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Podcast transcript

THE GLORY OF THE GARDEN

Welcome to The Glory of the Garden, a podcast from Royal Collection Trust where we'll be learning about the changing face of the garden in art and literature between 1500 and 1900. Vanessa Remington, Senior Curator of Paintings, gives a lecture at the Queen's Gallery, Buckingham Palace, drawing exclusively on paintings, works on paper, books and works of art in the Royal Collection. Images of the garden have mirrored its appearance in literature since Persian poets in the 11th century first described the Persian paradise garden and artists painted garden scenes in exquisite illuminated manuscripts. For details of other talks and events by Royal Collection Trust, visit the What's On section of our website.

Well, welcome everybody, how very nice to see you all here today. Painting Paradise explores, quite simply, the story of the garden in art and it looks at the way that artists and craftsmen have been inspired by the garden through the centuries. But in this talk I'm going to look at the idea of the garden as muse in a slightly broader sense and together we're going to explore the links between the garden in art, on the one hand, and the garden in literature on the other. Now, long before the printed book was invented writers had put pen to paper to describe their impressions of the garden, and in Western Europe the first horticultural author is Pliny the Younger, who described in the first century AD the gardens of his favourite Tuscan villa. Now, Pliny could never have guessed that the letter that he wrote to his great friend, Domitius Apollinaris, would come to have immense influence over a thousand years later when his descriptions of the garden and of all the elements in it: the vine covered pergolas, the terraces, the incredibly complicated topiary shaped like animals in some cases, or shaped to form the name of his gardener, all these different elements would serve as a model for Renaissance garden makers. In fact, only isolated images of classical gardens like Pliny's survive in Pompeian frescoes. So if we want to find the first comprehensive range of images of the garden in art, we actually have to look away from the Western tradition and we have to turn instead to Persian art.

Now, the Persians loved gardens and in fact it was in Persia in the 6th century BC that the first recorded gardens in history grew. And the Persian name for these early royal hunting gardens was *pairidaeza*, which means to create a round, suggesting the enclosed nature of these hunting gardens. And this term, *pairidaeza*, gave us the word paradise, which was transmitted then by the Greeks to Western Europe, and this word, paradise, came to have a huge resonance through the centuries. So gardens were developed in Persia and they became a really precious and significant part of Persian culture. And when the Persians also developed a very refined school of manuscript illumination from the 11th century AD onwards, it's not surprising that we find the first really comprehensive range of garden images in these illuminated manuscripts. And historical narratives such as the great Persian national epic, *The Shahnameh*, which is something rather like *The Iliad* or *The Odyssey*, almost invariably feature gardens and every aspect of garden life is brought alive on the page. So we see Princes greeting Ambassadors, having audiences in the garden, we see scholars and poets conversing in the garden, musicians and dancers performing, and of course lovers meeting in the garden. So the Persian manuscript provides this immense repertoire of garden scenes and the Emperor Shah Jahan, the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan, had a court poet who very beautifully described figures strutting in the garden of the page.

Well, the manuscript that we can see here is one of six illustrations of a folio of poetry by the Persian poet, Mir Ali-Shir Nava'i, and the poetry was written in Herat in 1492 and this and the other illuminations that accompany it were painted slightly later in Bukhara in about 1510 and it shows us a beautiful enclosed Persian garden and we can see lots of the typical features of the Persian garden in this. You can see that it's enclosed all around by high walls, you can see that water's very important; there's a tiled octagonal pool in the centre with a stream running from it. Shade was critical, obviously, in the Persian garden, and it's provided here by a plane tree in the background, a chenar tree, and we've got these cool pavilions where these seven couples are meeting and making love in this garden. Then in the centre, by the pool, we can see a woman offering wine from a golden cup to her lover, and just above her head in the tree, the plane tree, we can see a pair of nightingales. Now, the nightingale's song, *gulbang* in Persian, translates as 'flower cry', which is rather beautiful. And the nightingale was very often included in both Persian poetry and Persian art as a symbol of the arrival of spring. In Persian miniatures, the garden is very often depicted as the natural setting for the enjoyment of the great princely arts of music and of poetry, and here we can see two manuscripts which show Princes enjoying poetry in the garden. And in the first sheet on the left, you can see a young Prince who's reciting poetry to his companions, and there are attendants playing music, regaling them with music and with wine in the foreground. And in the second miniature, the one on the right, you can see two Princes and they're accompanied by older attendants and they're seated in discussion by this pavilion and a scribe is taking notes just behind them, you can see here.

So poetry and the garden had been inextricably linked in Persian culture for many centuries and these manuscripts are really the successors of a whole series of manuscripts which, from the 13th century onwards, had placed poets and mystics in a garden setting. And mystic poets, such as Farooqi or Nizami, whose verses in fact form part of the setting of the composite sheet on which the two young Princes discussing poetry that we've just seen is mounted, mystic poets like this often wrote love poetry, which personified the lover, the beloved, as a garden. So, for example, the poet Farooqi writes: 'I have an idol whose face in December is a rose bush and a Judas tree blossoming together. Whether spring comes or not, the flowers in my beloved's face will not wither. In my idol's face I have a new sort of garden, which unlike other gardens, will never be saddened by time'. So Persian poetry was full of imagery taken from the garden and flowers like the rose, the tulip, jasmine, narcissus, were very, very rich in poetic association. And there was nowhere more appropriate to read, to recite, to enjoy the floral laden of Persia than in the garden. And although the link between poetry and the garden was made in other contemporary and later cultures, there's really no greater visual expression of it than in the Persian illuminated miniature.

Well, in the Western tradition, by contrast, gardens appear almost exclusively in a sacred context until the 15th century, and the late 15th century at that. And the main context in which gardens appeared was in the depiction of biblical gardens, particularly the Garden of Eden. And the literary description that we find in the Book of Genesis provided a really tight framework that artists could draw on. So in Genesis we read, 'The Lord God planted a garden in Eden away to the East and there he put a man whom he had formed. The Lord God made trees spring from the ground, all trees pleasant to look at and good for food, and in the middle of the garden he set the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil'. And then the description in Genesis goes on to discuss the four rivers that flowed through the Garden of Eden as well as the fountain of life. We've got a woodcut engraving. It was produced in Nuremberg in 1493 for a really early printed book called The World Chronicle, *The Liber Chronicarum*, and all the features described in Genesis are here. On the right, here, we can see Eve plucking the apple from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and in fact that's not named as an apple tree in the Bible, but it was usually portrayed as an apple tree. Sometimes it appeared as a fig, a fig tree, sometimes as a mountain ash, but here it appears as an apple tree. On the right, here, we've got the tree of life, and that's shown as a dragon tree, *dracaena*, and the dragon tree had been known in Europe since at least Roman times and it was believed to have life giving properties, it exuded a really gummy resin, which was called dragon's blood, and that's why it's been chosen to represent the tree of life. And you can see that water's the main feature here, we've got a river meandering through the background, and then the four rivers, the named rivers are pouring out of this floodgate here, and we can see the fountain of life as well. Here it is in the background, and it's represented as a contemporary Medieval garden fountain with a carved mask spout, draining into this basin here and then onwards and outwards.

Now, another Old Testament description of an enclosed garden gave rise to an entirely new art form. It's one of the most beautiful literary descriptions of love in a garden, and it comes from the Old Testament Song of Solomon, which dates from about 1000 BC. There's a lot of discussion about how these verses should be interpreted. On the surface they read as a conversation between a bride and a bridegroom, and some people argue that they just simply celebrate the consummation of a marriage. But others say that they symbolise God's union with Israel and others say that they talk about the relationship between Christ and the Church. So we've got, for example, the bridegroom's voice, who says, 'A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed. Thy plants are as an orchard of pomegranates with pleasant fruits, camphor and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense, myrrhs and aloes, with all the chief spices, a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters and streams from the Lebanon'. And then the bride's voice responds, 'I sleep, but my heart waketh. It is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled, for my head is filled with dew and my locks with the drops of the night. My beloved has gone down into his garden to the beds of spices to feed in the gardens and to gather lilies. I am my beloved and my beloved is mine, he feedeth among the lilies'. Well, these verses came to be associated with the Virgin Mary in rather more or less tortuous interpretations that saw Mary's womb as the enclosed garden where Christ grew. And in about 1390 we start to see the development of paintings in oil and tempera on panel of the Virgin in the enclosed garden as a subject and they appear in Venice in northern

Italy, in north Germany and in the southern Netherlands. And one impetus on the development of this new art form may possibly have been the arrival of Persian illuminated manuscripts showing the garden, like the ones that we've just seen, coming through trade routes and through Venice. But quite possibly, the development of these paintings was encouraged by the development of the aristocratic and royal pleasure garden in northern Europe at this time.

So there are two features in the painting on the left which shows the Virgin with St Barbara – St Barbara's on the right – and St Catherine, who's on the left, that show that this is intended to represent the enclosed garden of the Virgin. And they're the turf bench, on which she's seated. Not terribly easy to make out, but you can see here, the turf bench, which really serves the purpose of a boundary wall in this particular case, and the carpet of flowers at her feet. Now, the plants that were commonly associated with the Virgin Mary in folklore at the time, plants like strawberries, the iris, flag iris, pinks, carnations, all appear in a very individualised way in this painting on the right, which is in the style of Martin Schongauer, but in the painting on the left, the flowery mead, the carpet at the Virgin's feet, is treated in a pretty sparing way, but there's still enough to show that a flowery mead is what was intended by the artist to be represented. Turf benches, like the one that the Virgin was seated on, would have been made of horizontal timber planking or with bricks, and they'd have been filled with earth, and then the top would have been laid over with turf, which would have been planted with daisies, with speedwell and sometimes with sweet smelling herbs like camomile.

Now, interestingly, Shakespeare made use of the device of the enclosed garden as a metaphor, but in a completely different context. Shakespeare intended his audience to understand the enclosed garden in terms of a well governed, well ordered state. So on the other hand, a state in crisis, like for example, the state of Denmark in *Hamlet*, was for him an unweeded garden that goes to seed. And this is repeated in plays like *King Lear* and *Richard II*, where repeatedly poor governance of a state and poor garden husbandry are linked. So in *Richard II* we find the nation depicted as an island garden and its desolation is conveyed by the return of the garden to a weed-choked wilderness, to an anti-paradise. 'Why should we in the compass of a pale, keep law and form and due proportion, showing as in a model, our firm estate, when our sea-walled garden, the whole land is full of weeds, her fairest flowers choked up, her fruit trees all unpruned, her hedges ruined, her knots disordered and her wholesome herbs swarming with caterpillars'. And 'knots', you understand, in that sense means knot gardens.

So the idea of a sea-walled garden as an allegory for effective monarchy had actually been given pictorial form quite early in Henry VIII's reign when he was given this illuminated choirbook, and you can see that it features an image of England as an impregnable island garden. And the choirbook was actually produced in the southern Netherlands in about 1516, and you can see England here as this enclosed garden, it's surrounded by the castellated wall, here, and it's dominated by this immense Tudor rose. And look how closely this pictorial imagery matches the literary imagery which we see in John of Gaunt's famous speech from Act II of *Richard II*. So the dying John of Gaunt is forecasting the devastation of his own estate and he's looking back at England as a sort of Eden, and he says, 'This royal throne of Kings, this sceptred isle, this earth of majesty, this seat of Mars, this other Eden, demi-paradise, this fortress built by nature for herself against infection and the hand of war. This happy breed of men, this little world, this precious stone set in the silver sea which serves it in the office of a wall or as a moat defensive to a house, against the envy of less happier lands, this blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England'.

So we're going to move on to look at the Renaissance garden and in pictorial terms, the Renaissance is the period when garden art embraced reality for the first time. And this is because it's during the 16th century that we find the very first paintings that record real gardens. And the first real garden in British art appears in the background of this painting, *The Family of Henry VIII* which was painted in about 1545. And the garden that you can see through the arches in the background is the great garden at Whitehall Palace. Whitehall Palace at that point was the King's principal residence and it remained so until it was burnt down in 1697, and now of course no trace remains of this magnificent garden, which was one of the first royal gardens to be laid out in England. Now, Henry VIII understood that magnificent gardens laid out in the grandest and most spectacular Renaissance style could enhance his prestige and his status as a monarch and he was really keen to keep up with the French Kings who were laying out fabulous Renaissance gardens just the other side of the Channel. And that's why this real garden makes an appearance in art at this particular point in time. So this is a dynastic portrait and it's asserting Henry's credentials as a monarch, and the garden and the heraldic emblems in it support his propaganda, and that's why it's here.

Well, another first in garden art at this point is the appearance of the first real gardener in art, and here he is. He's a character called Jacopo Cennini, and he was painted in 1523 by the Florentine artist, Franciabigio. We know that Cennini was the estate manager to the Medici family at Fiesole and this very wide ranging role would have included looking after the agricultural estate, the quarries, the vineyards, all those sorts of roles, as well as designing and maintaining the pleasure gardens on the residential estate that the Medici owned. And this was a point when the role of the head gardener, and certainly of the garden designer, hadn't really emerged as an independent entity, so agricultural husbandry and garden husbandry were still really perceived as one and the same at this point. Well, you can see that he's a very trusted individual, and the signs of that of course are the keys hanging over the ledge here, and he's also proud of his role, because he's chosen to be painted with the tools of his office, or tools of his role – billhooks, pruning knives – hanging up here, and that's also where the artist has inscribed his monogram, it's just about here. And similar tools can actually be seen in the volume on the right, and this was one of a flurry of small quarto volumes which started to appear in the late 16th century, and because they were relatively cheap, they introduced imagery like this to a much more diverse audience than had previously experienced images of the garden and garden related subjects. And these books and the images in them were very much intended for hands-on gardeners who were actually going to get their hands dirty. And so we start to see images of knot gardens and mazes, patterns for knot gardens and mazes, images showing you how to graft and plant fruit trees, for example. So we're looking at the business of gardening, which really appears for the first time in these prototype garden manuals. But interestingly, at the same time, Renaissance garden art, as well as being involved with the business of gardening, is about the art of fantasy. And the fantastical garden scenes that we discover are inspired in large part by the fantasy gardens on the Renaissance page. Literary sources - contemporary romances and poetry, and also revived classical sources – were incredibly influential on Renaissance garden art. So let's look at this painting, which is a very important painting in horticultural terms, because it shows the first hedge maze to appear in art. And this was painted by a Flemish artist, Lodewijk Toeput, who was working in Venice in the studio of Tintoretto in about 1580, and when he worked in Italy he Italianised his name to Pozzoserrato. And there are elements here, apart from the watery setting that identify this pretty clearly as Venice. So we can see in the upper right, here, architecture which can be quite clearly identified as St Mark's Square. And you can see here there's a gondola floating on the water. And hedge mazes like this were becoming quite a popular feature in the most important Renaissance gardens of the period in north Italy, so it's quite possible that the artist would have heard of, or possibly even seen, a maze like this.

But although the maze dominates the painting, we're not meant to understand this as a real garden, because the subject of the painting isn't really the maze itself, it's the pleasure to be had in a maze, and if you look in detail you'll see that this is absolutely packed full of people enjoying themselves: they're flirting, they're frolicking, they're feasting, they're generally having fun. And there are also hidden references to the five senses here. So we've got an eagle perched on the top of the pergola, referencing sight, and we've got a stag here referencing hearing, we've got an ape – I think it's about here, rather difficult to see – and that represents taste. Smell is shown by, well you'll have to take it from me, there's a dog waiting for the food to fall off the table, the feast here. And then we could interpret touch as the man's arm round the woman's waist, here. So we've got these veiled references to the five senses and this painting is really an allegory and the message that it's passing on is one about the perils of being entrapped in the pleasures of the senses, in the dangerous maze of the senses. So it's really easy to get in, but it's really difficult to get out. And Pozzoserrato is probably drawing on here, not only his experience of mazes in northern Italy at the time, but also on a hugely influential book that was published in Venice in 1499 by the leading Venetian publishing house, Aldus Manutius, and this was a contemporary romance called *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, 'The Dream of Poliphilus' and it was written by a Dominican Friar, Francesco Colonna. Basically the story tells about, the story is based on our hero, Poliphilus, who searches for his lover, Polia, and his searches lead him to the island garden of Cythera, the birthplace of Venus. And although Cythera is essentially a Medieval pleasure garden, both the text and the beautiful woodcut illustrations which appear in the book present a range of antique and classical garden features like obelisks, like pyramids, like pergolas, topiary and mazes, and these proved immensely influential, hugely influential. And in some cases these revived antique features were manifest in really extreme and fantastical degrees, or fantastical forms. For example, in the 1546 edition of this book which appeared in France, there's an illustration of a water maze, so a labyrinth where you could actually row your boat around the pathways of the maze. And you can see how features like this were lifted not only straight into garden design in the period, but also into Renaissance garden art. And in terms of atmosphere and the spirit of the garden, it's a very short step from the hazy, lazy, musical dream world of Hypnerotomachia to the hazy, lazy, musical dream world of Pozzoserrato.

Well, during the 16th and the early 17th centuries a huge transformation overtook the garden. Twenty times more plants came under cultivation at this period in Europe than during the previous 2,000 years and this transformed the appearance of the garden, it changed garden culture forever, and it also transformed the way that artists chose to portray plants. And bulb species coming in from the East were of particular interest and particularly enthralled and inspired artists, and we see the development of complete new art forms devoted to these new plant species. So we see the development of botanical art, devoted to the scientific observation of a new plant material. And on the left there's an example of one of the earliest botanical drawings, by Leonardo Da Vinci. We see floral still life come to birth in Holland in the Dutch Republic as artists start to commit to canvas and to panel the same sorts of exotic flowers that are being passionately nurtured as part of the floral economy in Holland. And you can see an example of this type in the centre. And we also see the appearance of the *florilegium* or flower book. And this was a completely new sort of art form and it was a compendium in paint or in print of the plants that had been put together in one particular garden or collection. The only surviving 17th century painted *florilegium* in this country is *Alexander Marshall's Florilegium*, and you can see four folios from it in the exhibition. It was painted during the second half of the 17th century and it was really Marshall's life's work. He was a very keen gardener himself as well as an artist and he was incredibly well connected with all the plant collectors, and florists, as they were known, of his day. And because his book, his *florilegium* represents his life's work, in this instance it actually probably represents plants that were from a range of gardens that he would have known at the time, and we can be pretty sure that those were the most glorious gardens of his day. And this particular folio shows a striped tulip, which was a really expensive and exotic specimen at the time, highly prized, very difficult to get, very difficult to achieve. And I think it's not fanciful to see the allure and the fascination that this held for Marshall as an artist – it really leaps off the page.

The 17th century metaphysical poet, Andrew Marvell, who wrote some of the most beautiful garden poems of all time, railed against what he saw as the corruption of nature by these exotic, artificial new specimens coming in. And in his poem, *The Mower Against Gardens*, he describes how, 'With strange perfumes man did the roses taint and flowers themselves were taught to paint. The tulip, white, did for complexion seek and learned to interline its cheek. Its onion root they then so high did hold that one was for a meadow sold'. And in those last two lines he's referring to all the speculation on tulip bulbs and the immense prices that tulip bulbs fetched. But it wasn't only new plant material that affected the appearance of the garden in the 17th century. A new formal style in garden design took over at this point in Italy and France and it really dominated European garden design during the 17th century. So gardens were now conceived on a previously unimaginable scale. Land was levelled or razed and swathes of trees were cut down to create huge long vistas through the landscape. Parterres, so formal ornamental flower borders were created, and these were laid out in box, box hedging, or patterns made of cut turf. We get long avenues of trees or hedges and water gardens with canals, with fountains and cascades, were all engineered on a magnificent scale. And all this was really done to show the garden creator as master, controller of nature and nowhere was more supreme control exerted over nature than at the Versailles created by Louis XIV. And here we can see those gardens in about 1700, we can see the parterre that had been laid out here by André le Nôtre and it's between these monumental staircases and it's just in front of the orangery, which had been created in 1686 by Mansart. And really the formal parterre dominates the eye in this picture, but I want to show you two tiny details, here and here, because we can see how the artist has shown the gardeners at work, wheeling out the orange trees from the orangery for the day; one on a wheelbarrow and one on a horse-drawn trolley. And what does John Evelyn, the 17th century's most authoritative writer on gardening have to say on the subject? 'Now bring your orange trees boldly out', he says, in his instructions for what should be done in May in the parterre garden, 'Now bring your orange trees boldly out of the conservatory, 'tis your only season to transplant and remove them. Let the cases be filled with natural earth, then cutting the two thick and extravagant roots a little, especially at bottom, set your plant but not too deep. Lastly, settle it with temperately enriched water, then set them in the shade for a fortnight and afterwards expose them to the sun', he says.

Well, Evelyn was passionate about trees and it was John Evelyn who first coined the term 'avenue' to describe a tree-lined approach to a house or a residence. And it was also John Evelyn who wrote the seminal work on trees in the 17th century called *Sylva, or A Discourse on Forest Trees* and there's a copy of this book in the exhibition. It was one of the most influential horticultural books of the 17th century and it encouraged the replanting of the timber stocks in England which had been massively depleted by endless wars, and this had a huge impact in later centuries on our gardens and on our landscape. But let's return to Versailles for a moment. So the lake in front of the parterre that we were looking at is called the Lac des Suisses, and this was because it was excavated by regiments by Swiss soldiers, Swiss mercenaries, and there are reports of cartloads of bodies of these poor Swiss soldiers being taken away at night because they'd all succumbed to the toxic marsh gases, methane, that was released in the course of the excavation. So you can see that the transformation of the landscape here was achieved at immense cost, not only economic, but human as well, all with the aim of showing Louis XIV as the master of nature. And we really have to see his efforts, his campaign, as part of the horticultural warfare that was being played out between the Princes and monarchs of Europe at this point, just as surely as political rivalry was being played out on the battlefield. So for Louis, his horticultural successes were really only valuable if everyone in Europe knew about them. And he deployed a whole succession of artists and engravers to recreate in paint and in print these amazing gardens that he created, both at Versailles and at Marly. And this painting is one of between 30 and 40 that were painted by Jean-Baptiste Martin, and also his master, Adam Frans van der Meulen, to show the gardens at Versailles. And in this particularly competitive world, it's no coincidence that the viewpoint, the composition they used is one that was traditionally reserved for battlefield scenes, panoramic battlefield scenes.

Well, Louis XIV's in-house publishing company, the royal publishing company, also produced folios of prints and these prints of the gardens were distributed all across Europe, and they were lapped up with particular enthusiasm by the Dutch, and especially by Louis XIV's great gardening rival, William, Prince of Orange who became William III. The elite at the Dutch court were passionate about gardening and when William, Prince of Orange succeeded to the English throne with his English wife, Mary II, he bought from the Dutch Republic his gardening enthusiasm, for one thing, his garden designers, and Dutch artists who specialised in painting garden views. And this is one of *the* grandest examples of Baroque garden art, and it's painted by a Dutch artist from Harlem, Leonard Knyff, in 1703, so very soon after William III's death. And what it shows us is the absolutely magnificent gardens that William laid out at Hampton Court before his death. What's interesting about it is that these gardens, magnificent as they were, were very transient, they survived really for only a couple of decades before they were all taken out by Queen Anne who, we're told, disliked the smell of box. So what we can actually see here is this incredible parterre laid out by the designer, Daniel Marot, and you can see these radiating lines of lime trees, the lime tree avenues, and they're laid out in a pattern known as a goose foot, like this. And then the parterre is interspersed with statues and with fountains, which you can see here. And gardens like this were copied and sprung up all over England, it became incredibly fashionable. And this almost exactly matches the description given by John Clark of Penicuik in his poem, *The Country Seat*, and he says, 'Stretch out the lines of every avenue with spreading trees in many stately rows, display the parterres and the shady walks, the sloping greens, the ponds and waterworks'. And he goes on to say, 'Tis monstrous to behold a vast large basin which no water fills, but what a little paltry jet bestows'. Well, what would he have thought if he'd known the trouble that William III had getting the fountains at Hampton Court to look like this. In fact, this was really illusory. There was a lot of trouble with the water pressure and we're told that on occasion William III was even driven to go outside and join his engineers struggling with the pipework trying to make the fountains produce impressive spires of water like this.

But the formality of the 17th garden fell out of fashion and symmetry, topiary, parterres, all started to disappear from the 18th century garden. And the aim became instead, not to subdue nature entirely, but to copy it, and the landscape garden was born. And a decisive moment in the acknowledgement of this new movement came when in 1728 Alexander Pope published his celebrated verse epistle to Lord Burlington, and this was a long, public poetic statement about the new gardening principles. Pope was a practising gardener with a garden which he loved very much at Twickenham, and Richard Boyle, Third Earl of Burlington , was the creator of the pioneering landscape garden at Chiswick House, his Palladian villa. And for Pope, nature was the best guide and the ideal scenario was for the garden designer really to be led by the natural features of the landscape in which the garden and the residence were set. So Pope writes, 'To build, to plant, whatever you intend, to rear the column or the arch to bend, to swell the terrace or to sink the grot, in all, let nature never be forgot. Consult the genius of the place in all, that tells the waters or to rise or fall, or helps the ambitious hill the heavens to scale, or scoops in circling theatres the vale, calls in the country, catches opening glades, joins willing woods and varies from shade to shade. Now breaks, or now directs the intending lines, paints as you plant, and as you work, designs'. The genius of the place paints as you plant, he says, and this was very much the key to landscape garden design.

So designers like William Kent, who practised the new tenets, abandoned the idea of designing a garden around a symmetrical axis, with a central axis, and instead they thought in terms of a foreground and a middle ground and a background. And the garden was intended now to be seen as a series of views which you would enjoy as you progressed round a serpentine path or you came over the summit of a hill. It couldn't any longer really be seen at a single point. So the aerial panorama, which we saw in the case of the Hampton Court view or the view of Versailles, which had been so effective really at capturing the Baroque garden, just wasn't fit for purpose any more with the landscape garden. And instead, what we find are sets of oil paintings or prints which really mimic the experience that a visitor to a garden would have had. So as the collector went through his folio of prints one by one, or looked at his paintings, he would have enjoyed the same experience as the visitor going round the garden with different views unfolding one by one.

And this is one of a set of five landscape views of Kew Gardens that were painted for Princess Augusta of Wales, the widow of Frederick, Prince of Wales, by a Swiss artist called Johann Jakob Schalch, and they were intended to show the first wave of changes which were achieved in the new style, the new landscape garden style at Kew under the direction of Frederick, Prince of Wales, and of the designer William Kent. So what can we see? Well, we can see gently rolling hills, we can see a meandering stream, we've got classical buildings dotted around the garden and we've got this Chinese bridge here. And really, the only thing that hints at man's intervention in this very rustic landscape at all are these gardeners on the hillside, at work on the hillside here. And the other absence, I'm sure you will all notice, is the flowering plant. With its clumps of trees and rolling lawns there's not a flower to be seen, but the flowering plant was to make a triumphant return in the 19th century with the dominance once more of the horticultural garden. So the Victorian period was the age of flowers, so in parks, in gardens, in conservatories, in the potting shed, everyone was tending to their flowers. And the guiding force behind the garden was no longer nature, but instead it was colour and design. And massed bedding became a particularly popular feature and you can see it here in this view of the new gardens laid out at Osborne House by Prince Albert and Queen Victoria. And also exotic new blooms that were brought to the country by a new generation of plant hunters became particularly popular. The greenhouse was essential to all of this, and as the poet, William Cowper, wrote, 'Who loves a garden, loves a greenhouse too, unconscious of a less propitious clime, there blooms exotic beauty, warm and snug while the winds whistle and snows descend'. Well, prefab cast iron greenhouses became cheaper and much more easily available at this time and the lawnmower was also invented in 1830, and that of course made a neatly trimmed lawn available to everybody, not just those who could afford to have an entire workforce scything away for them. So gardens really opened up to the masses in a way that simply hadn't been possible before.

And in artistic terms the Victorian love affair with the flower garden was reflected in the development of the Victorian, and then the Edwardian, floral watercolour. And the watercolour here is by an artist called Beatrice Parsons who was able to make a successful career exclusively from painting garden watercolours. And it shows the sort of garden scene which really came to exemplify the late Victorian and Edwardian garden style, and it was perceived as a quintessentially English style. You've got these lush, exuberant herbaceous borders tumbling over the edges of the lawn and the path in the centre. And this was in fact painted around 1910 and it's almost exactly contemporary with Rudyard Kipling's famous poetic celebration of *The Glory of the Garden*, which dates from 1911. Kipling picks up on the idea of the Englishness of this type of garden with his refrain, 'Our England is a garden'. So he says, 'Our England is a garden that is full of stately views, of borders, beds and shrubberies and lawns and avenues, with statues on the terraces and peacocks strutting by, but the glory of the garden lies in more than meets the eye. Our England is a garden and such gardens are not made by singing, 'Oh how beautiful', and sitting in the shade, while better men than we go out and start their working lives at grubbing weeds from gravel paths with broken dinner knives. There's not a pair of legs so thin, there's not a head so thick, there's not a hand so weak and white, nor yet a heart so sick, but it can find some needful job that's crying to be done, for the glory of the garden glorifieth everyone'.

The revived interest in flowering plants had even more of an impact on the decorative arts of the 19th century. The language of flowers was a very powerful influence on jewellery and other luxury items. And this was a system which gave meaning to different plants in a symbolic sense, and also to combinations of plants, so quite complex meanings could be achieved by putting different plants together. And a particularly beautiful example of this is the orange blossom parure which was given by Prince Albert to Queen Victoria at intervals from 1839 to 1846 and it's decorated with porcelain flowers resembling orange blossom, and of course the language of flowers' meaning for orange blossom was chastity, so it became very popular for bridalwear at the time.

But perhaps the garden was never brought inside more beautifully than in the floral creations of the St Petersburg goldsmith, Carl Fabergé. In late 19th century Russia, books on the language of flowers were very popular and there was also a cultural tendency to use cut flowers and the enjoyment of cut flowers had never been greater amongst the elite, the higher court echelons in Russia at the time. And Fabergé really exploited this by creating, from about 1890 onwards, enamelled and hardstone flowers which were set on gold stems and often in rock crystal vases mimicking not only the vase, but the water inside. About 80 of these fabulous jewelled flowers were made in total and of those 26 survive today in the Royal Collection. Many of these were collected by Queen Alexandra, whose sister, the Czarina, introduced her to Fabergé and his work. But this particular example, which is a convolvulus, was acquired by Queen Mary and it's a particularly appropriate finishing point for our talk today because its previous owner was Vita Sackville-West, the great novelist, the poet, the gardener and greatest garden writer of the 20th century. As a gardener, Vita was responsible for the beautiful gardens at Sissinghurst in Kent, and as a writer and poet Vita travelled extensively, she wrote about the Persian gardens that we introduced the talk with today, and she also produced two very long epic poems, one called *The Land,* in 1926, and one called *The Garden*, in 1946, on the theme of the garden. And the latter, *The Garden*, has been called the best description of the spirit and fascination of gardening in the English language. Well, I leave you to judge and finish with Vita's words from *The Garden*. 'And so the traveller, down the long avenue of memory, sees in perfection that was never theirs, gardens he knew and takes his steps of thought down paths that half-imagined and half-real are wholly lovely with a loveliness suffering neither fault, neglect, nor flaw'. Thank you.

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