 'adopting instead the dahlia and the chrysanthemum.'

Tulip Societies were mostly disbanded by the 1920s, and that might have been the end of the story. Except that one, the Wakefield and North of England Tulip Society, is still surviving and thriving today.

Members of the W&NETS still boldly grow tulips affected by Tulip Breaking Virus (TBV) because of the wonderful patterning it can produce, noting on their website that 'the flowers do not seem to suffer from infection' and pointing out that one of the oldest cultivars that is still grown by their members today, 'Habit de Noce' (Wedding Coat) was first grown in the 1790s.

Well done, the W&NETS! That really is keeping the faith. We'll look out for your wonderful displays of English Tulips at Spring Shows and Tulip Festivals in Yorkshire and Northumberland in 2018.

See more tulip facts at www.tulipsociety.co.uk

BUY BRITISH TULIPS!

Is it time to dump Dutch tulips and only buy home-grown?

In May 2017 the National Farmers Union (NFU) launched a campaign aiming to ensure that all cut flowers are labelled with their country of origin, in a bid to encourage consumers to buy British. Food is already labelled in this way, so the NFU teamed up with growers' organisations like Flowers From The Farm to encourage people to buy locally-sourced and seasonal flowers, mirroring trends that are already established in farmers' markets and ethically-sourced food supplies.

Just one in ten of the cut flowers for sale in Britain are actually grown here. Nearly all the flowers you see bunched in the supermarket have been flown or driven in from abroad. Most come direct from massive commercial growers in Holland, but some are grown as far away as in Africa or South America.

#grownnotflown is the hashtag of a campaign to support growing and buying British flowers, and British Flowers Week in late June is now an annual celebration, with their website claiming: 'Not only do British flowers usually have a superior scent to imported blooms, they will be fresher and last longer. Minimum distance means maximum vase life.'

It feels like these campaigns may be trying to shut the stable door long after the Dutch floral horse has bolted over the horizon. Growers in Holland have worked tirelessly to promote their flowers and build up their horticultural businesses so that they now span the world (see *Commercial Tulip Production* on page 42). Their success has meant that growers in other countries struggle to compete.

THE AESTHETICS OF TULIPS

Aesthetics is the appreciation of beauty in art and literature, design and decorative objects. So aesthetics is another way of saying whether we feel something is beautiful. Aesthetics also includes judgements about quality and taste; has an object been well made or presented? Does it give us pleasure to look at or hold? In this section we'll look at how flowers have been presented in books; how tulips have inspired fabulous folk art and fabric designs in Hungary; the ways that flowers are used to express different meanings, and how skulls came to be popular in paintings!

SAY IT WITH FLOWERS

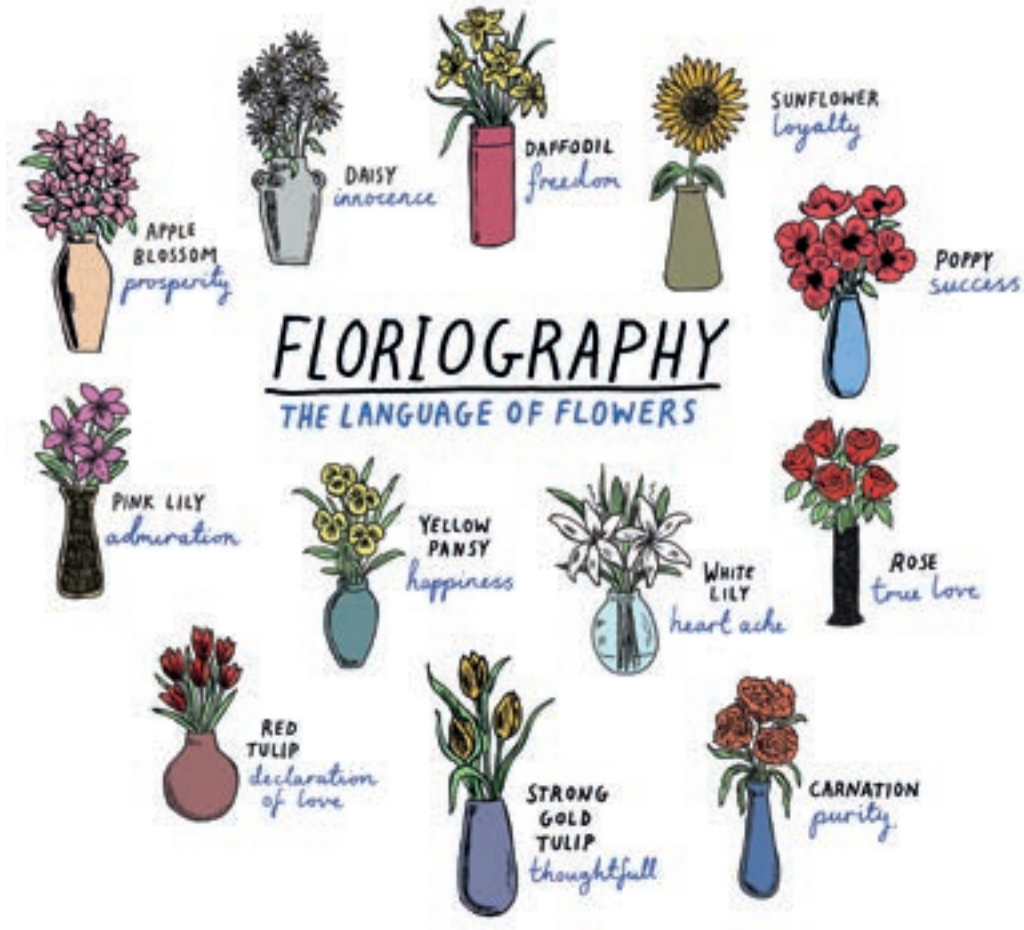
Coded language, high poetics and kitsch

Floriography or 'The Language of Flowers' is a form of cryptological (coded) communication through the use or arrangement of flowers. Meanings have been attributed to flowers for thousands of years, and in some form floriography has been practised by traditional cultures across continents. We find flowers put to symbolic use in the Hebrew Bible, most obviously in Solomon's *Song of Songs*.

Shakespeare's writings are full of flowers put to symbolic purpose – in *Hamlet*, for instance, Ophelia explains the meaning of pansies, rosemary, fennel, columbine, rue, daisy and violets. Other poets and writers, including novelists such as Jane Austen, Emily and Charlotte Bronte, also used floriography.

The interest in floriography in Britain begins in aristocratic and upper class circles in the 18th century, and became hugely fashionable in the 19th century, when a great variety of flower dictionaries were published. In the Victorian era, with its strict public codes of conduct and morality, one can easily see how being able to communicate secretly, especially for lovers and secret assignations, would gain popularity.

Since then floriography has not entirely disappeared, but is really now a kind of secondary thought at the florists, as with the Interflora ad copy – 'Say it With Flowers' – and often borders on the downright kitsch. However, its origins and early usage are more interesting and exotic.



Floriography was introduced to Britain by the English aristocrat, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689–1762) who travelled with her husband, who was the British Ambassador to the Ottomans between 1717–1718. As an aristocratic woman she gained entry to the famed, and otherwise secret world of the Sultan's harem, and it was here that she first discovered floriography. She wrote about it in letters, which she would later rewrite as the famous *Turkish Letters*, a classic of travel writing and the first important secular Western account of the Ottoman Empire.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

The temple bell stops
But I still hear sound coming
out of the flowers
BASHŌ

FLORILEGIA FABULOSA

Beautiful botanical books radically altered how flowers were presented and perceived

The frontispiece to the *Hortus Eystettensis*

Lavishly-produced publications which featured flowers and plants changed the way that horticulture was appreciated in the 17th century. One book, in particular, was responsible for this transformation.

The *Hortus Eystettensis* was first published in 1613, and to use a modern sporting analogy, it didn't just move the goalposts, it created a whole new playing field of botanical illustration.

Originally *florilegia* had been selections of written works by Christian writers or pagan classical authors. After the medieval period the term came to be used for any literary or scientific collection. But it was particularly applied to books of botanical illustrations of plants and flowers which were dedicated to recording their medicinal and culinary aspects. Generally 'Herbals' (as these books were called) contained poor quality wood-cut illustrations which served purely to distinguish one leafy legume from another.

The *Hortus Eystettensis*, though, was produced by Basilius Besler to celebrate the aesthetic beauty of garden flowers, herbs and vegetables. It did so in 367 copperplate engravings featuring more than 1,000 plants. Besler was working from the garden of the Bishop of Eichstätt, Bavaria – the first major European botanical garden outside Italy. All of the plants were depicted near life-size, in rich artistically pleasing detail and layout, with hand-colouring adding to the final effect. As the Bishop's garden contained 500 tulip bulbs, these 'new' and fashionable flowers were presented in fabulous detail in the work.

There was a black-and-white reference edition for 35 florins and a luxuriantly hand-painted version that cost an eye-watering 500 florins – by way of context, Besler's townhouse in a fashionable part of Nuremburg was bought for 2,500 florins.

The black-and-white edition cost 35 florins and a luxuriantly hand-painted version an eye-watering 500 florins

The late 16th and 17th century saw the publication of *florilegia* focusing on the ornamental aspects of flowers. The discovery of exotic new species from previously unknown regions of the world (tulips via the Ottoman Turks being an obvious example) fired scientific interest, and also inspired a widening taste for gardens and collecting.

As printing techniques advanced, wealthy individuals, botanic gardens and merchants in the new flower trade commissioned artists to record botanically correct illustrations of the beauty of these exotic blooms. These were published in black and white as well as much more expensive hand-coloured editions and were sumptuous affairs with illustrations of incredible beauty and craftsmanship.

It is the quality of the best of the florilegia that is still admired. It is also the fact that they are like constellations of history, windows on to different periods with their combination of early science, economics, art and literature that can be so interesting.

A luxury coloured edition of the *Hortus Eystettensis* was sold for £1,930,500 at a Christies' London auction in June 2016.

A plate from the *Hortus Eystettensis*

EMANUEL SWEERT was a Dutch painter, nurseryman and merchant noted for his publication in 1612 at Frankfurt-am-Main of *Florilegium Amplissimum et Selectissimum*. Botanical illustration suddenly found a new outlet in the production of nursery catalogues and Sweert prepared his *Florilegium* as a guide of his available stock for the Frankfurt Fair of 1612, borrowing freely from earlier florilegia. At the time he was head of Emperor Rudolf II's garden in Vienna. The book contains 560 different flowers including a large selection of tulips.

A plate from the Sweert's *florilegium*

KNOCKING ON HEAVEN'S DOOR

Tulips feature in *Vanitas* paintings as a prime example of the brevity of life on earth

Jacob de Gheyn's still life painting, *Vanitas* (1603) is the earliest known Dutch example in a genre that became popular in Dutch Realist painting in the 17th century. Its name comes from '*Vanitas vanitatum omnia vanitas*' (Ecclesiastes), which was translated as 'Vanity of vanities, all is vanity' in the Kings James' Bible, where vanity is used in the sense of 'futility', suggesting the pointlessness of human activity.

Vanitas paintings are based on a Christian philosophy of life, strongly held in Calvinism and Dutch Reformed Church Protestantism, that is critical of the acquisition of material wealth and worldly power rather than keeping to God's laws.

De Gheyn's *Vanitas*, and early works in the genre were often sombre in colour and style. By contrast, later *Vanitas* paintings often showed a bountiful exuberance of worldly goods and exotic flowers and foodstuffs, so that the pleasure evoked by the sensuous depiction of the subject is frequently in conflict with the moral message.

This exuberance is generally balanced with opposite symbolism of memento mori, skulls, smoke rising from extinguished candles, rotting fruit, soap bubbles, butterflies, a broken wine glass and related imagery indicating the ephemerality of life. These emphasise a spiritual tension at the heart of the protestant Dutch psyche, between enjoying the unprecedented success, celebrating prosperity and enterprise, and fear of the moral consequences of such riches.

Some of the works are showy representations of wealth, proclaiming the power of the Dutch Republic, at times with exotic 'foreign' flora, fauna and goods that refer to their dominion of foreign lands and trade, while simultaneously pointing out that life is fleeting, death is ever present and that one should always look to one's immortal soul.

JACOB de GHEYN, *Vanitas Still Life*, 1603, oil on wood, 83 x 54cm

Such paintings were also, of course, expensive luxury items. De Gheyn's oil painting of 1615, *Flowers In a Glass Vase*, is perhaps a case in point. If the flowers here are memento mori, that seems secondary to their colourful exuberance, with only the butterfly as an added symbol of life's brevity – its inclusion seeming almost an afterthought.

Vanitas paintings should be seen in the context of terrible events taking place at the time: Catholic Spain continued to fight the Dutch in the Eighty Years' War while it also engaged in a ruthless Counter-Reformation against protestants. The ongoing war and recurring outbreaks of the plague made life deeply precarious, so it's no surprise that death was a frequent theme.

The Calvinist and Protestant ban on religious painting in churches meant that artists could no longer rely on Church patronage, turning to the new art market of merchants and the professional classes. The market for history painting on biblical themes which the Catholic church had patronised no longer existed, leading to the elevation of the lowly genre of the still life in the Netherlands. The *Vanitas* paintings could also be a way in which rich merchants would celebrate and show off their new-found wealth, whilst being seen to still keep in line with Calvinist theology.

The dominant motifs in De Gheyn's 1603 painting are a skull and a bubble floating above it occupying a stone niche in the tomb-like structure, with '*HUMANA VANA*' (Human Vanity) inscribed at its apex. The columns flanking the arch are occupied with stone reliefs of the ancient Greek pre-Socratic philosophers, Democritus and Heraclitus. Both point to the bubble; Democritus laughs, whilst Heraclitus cries.

In the bubble can be faintly discerned a torture rack, a leper's rattle, and a crown and sceptre. Along with the two Spanish Hapsburg coins at the bottom of the painting, these directly refer to the Spanish Catholic monarchy and the Inquisition.

The sole colourful element in de Gheyn's macabre painting is an exotic and expensive variegated red-and-yellow tulip. This would have immediately impressed a contemporary viewer in a way that is hard for us to grasp; tulips were

'For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?'
KING JAMES BIBLE, *Matthew 16: 26*

still novel and rare, particularly 'broken' tulips such as this, which sits in a silver vase. The second silver vase has smoke rising from it, as if a candle has just burnt out, both symbolising life's brevity. The tulip is particularly suited to the message, as it was a highly-prized thing of beauty, yet one that blooms so very briefly.

The message in the painting is both personal and political, directly criticising the Spanish and Catholics whom they are at war with, while simultaneously pointing to the religious message that all earthly power, no matter how grand in scale, is temporary. Death, this painting reminds us, awaits us all. The point is to lead a good, upright and spiritual life

The tension between leading a spiritual, or more often in modern society, an ethical life, as opposed to one in which we are only concerned with making money, power and prestige, is something that still resonates in our consumer society. Within a variety of media, the *Vanitas* is a genre that is very much alive in contemporary art. Nowadays though, rather than worrying about the state of one's soul in the afterlife, the meaning is generally closer to *Dum vivimus vivamus* – 'Let us live, while we live'.

JACOB de GHEYN, *Flowers in Glass Vase in Niche*, 1612, oil on copper, 58 x 44cm

JACOB de GHEYN

Born in 1565 Jacob was a gifted draftsman, engraver, designer and also the first Dutch master to consider a bouquet of flowers a worthy subject for an oil painting.

In this bouquet he unites no less than 30 different kind of flowers, most of them exotic. Each is painted with such precision that he must have had real flowers as his models. But he could have never enjoyed this particular bouquet, as the flowers do not bloom at the same time. Tulips came out in spring, roses in summer and lilies in autumn.

HADES FIRST

The aesthetic allusions of Greek mythology and tulips

by JOJO TULLOH

Hold a tulip bulb in your hand – it is mute. The nut-brown carapace feels like satin, inside is a bulb that is white and waxy. A bulb is inanimate; it hoards its finery like a miser. You can have no idea of its colour. Like Cinderella in her dull brown dress it gives no hint of the flower's coming splendour. You take this promised jewel, bury it in the dirt and go away.

The earth turns to iron, no growth shows, nothing to tell you what lies beneath. The soil is either frozen and unyielding or sodden, decay is all around. The miracle of spring is far off and the garden feels dead. Everything is brown, black or grey. You cannot believe colour exists.

This gaudy finery sheathed in secrecy is central to a tulip's nature. Tulips are cryptophytes, hidden plants, botanically plants that start life underground. Their transformation from stolid bulb to gaudy silk is improbable. They have a mythological import. Only an ancient magic could bring about such a metamorphosis.

Ceres is the Greek goddess of nature. She is the goddess who most loved mankind, who walked the earth and made it fertile, she is the one who brought warmth and life, the guarantor of harvest. A tulip's life mirrors the myth of Ceres and Proserpine. Just like Proserpine a tulip spends half the year underground.

Ceres goddess of grain loved her daughter, Proserpine above all else. In turn her daughter, whose spring-like youth never changed, took her greatest delight in flowers. One morning the dark god of the underworld, Hades, glimpsed Proserpine at play, in a meadow bright with poppies and corn. Once he had seen her Hades desired Proserpine for himself. He swooped down in his great black chariot drawn by six black horses and dragged the terrified girl down into the underworld. Here she languished in darkness.

Above ground her mother sought her daughter unceasingly and in her grief she turned the earth barren, no sun shone, no plants grew. Ceres searched the world over, until in a ruined cottage a pig herder poet told of the day the ground opened and a black god dragged a screaming girl into the ground and his pigs followed. Ceres had found her daughter and with Zeus' help she was returned to her mother.

There were however conditions to be fulfilled. Proserpine had eaten seven pomegranate seeds in the underworld and so now she had to stay underground for half the year. Ceres the goddess of harvest and Proserpine the flower maiden of spring are the story of nature's yearly regeneration.

Tulips break from the earth even as winter lingers on. Undaunted, their smooth green scapes push upwards and bud, then brightly coloured upturned skirts greet the sun, their petals open wide in high gloss perfection.

They are the heralds of summer, they banish all thought of winter with their perfection. In time the sun's heat scorches their fragile beauty and they wither, their petals fade. At the last they are mere tattered flags, a faded memory of their dazzling beauty. Their petals fall and they return to dormancy, to sleep half the year away in darkness only to return to blaze forth in spring as a promise of eternal rebirth.

JEAN FRANÇOIS CALLET, *Ceres Begging for Jupiter's Thunderbolt after the Kidnapping of Her Daughter Proserpine*, 1777

I have found that all ugly things are made by those who strive to make something beautiful, and that all beautiful things are made by those who strive to make something useful

OSCAR WILDE, *Ugly and Beautiful Meanings*

HUNGARIAN RHAPSODY

Tulips are a beloved national flower in Hungary that feature in every kind of folk art

The tulip is the national flower of Hungary and may well have first been encountered by Hungarians as their nomadic ancestors migrated west from the Ural Mountains in central Asia – you have probably heard of the famous fifth-century warrior and tribal leader Attila the Hun, a distant relation that the Hungarians are still proud of.

But it seems equally likely that Hungarians first saw the tulip in the 17th century. The famous Flemish botanist, Carolus Clusius (yes, him again!) is credited with bringing tulips bulbs to Pozsony (now Bratislava), and once the exotic newcomer was established it soon took over from lilies as their favourite flower. Hungarians appear to have appropriated the Ottoman Turkish love of the tulip, and then proceeded to make it very much their own.

Just as in Turkey – where tulips can be seen 'blooming' on tiles decorating the major mosques regardless of the season – tulips in Hungary are ever-present too, and popular at all levels of society. In Hungary this isn't due to religious fervour but to their passion for floral designs and the tulip in particular. From the 17th century onwards the tulip became the inspiration for every kind of folk-art: embroidered on dresses and waistcoats, painted and patterned around the walls and doors of houses, carved or painted on Hope Chests (dowry chests) and bed-posts, and printed into fantastic fabrics.

Hungarian tulip designs were (and often still are) hand-made, do-it-yourself and local rather than mass-produced or made only for the wealthy (like those stunning but expensive Dutch paintings), and unite the peoples of Hungary into a common floral national culture.

THE SCIENCE & NATURAL HISTORY OF TULIPS

Cultivated tulips were mostly developed in an age before science, with only experience and trial and error as guides to improving the plants. Gardeners would pass on their knowledge but, even so, growing tulips could be a heartbreaking labour of love lasting decades. Until the 20th century, even the smartest growers did not know why tulips changed colour and 'broke' into the fabulous flowers that were worth a fortune during Tulipmania. These days we know so much more about the science of plants and horticulture, and tulip production has become fantastically efficient.

PIETER BRUEGEL the YOUNGER, *Spring*, c.1621–35, oil on panel, 42 x 57cm

WHAT ARE BULBS?

The term 'bulb' covers a multitude of plant species, ranging from the highly ornamental Lily family down to the lowly – but rather tasty – onion. The bulb organ exists as an underground energy store, and is often found on plants that have evolved to survive environments that are low in nutrients and/or suffer periods of drought.

Put simply, a bulb is a short stem with fleshy leaves or leaf bases. These specialist leaves often have the function of acting as food storage organs during periods of dormancy.

Nearly all plants that form true bulbs are called monocotyledons (which means that their seeds typically contain only one embryonic leaf) and include: onion, garlic, and other alliums such as the tulip, and many other members of the lily family, along with amaryllis and narcissus.

Bulbous plant species move through a cycle of vegetative and reproductive growth stages. The bulb grows to flowering size during the vegetative stage and the plant flowers during the reproductive stage. Certain environmental conditions are needed to trigger the transition from one stage to the next, such as the shift from a cold winter to spring.

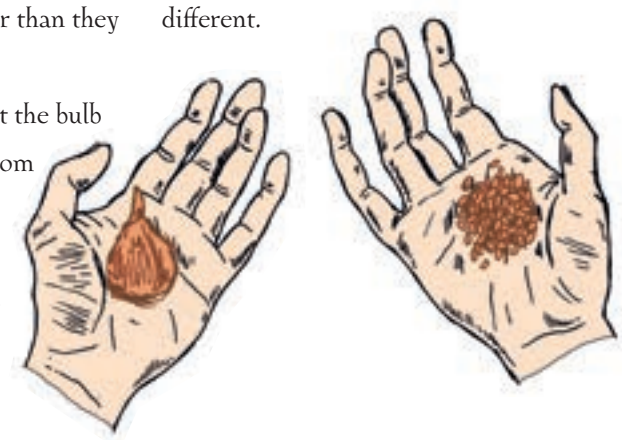
BULBS vs. SEEDS

Whether you like them with frilly petals or smooth, solid-coloured or striped, tulips add beauty and colour to the spring garden. Although typically started from bulbs, tulips can also be grown from seed. Tulip bulbs are commonly found in garden centres and catalogues for planting in the autumn. These bulbs will bloom the following spring and produce the same flower as the parent plant. With tulip seeds, it will take several years for your plants to bloom and the flowers may look nothing like those of the parent plant.

Tulip bulbs are perhaps one of the easiest plants to propagate as they do all the hard work themselves. However, tulips cannot be grown in the open in tropical climates, as they require a cold winter season to grow successfully. Manipulation of the tulip's growing temperature can, however, allow growers to 'force' tulips to flower earlier than they normally would.

The secret of the tulip is that the bulb is underground. It withdraws from above ground to escape the summer heat, and it uses the ground in the winter to protect it and keep itself warm from the freezing temperatures of the winter. If the ground water is freezing, this makes the water in the tulip bulb expand and damages the bulb so it will not re-grow. For this reason tulips have to find a climatic niche that suits them. Tulips generally do very well about 40° north (or south) of the equator, but they also thrive in the temperate maritime climates of Holland and the U.K. – which lie between 50° and 59° north.

There are generally two ways that you can increase your number of plants – either by seed collection or by removing the smaller 'offset' bulbs formed at the base of the parent bulb. The advantage of using these offset bulbs is that because they are genetically identical, they will grow identically to the parent plant. Collecting seeds from modern cultivated bulbs will result in further hybridisation, making these new plants genetically different.



HEAVEN SCENT

Which of the scented tulip varieties will most thrill your sense of smell?

The Turkish wild tulip *Tulipa suaveolens*, ancestor of many fragrant varieties

About 15% of modern tulip cultivars are scented, but in their wild state very few are fragrant.

Tulipa suaveolens is a scented exception that is found in the wild in the Crimea, Turkey, Iran and Kazakhstan, so perhaps the plant evolved a sweeter scent as there was greater competition from other flowers in the region. *Tulipa turkestanica* is also scented, although its smell is described by its fans as 'spicy' and by Anna Pavord as 'horrible'.

The wonderful scented tulips available now have been hybridised and cross-bred with *Tulipa suaveolens* to create new fragrant cultivars, of which the following varieties each come highly recommended.

Some early, double-flowered tulips boast lovely scents along with flowers as fulsome as any peony. Look out for the huge canary-yellow flowers of 'Mr. van der Hoef' or the honey-scented 'Monte Carlo'; the deep pink (or cherry red) 'Electra'; the feather-edged orange-red 'Comet' or the lovely pure white 'Schoonoord.'

Alternatively, make a bee-line for 'Apricot Beauty'; the orange-gold 'Generaal de Wet', or 'Couleur Cardinal', a beautiful, deep-red flower with a violet blush and a sweet scent.

GROWING YOUR OWN

We've read the top tips from the master growers... Now it's your turn!

Did you hear the old joke about the bulb? The bulb is a potential flower which is buried in the autumn, never to be seen again.

To help make sure that your bulbs do reappear in the spring, here are some guidelines to get your garden (or plant pot) tulips blooming.

Once you have chosen and obtained your tulips, store the bulbs in a cool, dry place, ideally in a shed or in a fridge (make sure bulbs are not placed next to ripening fruit as these release a gas that could destroy the bulb's flower bud).

Aim to plant the bulbs about two months before the first hard frost, so between late September and mid-November, depending on your location.

Plant the bulbs in an area which gets full sunlight, as tulips perform best with 4–6 hours of sunlight. Ensure that the soil is well drained (tulips really don't like getting their feet wet). If you have fairly heavy clay-based soil, dig in some organically-rich compost and maybe also some sand.

As a general rule, bulbs should be planted three times the depth of their own height (so larger bulbs get deeper holes), and four to six inches (10–15cm) apart. If you prefer precision, aim to plant the bulbs 8–9 inches (20–23 centimetres) deep. This will ensure that the bulbs get properly cold in the winter and keep cooler in the summer.

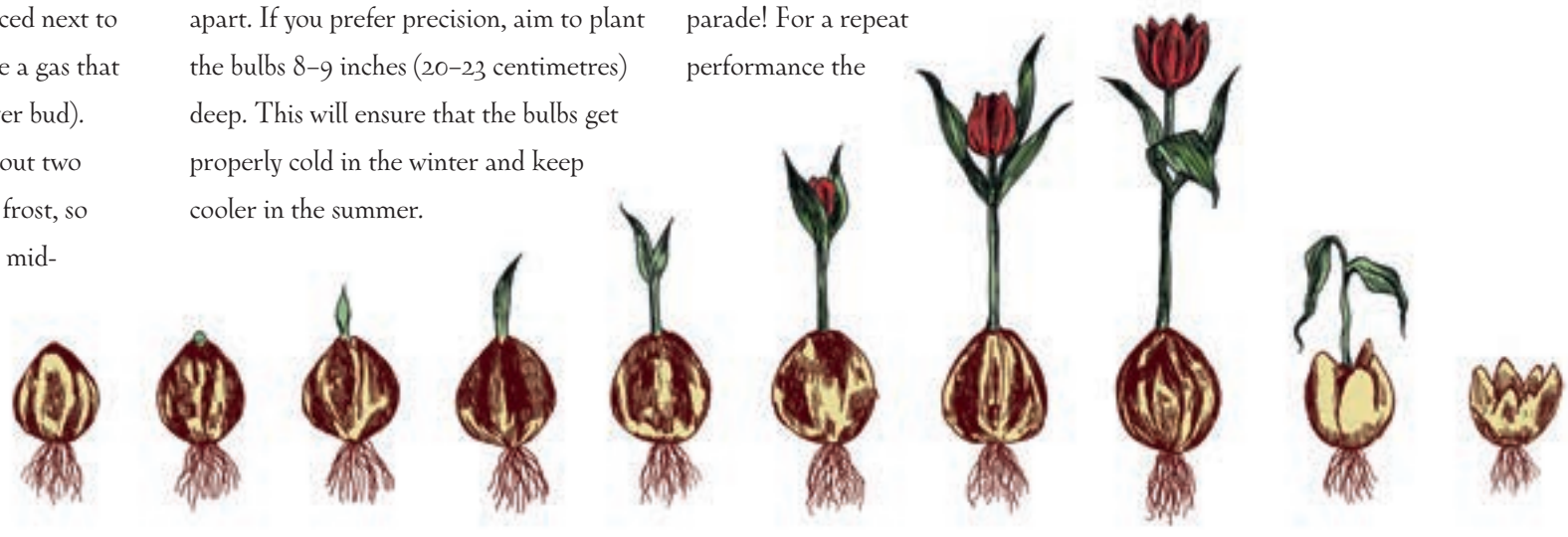
Water the bulbs after planting, which will activate the growth process. If you don't get an inch of rainwater in the first week then make sure you water them some more to give them a good start.

If you've got the time and the patience, then consider over-planting large-leaved perennials such as peonies around the tulips, as these will keep the plants cooler in summer.

Now… wait until the springtime parade! For a repeat performance the following year, allow the leaves to die down naturally (but snip off the seed pods that form where the flower was) as this will feed and store energy for next year's bloom. You could top-feed the tulips with some bone-meal fertiliser in the autumn, forking it into the top few inches (10cm) of soil.

Hey presto!

Now, that was easy wasn't it?



TAXONOMY

Everything in its place

Taxonomy is the branch of science concerned with classification, especially of living things.

Living things are classified by placing them in a hierarchical 'tree', the 'root' of which is the entire living world. From this grow several trunks, notably the animal and plant Kingdoms. The trunks further divide into branches which themselves divide further.

Eventually we reach the basic unit of biological classification, an individual species, which is defined as the largest group of organisms in which two individuals can produce fertile offspring.

Kingdom
Plantae

Subkingdom
Tracheobionata (vascular plants)

Division
Spermatophyta

Phylum
Magnoliophyta (flowering plants)

Class
Liliopsida (monocotyledons)

Order
Liliales

Family
Liliaceae

Genus
Tulipa

Species
10 different classifications including *Tulipa sylvestris* (wild tulip)

CARL LINNAEUS was the father of modern taxonomy, born in Sweden in 1707 and dying in 1778 – 31 years before Charles Darwin was even born.

Through his rigorous scientific study of species and their characteristics he paved the way for Darwin and his colleagues to make their breakthroughs about evolution and how life began on the planet.

ALEXANDER ROSLIN, *Portrait of Linnaeus*, 1775, oil on canvas, 56 x 46cm

SCENTS & SENSE-ABILITY

How bees play the pollination game

Most tulips have no fragrance, yet bees still pollinate them. So how do bees find the tulips? (when they cannot see red)

There are 76 wild tulip species and thousands of modern tulip varieties, but the vast majority have little or no fragrance. As scent is one of the most effective ways for flowering plants to attract pollinators – especially at night when the visual clues of colour and flower shape can barely be seen – what other tricks do tulips have behind their petals?

Bees are responsible for pollinating 80% of flowers, but the pollinators could also be moths, butterflies, bats or birds, so it's fortunate for tulips that they don't all rely solely on their sense of smell. If a flower's favoured pollinators usually operate in daylight, scent should not be needed as long as the flower can be easily located.

In their original wild state tulips grew in the mountain ranges that roll across Asia from western China to Pakistan, with the wild flowers gradually spreading along the Silk Road to Turkey and the eastern Mediterranean. These wild tulips were predominantly red (but often also yellow, white and orange), so their colour alone would have marked them out on the barren mountain slopes.

Well, that is true for us humans, whose colour receptors are blue, green and red.

A tulip seen through (from top) a human's, a bee's and a butterfly's eye

But bees and most other insects do not see the colour red, as bee vision is attuned to blue, green and ultra-violet (UV) light. Red tulips will appear as white under UV light. Bees' super-powered compound eyesight does respond well to contrasting colours, so red tulips (which appear white to bees) that are surrounded by green leaves or grass will still stand out clearly.

Their ability to see ultraviolet light means that bees and insects don't see flowers like we do. Somehow, plants are aware of this, and wily wild flowers will generally have ultraviolet patterns on their petals which act rather like aircraft landing-lights to guide flying insects to land next to their nectar.

PETAL POWER:

You'll often find tulips in hospitals, but can they help to cure the sick?

There is plenty of nonsense written about the medicinal uses of tulips. One website noted that tulip oil is used in creams, hand creams and essential oils, which seems reasonable enough (especially for dry skin subject to itches and irritation), and then goes on to state that the occasional uses for it were 'Father's Day, Mother's Day, Weddings.'

Hmmm. So we're not entirely confident about trusting their declaration that it 'reduces the risk of cancer' or helps prevent 'circulatory disorders', as no evidence is produced.

However, tulip flowers are known to make an excellent poultice for insect bites, bee stings, burns, and rashes on the skin, after the petals have been dipped in very hot water and then crushed inside a hot wet towel to soften them and release their oils. Use the hot towel to hold in place on the affected area for ten minutes.

COMMERCIAL TULIP PRODUCTION

From tiny bulbs, huge horticultural industries grow

Following the Tulipmania price crash in 1637 the industry began a gradual but steady course towards revitalisation. Despite the crash, demand for the most beautiful blooms stayed strong, as tulips were still a very fashionable flower, and tulip production rose to become an important component of the Dutch economy.

Throughout the 19th century the Dutch growers brilliantly promoted their plants, often by giving away thousands of bulbs to help nurture an interest in tulips across the world. They recognised that mass planting could generate bigger sales than rare luxury tulips, a technique that they have carried on since.

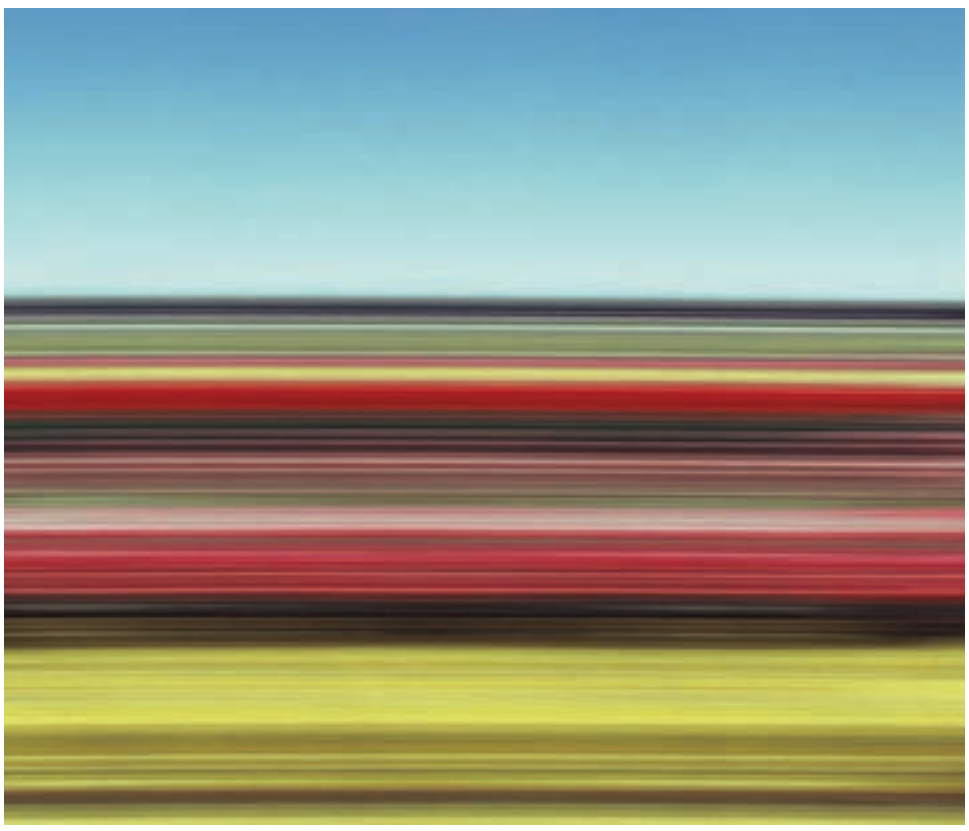
€16·2billion
Dutch horticultural exports (2011)

As global exports grew, planting, harvesting and distribution techniques improved. A highly orchestrated nationwide system of tulip growing and distribution was already in place by the 1880s, and Holland's reputation as the centre of the industry was strengthened over the next 70 years of worldwide growth.

77%
of all flower bulbs traded worldwide come from Holland (most are tulips)

In the 21st century there have been many more innovations introduced within the tulip and horticultural industries, including: 'intelligent' greenhouses that can float on water; innovative lighting, water- and waste-recycling; and new-generation greenhouses that generate more energy than they consume (roughly 10% of Holland's power needs) and thus contribute to a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions.

60 km²
of Holland is covered by greenhouses (how much of Holland is *not* covered by greenhouses?)



ROB CARTER, *Travelling Still, Tulip Fields XXIX*, 2007, Cibachrome print

A tulip grower from the time of Carolus Clusius, in the late 16th century, when only a few species were known, would be overwhelmed both by the many thousands of varieties that are grown commercially today as well as the worldwide love for the flower.

That 16th century tulip grower would also be amazed at the size of the Dutch bulb industry and its importance in global tulip production. While advances in horticultural science have allowed tulip flowers to be grown in a variety of places around the world, tulip bulb production continues to be dominated by Dutch growers, who have formed a small fraternity who strives to perfect methods of cultivation and distribution.

The saying goes 'God created the Earth', but the Dutch created 'Holland'. Taking advantage of a perfectly suited climate and land for growing, the industrious Dutch turned a single tulip bulb into a worldwide icon.

JACOB MARREL, *Still Life with a Tulip*, 1634, oil on canvas, 18 x 26cm

BLIGHTED BEAUTIES

How a virus 'magically' transformed standard tulips into stunning blooms

Wild tulips are fickle flowers, which is part of their charm and fascination. The earliest observers in central Asia and Persia had marvelled at the diverse beauty of their petals and blooms, which could turn out to be yellow, red or pink, even among plants of the same variety!

When the tulip arrived in Europe in the 17th century much of the mystique and excitement of the new-fangled tulips was a consequence of their unpredictability.

This unpredictable tendency was dramatically pronounced in tulips affected by the Tulip Breaking Virus (TBV), whereby a tulip would be weakened by a virus that was spread by tiny aphids. The virus causes the cultivar to 'break' its lock on a single colour, leading to the streaks, swirls and flame-like effects that so enchanted tulip growers and collectors.

Two of the most prized varieties were the 'Viceroy', which was red with yellow flaming, and 'Semper Augustus', red with white striations. But for hundreds of years tulip growers did not know the real reason why the flower was 'breaking', so in 16th-century terms these flowers seemed quite wondrous, like witnessing alchemy in action, or to give it a modern name: MAGIC.

SEMPER AUGUSTUS & THE BREAKING VIRUS

The symptoms of a 'Breaking' virus were first described in 1576 by Carolus Clusius (who you may remember from page 19), who described the variegation as 'rectification' because it was believed that with the offset production of an entirely new 'broken' bloom the plant was distilling, or rectifying, itself into a purer life form.

It's hardly surprising that the causes of TBV flummoxed the finest florists for centuries, although the consequences were soon recognised by that man Clusius once again. In 1585 he noted that 'broken' plants also slowly degenerated – 'any tulip thus changing its original colour is usually ruined afterwards and so wanted only to delight its master's eyes with this variety of colours before dying, as if to bid him a last farewell.'

It was these beautiful 'broken' tulips affected by TBV that famously led to the Tulipmania of the 1630s. It was very hard to replicate these flowers and it seemed even the most expensive and esteemed flowers would degenerate.

WHEN THE WORLD WAS FLAT

Yet growers continued to attempt to recreate the wonderful effects of TBV without understanding its cause, believing it to be the result of environmental factors. Some of those attempts to replicate TBV – including adding dye to the soil and exposing the bulbs to extremes of heat and cold – seem almost comical in hindsight.

'Any tulip thus changing its original colour is usually ruined afterwards and so wanted only to delight its master's eyes with this variety of colours before dying, as if to bid him a last farewell.'

Carolus Clusius,
A treastise on tulips

The real reason for the broken tulips was not discovered until 1928. Dorothy Cayley, a scientist working at the John Innes Horticultural Institute in Norfolk, determined that the 'breaking' of tulips was due to a virus that was spread with the help of aphids. Armed with this knowledge, Dutch growers started to prevent the 'breaking' by destroying any infected plants. TBV is still a significant problem that can cause millions of pounds of damage to tulip plantations. Continuing research into the precise times when infection takes place should help to reduce the amount of pesticides which are used to prevent TBV.

There are still a few varieties of truly 'broken' tulips in existence (such as the 'bizarre' Absalon, which was first sold in 1780) due to the fact that the worst effects of the virus have somehow remained benign; thus it has survived – unlike so many others. Apart from these, most modern cultivars which appear to have a 'broken' appearance are actually the result of careful breeding, so the 'breaks' result from stable genetic mutation and not virus infection.

TBV is still a significant problem that can cause millions of pounds of damage to tulip plantations.

However, there are still amateur growers who are delighted to experiment with 'broken' flowers that are affected by TBV, as you'll discover in the story on English Tulips (see page 33). TBV can still break the hearts of professional tulip breeders, but for English Tulip fanciers at least, these blighted beauties are still very highly prized.

ATOMIC GARDENING IS THE BOMB

It seems that exposure to radiation can actually be a good thing...

In 1986 there was a disastrous leak of radiation from a nuclear reactor near Chernobyl, in the Ukraine, affecting the environment for hundreds of miles around. In spite of this, tulips still flower and flourish in the radiation-blitzed zone nearby. But perhaps this should come as no surprise.

Since the 1930s there have been programmes to harness the transformational effects of radiation, particularly on plants.

The process works like this. Plant seeds are exposed to radiation in order that they develop mutations with desirable traits (such as drought resistance, higher yield or early-ripening) that can be bred with other cultivars.

After the Second World War there was a concerted effort to develop peaceful uses of atomic fission energy as part of the Atoms for Peace programme. It was called Atomic Gardening or Gamma Gardening, and it was scientifically planned to help create and develop new plant cultivars (cultivated varieties). It may sound crazy, but this radiation breeding actually works.

One of the best known is the 'Todd's Mitcham' (pictured right) cultivar of peppermint which is resistant to Verticillium Wilt, that was produced at Brookhaven National Laboratory Atomic Garden in the USA. It's one of many success stories: 'Though poorly known, radiation breeding has produced thousands of useful mutants and a sizeable fraction of the world's crops... including varieties of rice, wheat, barley, pears, peas, cotton, peppermint, sunflowers, peanuts, grapefruit, sesame, bananas, cassava and sorghum,' wrote William Broad in *The New York Times*.

It's one method among many different forms of mutagenic breeding – seeds have also been exposed to chemicals and sent into space to experience cosmic radiation – and every day you're probably eating something which has benefited from radiation breeding.

So what about those Chernobyl tulips? Might they have actually benefited from irradiation too? Sadly we didn't get close enough to find out. But if anybody reading this is feeling brave enough to go and get another bunch, and perhaps collect some bulbs, we'd really love to see them.

Rosalie and the tulips

A chance meeting with an elderly lady who refused to leave her home in the radioactive zone around Chernobyl.

After we pulled off the weed-pocked road and began tramping the winding path to her door, my memory drifted back to the Dark Walks of old English pleasure gardens, some of which were outfitted with freshly constructed ruins. Occasionally, their owners would install a real live 'hermit' whose job was to offer benedictions of 'Memento mori' to revellers wandering the pathways, and perhaps hoping for a little earthly romance in the cool of the evening. Igor reminded us that Rosalie doesn't often chat with strangers; he assured us that we were quite fortunate to meet her. And naturally we felt gratitude as she picked us tulips from her garden and presented a bag of bread for our day, reminding us (via translation) how Jesus fed the multitudes with a few loaves.

Thanks to woodlandshoppersparadise.blogspot.co.uk

Pesticides, which are designed to attract, seduce, and then destroy any pest, are a class of biocide.

The most common uses of pesticides are as plant protection products, which destroy damaging influences on crop production, such as weeds, fungi, or insects. The trouble is, these are also vital for the wider eco-system.

The most insidious products contain neonicotinoids, compounds which get into the system of the bulbs that they are used on. When the bulbs are sold, these pesticides get distributed into thousands of gardens internationally and so unwittingly the insects there continue to be poisoned.

There are great advances in organic bulb production now – especially in the light of EU pesticide regulations – so it is important to choose your variety and supplier wisely.

TULIPS FROM SPACE

BENJAMIN GRANT, *Tulips 52·276355°, 4·557080°*

Benjamin Grant's *Overview* project seeks out the effects of man on the surface of the planet as seen from space. It was inspired, and derives its name, from an idea known as the Overview Effect.

This term refers to the sensation astronauts have when given the opportunity to look down and view the Earth as a whole. They have the chance to appreciate our home in its entirety, to reflect on its beauty and its fragility all at once. That's the cognitive shift that the project hopes to inspire.

From a line of sight on the Earth's surface, it's impossible to fully appreciate the beauty and intricacy of the things that humans have constructed, the sheer complexity of the systems that have been developed, or the devastating impact on our planet. Beholding these forces as they shape our Earth is necessary to make progress in understanding ourselves and what is needed to sustain a safe and healthy planet.

The mesmerising flatness seen from this vantage point, the surprising comfort of systematic organisation on a massive scale, or the vibrant colours captured attract attention. Then our thoughts go beyond the aesthetics, contemplate just exactly what it is that we are seeing, and consider what that means for our planet.

Every year, tulip fields in Lisse, Netherlands begin to bloom in March and are in peak bloom by late April.

The Dutch produce a total of 4·3 billion tulip bulbs each year, of which 53% (2·3 billion) are grown for cut flowers. Of these, 1·3 billion are sold in the Netherlands as cut flowers and the remainder is exported: 630 million bulbs to Europe and 370 million elsewhere.

MARIA van OOSTERWIJCK, *Vase of Tulips, Rose, and Other Flowers with Insects*, 1663, oil on canvas

MISTRESSES OF A GENRE

Holland nurtured three important female still life painters in the 17th Century: RACHEL RUYSCH, MARIA van OOSTERWIJCK and JUDITH LEYSTER (see right). Oosterwyck (1630–1693) enjoyed great renown as a painter, both for her skills and her gender. She never married nor joined a guild, perhaps because she didn't need to, as she received commissions from international patrons who included the Holy Roman Emperor Leopold, Louis XIV of France and William III, King of England. Ruysch (1664–1750) was arguably even more successful, the best documented woman painter of the Dutch Golden Age. While Rembrandt rarely received more than 500 guilders for a painting, her flower paintings were sold for up to 1200 guilders, and she was more prolific.

Mondrian and the white painted tulip

Piet Mondrian did not appreciate fresh flowers and green trees, recalled Charmion von Wiegand, who visited Mondrian's New York studio in the early 1940s:

'Everything was spotless white, like a laboratory. In a light smock, with his taciturn, clean-shaven face, wearing his heavy glasses, Piet Mondrian seemed more a scientist or priest than an artist. The only relief from all the white were large mat-boards, rectangles in yellow, red and blue, hung in asymmetric arrangements on all the walls. Peering at me through his glasses, he noticed my glance and said "I've arranged these to make it more cheerful." In his Paris studio he had used a flower – one tulip in a vase, an artificial one, its leaves painted white.

'As Mondrian was probably incapable of irony, the tulip was unlikely to be a wry joke about his having had to produce flower pieces between 1922 and 1925 when he no longer wanted to, because there were no buyers for his abstracts. It could, of course, have been a revenge for the agony that compromise must have cost. More likely, it was simply a part of the general revulsion against green and growth which made him, when seated at a table beside a window through which trees were visible, persuade someone to change places.

'The artificial tulip fitted in, of course, with the legend of the studio as laboratory or cell, the artist as scientist or anchorite. Mondrian felt it mattered that an artist should present himself in a manner appropriate to his artistic aims.

'A photograph of him taken in 1908 shows a bearded floppy-haired "Victorian" man of sensibility. A photograph of 1911 shows a twentieth-century technologist, clean-shaven with centre parting and brilliantined hair; the spectacles were an inevitable accessory. Soft and hairy becomes hard and smooth; one of the great landscape-painters of his generation, one of the great flower-painters of his generation, comes to find trees monstrous and green fields intolerable.'

'I instinctively tried to capture in my photographs the spirit of his paintings. He simplified, simplified, simplified.'

ANDRÉ KERTÉSZ

ANDRÉ KERTÉSZ, *Chez Mondrian*, 1926, photograph

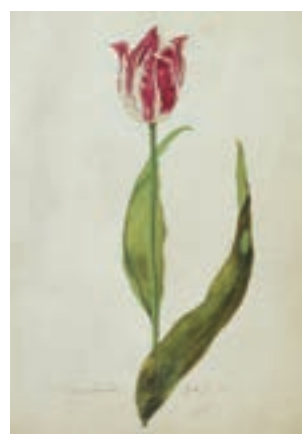
The lady and the *Tulip Book*

JUDITH LEYSTER , *Self Portrait*, 1633, oil on canvas, 75 x 65cm

Born into a family of weavers in Haarlem, Judith Leyster (1609–1660) successfully pursued a profession that was otherwise dominated by men. She became the only female member of the painters' guild, with her own workshop.

After her marriage in 1636 she moved to Amsterdam. Much of Leyster's work was wrongly attributed to Frans Hals until 1893, when Hofstede de Groot first attributed seven paintings to her, six of which are signed with her distinctive monogram 'JL'. Her last painting dates to 1643 – a Judith Leyster *Tulip Book* in the Frans Hals Museum in Haarlem.

Tulip books were albums put together by one or more artists and commissioned by bulb merchants or well-to-do flower enthusiasts. Although the book bears her name, only one of the tulips, *De Vroege Brabantsson*, can with certainty be credited to Judith Leyster.



JUDITH LEYSTER, from *Tulip Book*, c.1643
watercolour and silverpoint on vellum, 40 x 12 x 5cm

VINCENT van GOGH, *Bulb Fields*, 1883, oil on panel, 49 x 66cm

ROBERT MAPPLETHORPE, *Tulip*, 1984, photograph

YAYOI KUSAMA, *Les Tulipes de Shangri-La*, 2004, mixed media

JEFF KOONS, *Bouquet of Tulips*, 2017, mixed media, 10 x 8 x 10m

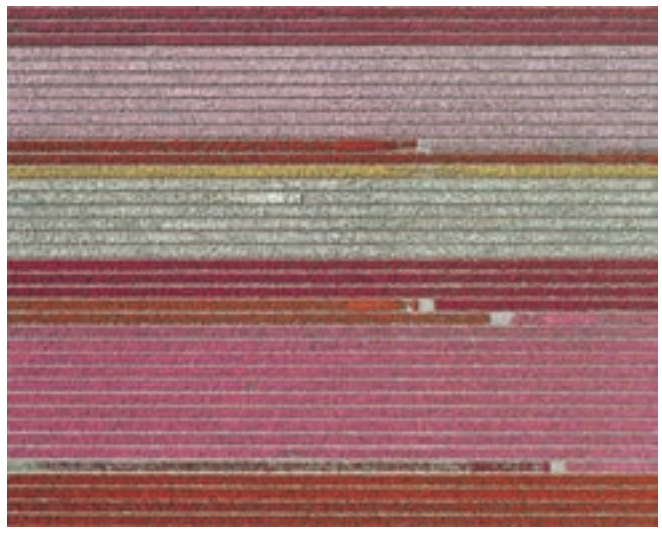
'I hope that the Bouquet of Tulips can communicate a sense of future, of optimism, the joy of offering to find something greater outside the self... a symbol of remembrance, optimism and healing in moving forward from the horrific events that occurred in Paris one year ago...'

Jeff Koons speaking about his proposed memorial sculpture for the city of Paris

ELIZABETH BLACKADDER, *Tulips in a Sunderland Jug*, 2010, watercolour

JEFF KOONS, *Tulips*, 1995–2004, mirror-polished stainless steel with transparent colour coating, 2 x 4 x 5m

GEORGIA O'KEEFE, *Pink Tulip*, 1926



BERNHARD LANG, *Tulip Fields*, aerial photograph

LILY van der STOKKER, *Dreaming Makes the World Go Forward*, 2010, installation

Joséphine Bowes

Artist and museum creator

Tulips feature in the designs of dozens of the ceramics, furniture and paintings which are part of the *Turkish Tulips* exhibition at The Bowes Museum. It's a remarkable collection housed in a magnificent French château in the north of England, but the story of the museum's conception is almost stranger than fiction.

Once upon a time a bold and beautiful Frenchwoman named Joséphine met a rich, handsome Englishman called John, and they fell in love… There's a fairy-tale aspect to the narrative behind the founding of The Bowes Museum, as Joséphine was an actress while John was the illegitimate son of an English Lord, so both were outsiders who were looked down upon in the most polite society.

Joséphine Coffin-Chevallier was just 22 when she met John Bowes in 1847. She was acting, singing and dancing in comic plays at the Théâtre des Variétés. Acting was not as highly regarded then as it is now; actresses inhabited the same world as courtesans or mistresses, and indeed she became John's mistress and was duly installed in a very fashionably-appointed house. That might have been the last we heard of her, as men rarely married their mistresses, but it transpired that acting was the least of her talents.

Joséphine was to really show her range in the many roles she played away from the stage: as a highly-accomplished painter, as a patron of the arts and hostess of celebrated salon parties, as a shrewd collector of decorative design, and as a pioneering woman who conceived the idea of establishing a truly grand museum in rural County Durham.

'We have spoken with the praise she deserves about the ravishing canvas she showed at the Salon.'

After their marriage in 1852 they shared a town house and the Château du Barry outside Paris, both of which were flamboyantly furnished in the Second Empire style. These were ideal locations for dinners and parties where artists, writers, musicians and intellectuals could meet, and she developed into an enlightened patron of the arts, filling her homes with works by dozens of young French painters. 'She was buying impressionist-type paintings before Impressionism was even a thing. She was very much a pioneer,' says Judith Phillips, archivist at The Bowes Museum. Joséphine avidly adopted the new approach of painting outdoors, developing more naturalistic brushwork in her paintings, which were much appreciated: 'We have spoken with the praise she deserves about the ravishing canvas she showed at the Salon,' reported Revue Critique in 1867, the first of four successive years in which her landscapes were included in the Paris Salon exhibition at the Louvre.

Joséphine would have dressed to thrill when attending the Salon or the opera, as huge sums were lavished on clothes from the hottest designer in Paris, the couturier Charles Frederick Worth – who also dressed the Empress Eugénie of France. Just one bill from 1872 records that she spent 11,184 francs, the equivalent of around £36,000 today!

Nonetheless, she and John invested far more in their passion for collecting stunning ceramics and artworks, luxurious textiles, and fine furniture, many of which feature tulips in their decoration. Between 1862 and 1874 they built up a collection of 15,000 objects with the clear intention of creating a museum-quality collection that could improve peoples' lives. 'People were becoming better educated,' explains Judith Phillips, 'and Joséphine and John were philanthropists who wanted to introduce the people of the area to art and culture. At that time art was viewed as a refining agent; exposure to it would just make people better.'

It would be lovely to write 'and they all lived happily ever after,' but Joséphine suffered from frequent illnesses, and was only just strong enough to see the foundation stone of the museum laid in 1869. She was to die suddenly, aged 48, in 1874 and her widower was so distressed that he all but stopped collecting. John married again, but it was not a success, and he carried on overseeing the construction of the museum until his death in 1885.

Fortunately, the building work was completed in 1892 and the real 'Happy Ending' to this story is that the museum Joséphine and John planned for decades celebrates its 125th anniversary in 2017, an incredibly vibrant legacy and a remarkable monument to their dreams.

JOSÉPHINE BOWES,
The Chateau du Barry at Louveciennes, 1852

Münden tureen and cover, c 1770

WHEN IS A TULIP NOT A TULIP?

The Tulip Nebula, 6,000 light-years away in the constellation of Cygnus

THE IMPOSSIBLE BLACK TULIP OF CARTOGRAPHY

This is the nickname given to this very rare map first printed in 1602 by the Italian Catholic missionary Matteo Ricci and his Chinese collaborators Mandarin Zhong Wentao and the technical translator Li Zhizao. Its tulip epithet referred to its rarity, importance and exoticism. The map was crucial in expanding Chinese knowledge of the world, the first Chinese map showing the Americas. Its actual title translates as 'A Map of the Myriad Countries of The World'. (This is a coloured Japanese version from 1604).

TULIP for Syria Relief

GOLDEN TULIP
HOTELS · SUITES · RESORTS

The Tulip Staircase in the Queen's House in Greenwich, designed by Inigo Jones

NICOLAES TULP (1593–1674)

Born Claes Pieterszoon, the Dutch surgeon and mayor of Amsterdam adopted the tulip as his heraldic emblem and changed his name to Nicolaes TULP, later becoming famous as the subject of Rembrandt's painting The Anatomy Lesson of Dr Tulp.

He was also responsible for the regulation of apothecary's shops and in 1636 co-authored Amsterdam's first pharmacopoeia, the *Pharmacopoeia Amstelredamensis* – a book containing rules and instructions for the proper use of medicines and pharmaceuticals.

THE BOWES MUSEUM

The Bowes Museum celebrates its 125th anniversary in 2017. This remarkable museum is housed in an opulent French château, so that it comes as a real surprise in rural County Durham. Its renowned collection of decorative arts, ceramics and clocks, fashion and textiles, elegant furniture and hundreds of European paintings are often described as 'the Wallace Collection of the north.' You can read about its founders, Joséphine and John Bowes, on page 48, but we urge you to treat yourself to a visit to see the beautiful collection they created, especially between July 29 and 5 November when both *Turkish Tulips* and *The Clockwork Garden* will take place there.

www.thebowesmuseum.org.uk

The House *of* Fairy Tales

The House of Fairy Tales is a national children's arts charity, founded by Deborah Curtis, with her husband Gavin Turk. The charity produced the *Turkish Tulips* exhibition in 2017 and is now developing a national education programme inspiring young person-centred, creative and positive learning about European and Middle Eastern History.

Founded in 2006 the charity has a track record of producing rich, impactful and spectacular events and projects for young people and their families and teachers. The work is rooted in exciting narratives and compelling gaming structures, which inspire and encourage a sense of ethics and responsibility, while expanding their understanding of the wider world and their potential within it.

The charity has delivered successful projects with a wide range of partnership organisations, museums and galleries to festivals, public parks and of course schools. These partners have included the National Trust, the Royal Shakespeare Company, Tate Modern and The Royal Horticultural Society. Working with over 700 creatives artists and inspirators the company has impacted on the lives of hundreds of thousands of children.

The charity's vision is that providing more imaginative, inspiring spaces, materials and programmes will not just engage and develop more positive children and families, but will build thriving, safe, sustainable communities and more optimistic societies.

The House of Fairy Tales exhibition programmes are produced by artists with the support of a growing board of respected international creatives – aiming to be family-friendly, fun, playful and inclusive.

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Turkish Tulips

is a travelling exhibition and an accompanying education programme that raises awareness of world history and politics for children, young people and families within the host communities.
Further information:
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TULIPS & GARDENS IN WORLD HISTORY

3000–2500 BCE
Assyrians and Sumerians develop gardens in Mesopotamia

3100 BCE
First dynasty established in Egypt

2500 BCE
Egyptian gardens are shown in tomb paintings, featuring pools, trees and flowers. Their rectangular shape is determined by irrigation methods

1500 BCE
Ancient Greek delight in plants is shown in frescoes and pottery

2200 BCE
Completion of Stonehenge

700 BCE
King Sennacherib of Assyria creates a park garden at Ninevah on the River Tigris, with ponds, vines and fruit

776 BCE
The first recorded Olympics Games in Greece

550 BCE
Cyrus the Great establishes the Persian (Archaemenid) Empire in Iran

580 BCE
The Hanging Gardens of Babylon are created by Nebuchadnezzar in a grand ziggurat of terraces watered by the River Euphrates

551–479 BCE
Life of Confucius, founder of Confucianism

562–483 BCE
Life of Buddha, founder of Buddhism

540 BCE
Cyrus the Great creates a garden at Pasargadae based on a pattern of rectangular pools and water channels

300 BCE
In Greece, Theophrastus' *Enquiry Into Plants* classifies and describes over 450 plants – the beginnings of botany

334–330 BCE
Alexander the Great of Macedonia defeats Darius of Iran (Persia) and invades central Asia

264–146 BCE
The Punic Wars between Rome and Carthage, fighting for control of the Mediterranean

206 BCE–220 CE
The Han Dynasty rules in China. The Great Wall is completed as defence against invasion and the Silk Road trading network to the west is set up

20 CE
The art of topiary begins and is widely used in Roman gardens

4 BCE–30 CE
Life of Jesus Christ

224-651
Sasanian Empire in Iran (Persia) dominates western Asia

79 CE
Vesuvius erupts. The ruins of Pompeii reveal small domestic gardens as well as landscaped gardens at country villas

750
Arabs build impressive gardens on the banks of the River Tigris. The Islamic garden style adapts Iranian 'fourfold' garden, quartered by water channels

330
Constantinople becomes capital of the Eastern Roman Empire

410
Visigoths sack the city of Rome

570-632
The life of Muhammad, the prophet and founder of Islam

900
Japanese gardens are inspired by Chinese ideas, but take on symbolic forms and spare, ascetic lay-outs. Rocks are venerated in Chinese and Japanese cultures

1000
Tulips are being cultivated in Iran (Persia) and Turkey

1066
The Normans, led by William the Conqueror, invade England

1048–1273
Omar Khayyam and Rumi write poetry which mentions tulips

1300
The Ottoman Empire is founded by Osman in Anatolia

1400–1550
The Renaissance in Italy revives classical Greek and Roman ideas of proportion and geometry in garden design

1453
Mehmed the Conqueror creates pleasure grounds and public gardens in Istanbul which feature tulips

1453
The fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks. Its new name: Istanbul

1500
In Japan Zen-inspired gardens of rocks and raked gravel or moss and rocks first appear, designed to aid meditation

1492
Columbus discovers the 'New World' in the West Indies

1500–1700
Chinese create gardens which are designed as a Microcosm of the Universe

1517
Martin Luther initiates the (Protestant) Reformation in Germany

1559
Conrad Gesner paints the first tulip in Europe. It appears in a book in 1561

1530
The Moghul emperor Babur is an avid gardener, introducing tulips, melons and grapes to India

1526
Babur becomes the first Mughal Emperor, India

1578
First tulip is reported in England

1594
The first tulips are grown in Holland by Carolus Clusius in Leiden

1566–1648
The Eighty Years War between Spain and the Dutch Republic

1632
Shah Jahan builds the Taj Mahal with fabulous Mughal gardens, in Agra, India

1634–1637
Tulipmania in Holland

1650
The Council of Florists established in Istanbul. Registers and describes new tulip varieties

1662–1700
The Gardens at Versailles are created, the apogee of the French Formal Garden style

1760–1840
The Industrial revolution begins in Great Britain and Europe

1718–1730
The Tulip Era or *Lâle Devri* in the Ottoman Empire under Ahmed III

1700–1815
The English Landscape Garden style is developed, perfected by Capability Brown, and transformed by Humphry Repton into the 'picturesque'

1803–1815
Napoleonic Wars in Europe and around the world

1849
J.B. van der Schoot is the first 'bollenreiziger' (travelling bulb salesman) to go to the United States.

1914–1918
First World War

1850
The Black Tulip, a historical romance by Alexandre Dumas, is published

1928
The real reason for Tulip Breaking Virus is discovered in England

1939–1945
Second World War

1943
D.W. Lefeber develops enormous red tulips which are known as Darwin Hybrids. The most famous one is 'Apeldoorn'

1969
Man lands on the moon

TULIPS & SPORT

Even we must admit that planting or picking flowers isn't a great sporting experience. So let's step away from the flower beds and consider sports that are really popular in places where tulips grow wild and in countries like tulip-mad Holland and the UK too.

1 HOCKEY: Why is hockey No.1? Because games played with curved sticks and a ball have been played for thousands of years, from ancient Greece to inner Mongolia (at the Chinese end of the Silk Roads) where the Daur people have played for a thousand years. It's one of the most popular sports in India and Holland – these two countries have won 12 Olympic gold medals in team hockey!

2 ARCHERY: Don't try this at home, kids, because the whole point is that it's dangerous. Archery practice helped soldiers build up their muscles and be more accurate so that they could kill more enemies (before they had guns). Modern archery, of course, isn't about fighting but is all about targets; both aiming at them and trying to achieve them. And what happens when you succeed? Bullseye!

3 FOOTBALL: The Ancient Greeks and Romans played ball games which have similarities to modern football (and rugby), but the Chinese game Cuju is actually recognised by F.I.F.A. as the earliest form of football, and was played for around 1500 years. As for modern football, the Best National Team Never To Win The World Cup was Holland, which came second in 1974 and 1978 (and again in 2010, as if they need reminding).

4 POLO, BUZKASHI AND KOKPAR: Polo (think of hockey played on a horse) was originally a game to develop horse-riding skills in ancient Persia. It was played by men and women in 8th century China and among the elites in the Byzantine Empire and Mughal India. Buzkashi is different: horse riders score points by placing a decapitated goat carcass in a goal. It's the national sport of Afghanistan and is played across central Asia. Kokpar, a variant of buzkashi, has many professional teams in Kazakhstan.

5 ICE SKATING developed as a sport on Dutch canals, Scottish lochs and in the English fens. People had been gliding along on the ice for millennia, but it was those innovative Dutch who in the 14th century first added sharpened steel edges to their boots to aid movement and control direction on the ice. Dutch skaters won seven Speed Skating gold medals at the 2014 Winter Olympics!

6 WEIGHTLIFTING has been a competitive way of testing strength since time immemorial, and requires relatively little equipment. The sport is as huge and popular along the Silk Road routes as are the winners – who are as famous as Premier League footballers. World records in the 'Snatch' and 'Clean & Jerk' lifts have recently been achieved by competitors from China, Kazakhstan, Iran, Turkey, Russia and Greece.

7 HORSE RACING: The 1000 km Mongol Derby horse race – the longest in the world – looks like an exercise in cruelty, but it's the riders who suffer most; horses must be changed every 40km, but the riders stay in the saddle for over 12 hours each day for ten days! That's provided they don't get injured – about half the riders complete the course, which recreates the messenger system developed by Genghis Khan in 1224 as the fastest way to communicate across his empire.

7 KABADDI is a contact sport that originated in southern India, but is now widely played across central Asia. Teams compete in a 22 metre-diameter circle, sending raiders into the opposition area to try to touch opposing players without being captured. It is the national sport of Bangladesh, and the Kabaddi World Cup first took place in 2004. It is now an annual affair. In 2016 India beat England 62-20 in the World Cup Final.

9 WRESTLING: One of the oldest forms of combat (wrestling appears in 15,000 year-old cave paintings in France), wrestling is still massively popular right along the Silk Road routes from China to Turkey, where oil wrestling (wrestlers are doused in olive oil!) is the Turkish national sport. In the Olympics wrestlers compete in either Greco-Roman or Freestyle, while in Japan Sumo wrestling is XXX Large!