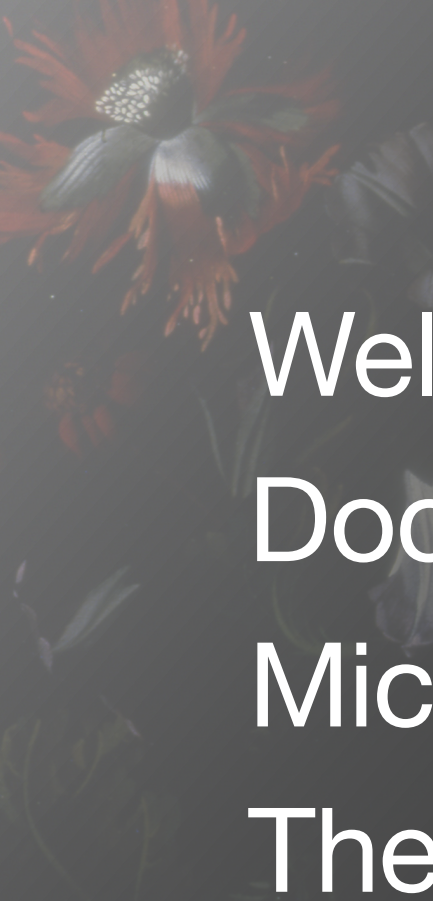


MASTERPIECE
MINUTE





Welcome back to Masterpiece Minute with Doc Brown on Virtual SDMA. I'm your host, Michael Brown, Curator of European Art at The San Diego Museum of Art. Drop in every Friday at 10 a.m. to pick up a new 60-second mini talk led by SDMA curators spotlighting works of art from the Museum's collection.

[Music]

Dutch painter Rachel Ruysch was born in The Hague in 1664, but soon moved with her family to Amsterdam, Holland's commercial center.

She grew up in an extraordinary family of scientists and artists. Her maternal grandfather was a leading architect, and her uncle, Frans Post, was famous for his landscapes of Brazil.

Perhaps most importantly, her father Frederick, a professor of pediatric anatomy and an expert botanist, was also an inveterate collector who founded a science museum in their home, published illustrated catalogues, and opened the collection to the public.

Peter the Great of Russia visited the Ruysch home in 1697, and the tsar eventually bought the entire museum in 1717.

Ruysch began drawing plant, insect and animal specimens as a child. Following formal training at age 15, she became the most celebrated flower painter of her day. And she managed all this while raising 10 children, painting until the age of 83.

Her arrangements are jam-packed, nearly haphazard—unlike the tidiness of earlier floral painters.

And yet Ruysch was meticulous in her observation. As an example, see the detail of the blue nasturtium in the center, which appears in the same position in at least three other paintings.

Another example of her keen attention to detail is the Semper Augustus tulip (grown from the rarest of bulbs), which has been cut and lies decaying on the ledge, a symbol of life's brief nature and the limits of worldly riches.

Speaking of riches, in her lifetime, Ruysch could command 1000 guilders for a painting, twice as much as Rembrandt got for a typical portrait, and twice as much as the annual

salary of the local pastor.

This has been Doc Brown with Masterpiece Minute. Thanks for joining us here on Virtual SDMA—catch ya next Friday!

BALBOA PARK

THE SAN DIEGO
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