

Leopold ZINÖGGER (Linz 1811 - Linz 1872)

Parrot Tulips

Watercolour, over a pencil underdrawing, on laid paper.

Faintly signed with the artist's initials L.Z. in pencil at the lower right.

Numbered 31.486/6 in pencil at the lower left.

Inscribed, signed and dated Agu. Pudie.(?) v. Leop. Zinnögger Linz / mai 1850 on the verso.

273 x 231 mm. (10 3/4 x 9 1/8 in.)

This watercolour depicts a 'parrot' tulip, one of the fifteen divisions or groups into which the larger family of tulips (Tulipa) are sorted. These large, exotic plants flower in mid to late spring, and derive their name from their vibrant colouring – with patterns in combinations of red and yellow or red and white - and long petals with fringed, curly edges. As Beeton's Gardening Book, published in 1874, noted of them, 'The parrot tulip has a singularly picturesque appearance; the flowers are large and the colours brilliant, so that when planted in flower-borders and the front of shrubberies they produce a most striking effect. When grown in hanging baskets, and so planted as to cause their large gay flowers to droop over the side, the effect is remarkable and unique.'

The particular type of parrot tulip depicted here would seem to be either a 'Markgraaf van Baden', first introduced in 1750 and one of the most celebrated of all tulips, or a 'Cafe Brun' tulip, dating from 1840; both cultivars are a deep yellow, patterned with scarlet.

Artist description:

The son of a gardener, the 19th century Austrian painter and amateur botanist Leopold Zinögger enrolled in the Akademie der bildenden Künste in Vienna in 1830. Five years later, he held his first exhibition at the Landesmuseum in Linz, together with his friend and fellow student Johan Baptist Reiter. In 1836 Zinögger was awarded the Heinrich-Füger Prize for a flower painting. Despite this accolade, however, his application for a travel grant to study flower painting in Holland was rejected in 1837. After turning down the offer of a teaching position at the Vienna Akademie, Zinögger worked with the botanist Johann Baptiste Duftschmid, conducting experiments in plant breeding and making discoveries concerning the reproduction of orchids. Between 1849 and 1862, he was employed as a drawing teacher at a grammar school and also gave private lessons, while at the same time running his father's plant nursery. He continued to paint, and eventually completed over 320 works. When the Oberösterreichische Kunstverein (Upper Austrian Art Association) was established in Linz in 1851, Zinögger was among the founding members and showed four still life paintings at the group's inaugural exhibition that year. He continued to take part in every exhibition of the Kunstverein in Linz from then onwards. The artist died in Linz in 1872, at the age of sixty-one.