



Forever Flowers

Mastery and Meaning of Flower Paintings in the Low Countries (1600-1700)

Sven Van Dorst

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- Fresh Perspective on Flemish Flower Still Lives: Explores the artistry of flower paintings from the early modern period (1600-1700) through eight exquisite works from The Phoebus Foundation
- Unique Authorial Expertise: Written by Sven Van Dorst, a restorer and conservation expert, offering a rare combination of technical and artistic insight
- Material-Technical Research: Delves into the craftsmanship and knowledge behind the creation of these masterpieces through hands-on experiments and analysis
- Rich, Intriguing Stories: Illuminates the religious symbolism of flowers, the exotic species depicted, international trade connections, and even the use of real butterfly wings in art
- Unveiling New Discoveries: Presents previously unknown aspects of flower still lifes, offering groundbreaking insights for art lovers and scholars alike
- Comprehensive Exploration: Combines art history, technical research, and storytelling to invite readers to view this genre with a fresh lens
- Published to accompany the exhibition *Garden of Delights* at the Kadriorg Art Museum in Tallinn, Estonia, from 30 August 2025 to January 25, 2026.

If flowers could talk... In **Forever Flowers**, restorer and head of the conservation studio of The Phoebus Foundation, Sven Van Dorst (1990), offers a fresh perspective on Flemish flower still lifes from the early modern period (1600-1700). Eight paintings, prints, and drawings from the collection of The Phoebus Foundation serve as the basis to discuss the intricacies of this genre. With his unique approach, the author-restorer sheds light on the knowledge and craftsmanship behind painted bouquets. Through material-technical research and experiments, he establishes connections and demonstrates the outstanding expertise of the early modern creators of these painted gems. In this book, Van Dorst unfolds new insights about eight fascinating works and invites the reader to view the flower still life genre differently. One by one, intriguing stories blossom about the religious significance of flowers, exotic species and international connections, the use of real butterfly wings in paintings, and previously undiscovered aspects of these refined still lifes.

Sven Van Dorst (1990) gained his master's degree in conservation and restoration from the Royal Academy/University of Antwerp. After working at the Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp, he completed his training at the Hamilton Kerr Institute, a department of Cambridge University. In 2016, he founded the conservation studio of The Phoebus Foundation. As head of the studio, Sven assembled a team of passionate conservators and conservation scientists who manage the Foundation's collection on a daily basis. Among the paintings he has treated are works by masters such as Peter Paul Rubens, Jacob Jordaens, Anthonis Mor and Michaelina Wautier. Between 2017 and 2020, Sven led the research and restoration project of the panels of the Dymphna altarpiece by Goossen Van der Weyden. His fascination with the painting technique and materials of Baroque flower painters has already led to two editions – on Daniel Seghers and Jan Brueghel I – of the Phoebus Focus series.

