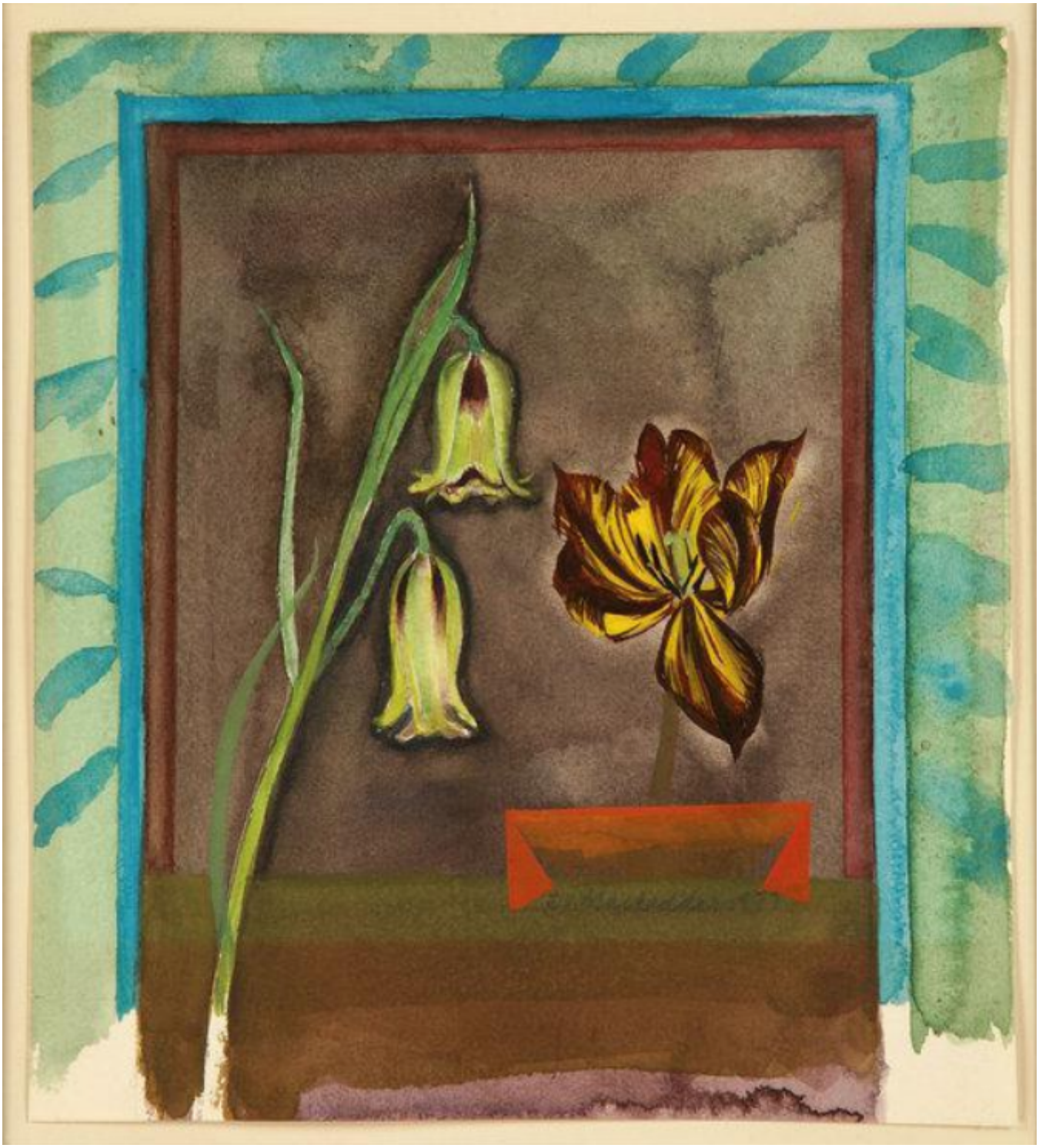
Fritillary & Tulip

Elizabeth Blackadder DBE RA RSA

Sold



Howgego Historic & Modern
07974 149 912
lucy@howgegohistoricandmodern.com howgegohistoricandmodern.com

REF: 10659

Height: 20.5 cm (8.1")

Width: 20.5 cm (8.1")

Description

ELIZABETH VIOLET BLACKADDER, R.S.A., R.A.
B.1931

FRITILLARY AND TULIP

Signed and dated 1977, also signed and titled on the backboard

Watercolour and gouache

DAME ELIZABETH BLACKADDER, RA (b.1931)

Born in Falkirk in 1931, Blackadder often stayed with her maternal grandmother on the West coast of Scotland, near Holy Loch, where her interest in botany and art began, as she drew the flowers and plants she collected. This dual fascination inspired her now hallmark botanical works for which she is so highly renowned.

Blackadder studied Fine Art from 1949-54 at Edinburgh University and Edinburgh College of Art, lecturing at the latter from 1962 until her retirement in 1986. Blackadder's student work was of a sombre tone and concentrated on landscapes and architecture. This output was inspired by her travels in Italy, Greece and Yugoslavia in 1954 and 1955-6, the results of a postgraduate scholarship and a travelling scholarship, the latter affording her nine months in Italy. A selection of these works was exhibited at the Gimpel Fils Gallery, London in 1955, the exhibition, Eight Young Contemporaries, chosen by Peter Gimpel from student work throughout England and Scotland. Blackadder's first solo show was in 1959 at the 57 Gallery, Edinburgh.

During the late 1950s and early 1960s Blackadder widened her range, creating a series of still lifes focusing on unique objects, such as a Turkish coffee grinder or Venetian goblet placed against a densely painted background. The curiosities float on the picture plane although simultaneously the surface can be deemed a table, her inspiration for such compositions deriving from Byzantine mosaics and Japanese painting. It was such an early still life, White Still Life:Easter which won Blackadder the Royal Scottish Academy's Guthrie Award in 1962, the Academy's main award for a young painter. This style of spatial arrangement is characteristic of her still life work from this time onwards.

Blackadder and her husband, the artist John Houston, continued to travel extensively during the 1960s, including visits to the Matisse Chapel, Vence and the nearby Picasso and Matisse museums in 1964. Blackadder's palette began to brighten, as did the mood of her work, affected by the light and warmth of the Mediterranean. In 1965 Blackadder exhibited for the first time with the Mercury Gallery, London, with whom she showed every two or three years from then onwards until 2000.

Blackadder began featuring Flowers in her work prominently from the 1970s, working in watercolour, and to this day these works remain an ever present and striking element in her oeuvre. They display her lightness of touch, intriguing compositions of flowers and plants against the picture plane and a meticulous but beautiful observation of botanical detail. Blackadder's illness and recuperation in the late 1970s meant she had to work from subjects close to her, resulting in depictions of subjects from her magnificent garden in Edinburgh, which is the most likely inspiration for the present work, Fritillary and Tulip. In 1979, she introduced a course to her teaching at Edinburgh College of Art on learning to paint from plants and

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collaborated with Dr Brins...

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lucy@howgegohistoricandmodern.com howgegohistoricandmodern.com