



An Oak Spring Flora: Flower Illustration from the Fifteenth Century to the Present Time- A Selection of the Rare Books, Manuscripts and Works of Art in the Collection of Rachel Lambert Mellon (Vol 3)

Lucia Tongiorgi Tomasi

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This authoritative and magnificently illustrated presentation of the art of flower depiction in the West is the third volume in a handsome series of catalogues that describe the rare - in some cases unique - books, manuscripts and other works of art conserved at Oak Spring Garden Library, Upperville, Virginia, a collection formed over many years by Rachel Lambert Mellon. The author, Lucia Tongiorgi Tomasi, has selected more than one hundred items from Oak Spring's extensive holdings, which include superb manuscript florilegia, botanical prints, books of instruction of every kind, still-life and vanitas paintings, and various ornamental ceramics and textiles. Among them are examples by some of the greatest names ever to have worked in either scientific or decorative botanical art - Jacques Le Moyne de Morgues, Georg Dionysius Ehret, Nicolas Robert and Pierre Joseph Redoute. An Oak Spring Flora is thematically organized, with topics ranging from Tulipomania and women artists to Dutch and Flemish painting and the search for exotics in remote lands. In her introductions the author provides the personal and contextual backgrounds that are essential for a real understanding and appreciation of floral illustration past and present. The sheer beauty as well as extraordinary skills encountered in, for example, manuscript florilegia by Jacob Marrel and Maria Sibylla Merian, hand-coloured books by Pierre Vallet and G. B. Ferrari, and flower studies by John Constable and others, are testament to the high status accorded floral illustration over the centuries. This latest addition to the Oak Spring Garden Library series will be of great interest to collectors of rare books and to fine-art historians as well as to horticulturalists, botanists and garden historians.

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