

KLAAS MULLER

A N T H O N Y C L A E S Z . T H E Y O U

Four Studies of Tulips

These refined botanical illustrations of four tulips are attributed to Anthony Claesz. the Younger (1616–1652), an artist renowned for his precise and aesthetically detailed flower studies.

During the early 17th century, at the height of the Tulip Mania, several artists, including Jacob Marrell and Pieter Holsteyn, devoted themselves to creating so-called “Tulip Albums.” Anthony Claesz De Jonge was another such artist, and it is more than likely that our four examples come from his album, as they were clearly made by the same hand and are also roughly the same size and display the same technique as other examples (cf. Tulip Album R. Noortman (Maastricht) 1987 and 3 studies of Tulips, Christie's Amsterdam, 5/11/2003, lot no. 118).

Each tulip displays a unique variation in color and pattern — from deep purple streaks to fiery red-and-yellow flames — capturing the fascination with rare tulip varieties during the height of Tulipmania in the 17th-century Netherlands.

Tulipmania was a brief but intense speculative craze, during which prices for rare tulip bulbs soared to extraordinary levels. The most coveted flowers featured striped or flamed petals, caused by the so-called “tulip breaking virus,” and were considered symbols of wealth and status.

Claesz.'s work is more than botanical documentation; it is a cultural artifact that reflects the aesthetics and economic fervor of his time. Today, his tulip studies are celebrated for their artistic finesse, historical significance, and rarity, making them highly sought-after by collectors and museums alike.

These four tulips offer a striking example of how art, nature, and history converge in a single image.

Watercolour on paper, 233 x 83mm

17th century

