

## VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

Gallery Social: *In Bloom* by Viviane Sassen

Video one: Artist Tessa Asquith Lamb explores Viviane Sassen's euphoric image *In Bloom*

2021

[04:48]

Tessa Asquith-Lamb:

Hello my name is Tessa Asquith-Lamb and I'm one of the artists that works for the Gallery Social programme for the National Galleries of Scotland.

Today in the first of two videos I'm going to be talking about an artwork in the collection and then in the second video showing you an activity you might like to try at home inspired by that work. But first, as always, we'll have a cup of tea (drinks tea) and look at the picture.

The picture I've chosen is called *In Bloom* by the Dutch artist Viviane Sassen. It was made in 2011 for *Dazed and Confused* magazine. It shows a figure in a field of tulips. Now the figure is obscured by a huge froth of golden yellow skirts that have been flicked up in the air by the movement of maybe a leg or the arms of this figure. You can't actually see her head or face. All you can see is her bright white hair that's kind of flying out behind her and two arms raised above her head in an almost dance-like, flamenco-like move.

The skirts fly up in the air like the frill of a can-can dancer's skirt and they are a lovely golden primrose yellow colour with crinkly soft edges made of net or tulle. The edges of them look like the edges of the petals of a flower.

Outside of that is the blue skirts, and it's a very sort of high fashion image. You can imagine it being an amazing dress and that isn't surprising since the artist trained in both fashion and fine art.

There's a sense that the flower-like form of this skirt is really complemented by the setting which is presumably the Dutch bulb fields around Amsterdam where the artist lives and works. The field itself is full of these beautiful pink tulips. Pink with kind of sort of rosy deep purpley pink edges, those kinds of variegated tulips, and they are backed by the dark stems and leaves of the green behind them, dotted about all over this field. A beautiful surface.

Behind that there's stripes of other colours in the distance. I can see green and yellow, darker green, white blue and at the top a beautiful red. It must be just amazing to be amongst these colourful fields, just surrounded by these natural colours all popping up in these beautiful striped fields into the distance.

The picture feels very surreal in a way to me, because you can't see her face, she almost becomes a sculpture of this kind of froth of a flower and the artists other work often has figures where the faces are obscured by a fold of cloth or an object. She plays around with light and shade, but in this picture, I feel like it's really bright direct sunlight on a really amazing spring day when the sun's baking down on this field of all these flowers and they are all reaching up to take in that sunlight little cups of pink all held up to the sky.

I also see the green arms of this dress which look like they are made out of a kind of cable knit or something like that, kind of minty green. They look like leaves or maybe the stems that are coming out from this flower that is this presumably female figure in this field. It feels like she is just one giant flower amongst all these little tiny flowers.

It's such an intense image, and I think that because when I'm recording this is winter, I think it's the time of year when you look in the garden and you can't really see a lot that's growing, not much colour about. But images like this remind you that under the ground there's all those bulbs and very soon spring will come again and out of the dark soil will spring all this colour and life of tulips and daffodils and snowdrops, and it feels such a hopeful image for this time of year.

I like the title *In Bloom* which kind of suggests something in its prime, in its kind of fullness of life

So, in our next video we are going to be exploring how we can make an artwork that reflects some of these feelings that this photograph creates, some ideas about spring and colour, and also the textures that are in this that are so beautiful. The froth of those yellow skirts the blues and the all the petals, the cup-like petal shapes. So hopefully we can reflect those in the next activity.