



The Golden Age of Flowers: Botanical Illustration in the Age of Discovery 1600-1800

By Celia Fisher

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The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries witnessed a surge in the study of and interest in botanicals that led to some of the greatest books of plant illustration ever made, including such outstanding examples as the *Hortus Eystettensis*, work by Maria Sibylla Merian, Thornton's *Temple of Flora*, Banks's *Florilegium*, and Sibthorp's *Flora Graeca*. Culled from these masterpieces of botanical art, this lavishly illustrated new book reproduces one hundred of the most beautiful flower images from this period.

As Celia Fisher explains, during this time several developments took place that led to a significant increase in the popularity and output of botanical illustration, including the revolution created by the advancement of metal engraving, the development of the new Linnaean system for classifying types of plants, and the epic voyages of discovery that recorded and collected the exotic plants encountered in remote, uncharted lands. The historical illustrations presented here are arranged in alphabetical order by flower with an accompanying text that outlines their geographic and botanical origins, the derivation of their names, and the properties for which they were most valued.

This beautiful and informative book will appeal to gardeners and flower lovers as well as readers interested in the history of botany and illustration.

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Review

“Using images from some of the most celebrated botanical works in the British Library, Fisher arranges a vivid alphabet of flowers. She starts with an alstroemeria by the great French artist Redouté (his *Les Liliacees* was first published in Paris at the beginning of the 19th century) and finishes with zinnias, which arrived in Europe from Mexico in 1753.”

(Anna Pavord *Independent (UK)*)

“This book is really beautiful and anyone interested in art, gardening or serious botany will enjoy turning the pages.”

(Helen Asherton *Reference Reviews*)

“A feast for the eyes, informing us of the great plant collectors and their patrons.”

(Bill Spence *York Press*)

“This book is simply beautiful and anyone interested in art, gardening, or serious botany will love it.”

(*Yorkshire Gazette and Herald*)

About the Author

Celia Fisher gained her MA and PhD at the Courtauld Institute of Art, where she studied flowers in fifteenth-century paintings and manuscripts. She has worked for the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew as part of a project evaluating the uses of plants. She lectures and writes widely on the history of plants and gardens in art, and is a keen gardener. Her publications include *Flowers and Fruit* (National Gallery, 1998), *Still Life Paintings* (Vadi, 2000), *Flowers in Medieval Manuscripts* (British Library, 2004), and *The Medieval Flower Book* (British Library, 2007).

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