Stephen Ongpin Fine Art



Fiona STRICKLAND (1956 -)

Tulipa 'Estella Rijnveld'

Watercolour on Fabriano paper.

Signed Fiona Strickland in pencil at the bottom centre.

480 x 695 mm. (18 7/8 x 27 3/8 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 derive their name from their vibrant colouring 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 is the Tulip 'Estella Rijnveld' (also sometimes known as the 'Gay Presto'), which blooms in late spring.

As noted in the catalogue of a recent exhibition of the artist's small-scale watercolours on vellum, 'Fiona Strickland has long been drawn to tulips, finding their colour, shape, and form visually engaging, and the history of their depiction in art intellectually fascinating…she follows in the footsteps of illustrious artistic forebears, including the painters of the Dutch Golden Age such as Ambrosius Bosschaert, Balthasar van der Ast, and Jacob Marrel, whose seventeenth-century Tulip Book she travelled to study at close-hand in the Rijksmuseum in 2016…Often depicting flowers from an unusual viewpoint or at turning points in their life cycle, her paintings act as portraits of individual flowers, rather than scientific representations of a species.' Strickland is a member of the Wakefield and North of England Tulip Society, founded in the early 19th century, and often paints individual tulips from the society's annual shows.

Artist description:

Born in Edinburgh, Fiona Strickland studied under Dame Elizabeth Blackadder at the Edinburgh College of Art, receiving a postgraduate diploma in 1979, and exhibited her work at the Royal College of Art in London and in Scotland at the Scottish Society of Artists, the Royal Glasgow Institute of Fine

Art and the Royal Scottish Academy. She was elected a member of the Society of Botanical Artists in 2008, where she exhibited her first botanical watercolours. In the same year she was also awarded a Royal Horticultural Society gold medal and exhibited at the Royal Scottish Academy of Painters in Watercolour in Edinburgh, while later exhibiting her work at the Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation in Pittsburgh. Watercolours by Strickland are today in the collections of the the Royal Horticultural Society in London and the Hunt Institute at the Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, as well as in the Shirley Sherwood Collection of contemporary botanical art.