

The Enigmatic Art of Flowers

A Selection from Christl's Paintings

Edited by David Murray

Flowers have always been an historical subject for artists. The symbolism of flowers goes back thousands of years. The Lotus flower is, perhaps, the oldest and best-known historical flower. In ancient civilizations, it represented creation, rebirth, enlightenment and spiritual awakening, among other things. It has been deeply associated with Buddhism and Hinduism, as well as ancient Egypt where it was linked to the sun god Ra – creation, resurrection and the sun's daily 'rebirth'.

But as Christl might say, a flower painting is just, sometimes, a flower painting. **Let the viewer interpret.** For her they have been exercises and a good excuse to just sit down and paint. Like physical exercises, painting exercises the mind and the heart. It exercises and strengthens the memory of colours, composition and, perhaps, story-telling. There might be an intuitive connection to art history and all those famous artists who have painted flowers over the centuries. How could we not be influenced by what we have seen, admired and studied in the past?



One of Christl's childhood drawings, in Holland, before the age of 9

Christl's "A View to Understanding"

"...There was art. A local sign painter and his wife were friends of mine. I had met him at an extension art class (U of A). The program was through the university and included traveling professors. I loved these classes. There were classes at school and again I had great joy in learning to draw and paint. Throughout my life, I can remember my life best through the joy of drawing or painting. There was at this time a drawing of a tree, very simple but using a large number of colours, and I believed I had captured a singular moment of life, both the tree's life and my life. My life within the family was not as easy."

Perhaps painting is also an escape, not so much from, but into a world that is safe, secure and reliably real.



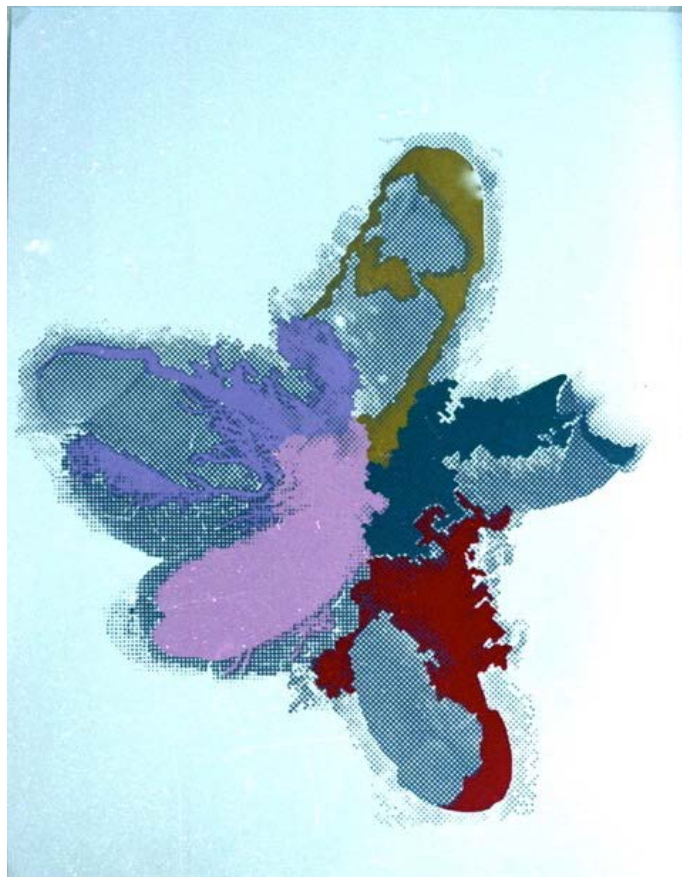
#002 Amaryllis prismcolour pencil on paper 21"x 23" 1979

Flowers and Eroticism

One pervading theme in Christl's artistic career has been the erotic, often explicitly so. The first evidence of this was at university where she freely pursued erotic themes in printmaking and sculpture.

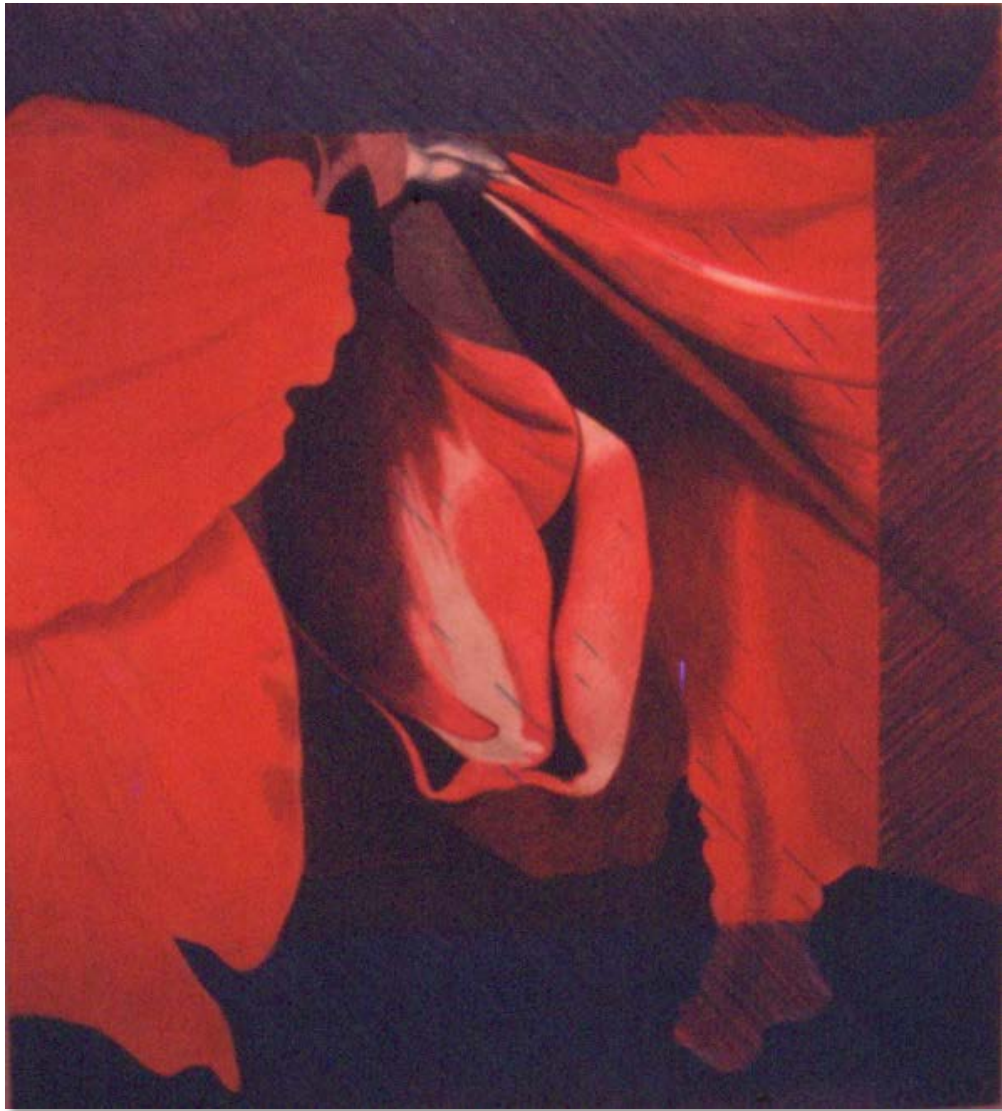


David and Me 2, Silkscreen 1971



Untitled, Silkscreen 1971

Christl's sometimes erotically-provocative art, perhaps depicted in flowers, is evident in her post-university days, after 1972. Is this 1981 drawing erotic? It's all in the viewer's mind.



#013 **Amaryllis** prismacolor pencil on paper 27.5" x 20" 1981

The Anthuriums of Jamaica – A Trip in 1979

“The party was a typical cocktail party...Most of the people were white. The ones who live in Jamaica speak of leaving as soon as possible. The politics of this land I do not know. The current sense of violence is present (1979). People will talk about it. One man said that at each party less people come so that the rich social set is diminishing. If there was not the party, the entire house would be locked up, with steel bars around the compound and dogs on guard. It was a lovely evening for a party. Alcohol was abundant... The food was plentiful and oddly western, American. The couple that threw the party were Maurice and Valerie Facey. They are exporters of flowers, specifically **anthuriums**. But because they invested heavily in Jamaica, they are now not able to take their assets out of the country. Maurice was in Edmonton to buy Le Marchand Mansion and will be back in Edmonton in February...” *A View to Understanding*



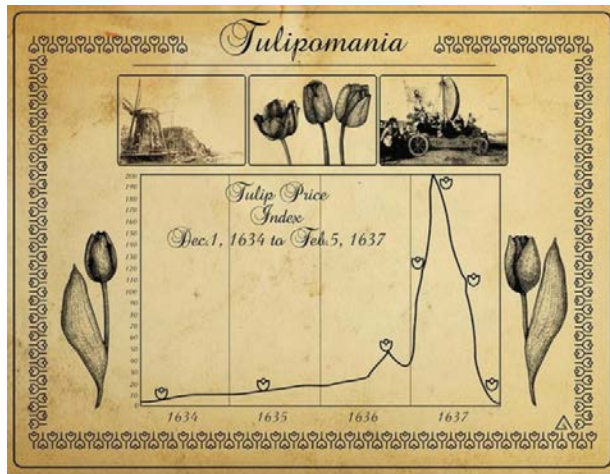
#017 **Anthurium** prismacolour pencil on paper 22"x 27" 1982



#018 **Anthurium** prismacolour pencil on paper 22"x 27" 1982

The Tulip

Why Tulips? Christl was born in Holland on October 8, 1945. Tulips, a springtime flower, symbolize renewal and rebirth. Since the 17th Century, Holland has been associated with tulips, which has been referred to as 'Tulip Mania' in the past.



Picture source: ecotalker.wordpress.com

Tulips were a commonly depicted in early Dutch paintings, such as this painting by Rachel Ruysch in 1704. We could say that this is Christl's heritage, a youthful and long-lasting impression.



Amsterdam Tulip Museum

Tulips – Perhaps a Self-Portrait?



#019 **Tulips** prismacolor pencil on paper 27"x 22" 1982



#040 **Tulip in Winter** prismacolor pencil on paper 29"x 43" 1985



#048 **Tulip/Green Fence** prismacolor pencil on paper 29"x 43" 1987



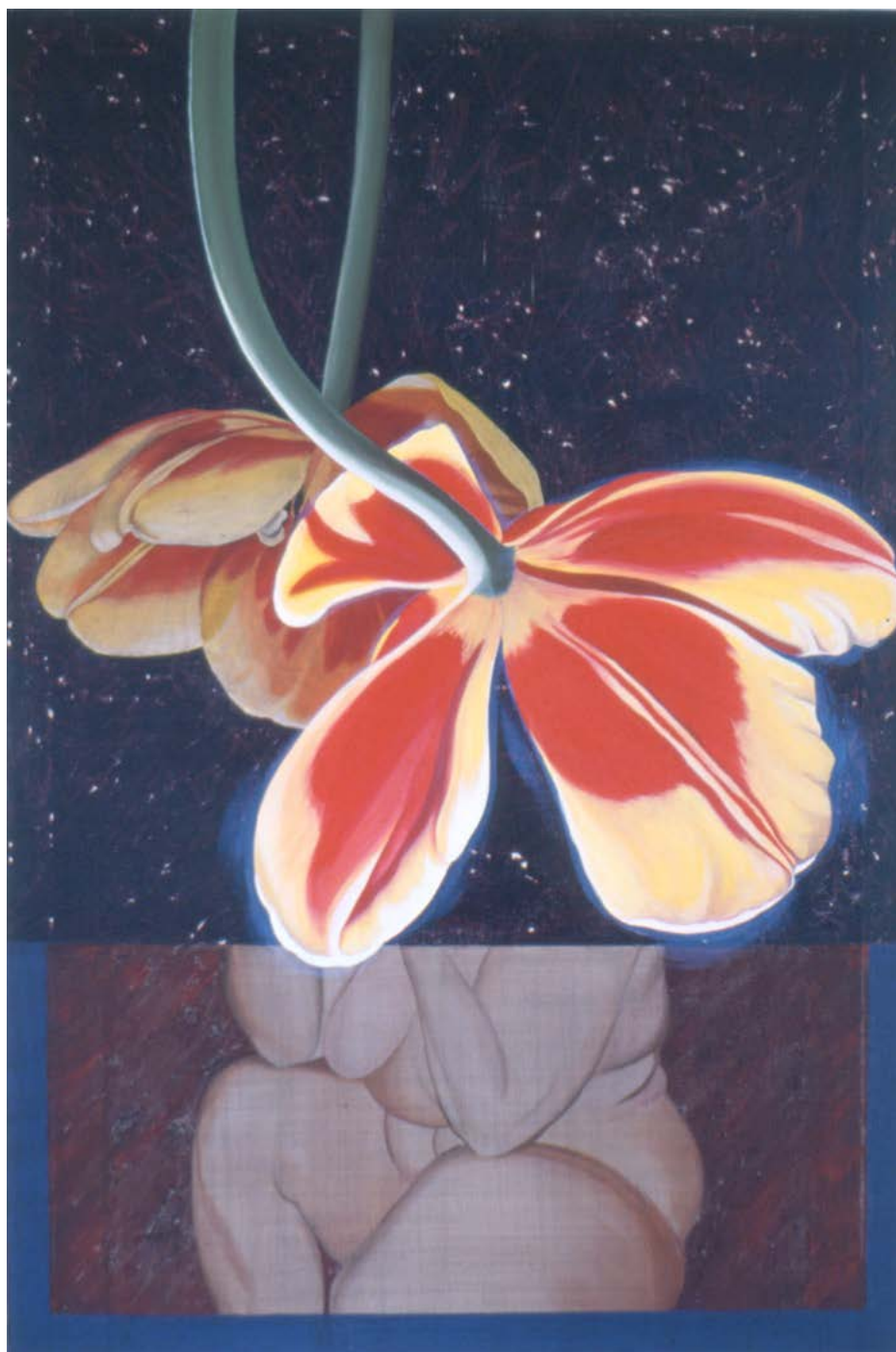
#053 **Marching Tulips** prismacolor pencil on paper 29"x 43" 1988



#054 **Sleeping Tulips** prismacolor pencil on paper 29"x 43" 1988



#050 **Tulip in the Window** prismacolor pencil on paper 30"x 22" 1987



#067 **Nude with Tulip** acrylic on canvas 48"x 32" 1992



085 **Enlarged Bouquet** oil on canvas
54.25"x 28" 1994



084 **Bouquet** oil on canvas
53.5"x 24" 1994



082 **Marching Tulips** oil on canvas
53.5"x 4" 1994



081 **Fallen Tulips** oil on canvas
53.5"x 24" 1994

My Edmonton Garden on 85th Avenue



#205 **Tulips** oil canvas 20"x 30" 2001



#211 **Delphiniums** oil on canvas 24"x 48" 2001

Christl the Gardener



#051 **Bleeding Heart** prismacolour pencil on paper 22"x 30" 1987



#063 **Coloured Peony** acrylic on canvas 30"x 36" 1990



#064 **Poppy** acrylic on canvas 32"x 32" 1990

Painting Studies – Simply Exercising

When I put a brush into the paint, and place the creamy substance on the white canvas, I exhilarate in the texture and the smoothness of the paint. The oily substance can be combined side by side in a course manner, combining the colours, feathering the edge or it can be kept separate, a sharp edge. I love the effect of softly brushing one colour into the next colour. Slowly without notice, like the ticking of the clock, the days pass by, and a painting becomes a reality. This activity of painting is my bliss. A View to Understanding



#075 **Studies** acrylic on canvas 12"x 12" 1993



#095-110 **Studies** oil on canvas 12"x 12" 1995



#086 **Enlarged Peony** acrylic on canvas 55.75"x 28" 1994



#092 **Marching Tulips** oil on canvas 54.5"x 28" 1995



#143 **Sunflower** oil canvas 12"x 12" 1996



#123 **Shadow** oil canvas 12"x 12" 1996



#127 **Pleasures** oil canvas 34"x 34" 1995

Precious Gifts



#165 **Studies** oil canvas 12"x 12" 1999

The vase was a gift from Neeva and the flower a gift from Carrie.
I love this painting.



#143 **Dahlia & Blue Vase** oil canvas 24"x 24" 2001



#207 Poppies oil canvas 16"x 24" 2001



#206 Poppies oil canvas 16"x 24" 2001



#377 **Dark Bouquet** oil canvas 20"x20" 2012



#375 **Bouquet Light** oil canvas 20"x20" 2012

The Chinese vase, with flowers, was a gift for our wedding in 1981.



#374 **Fast Flowers** oil canvas 18"x24" 2012

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THE ARTIST IS....working
THE ARTIST IS....painting
THE ARTIST IS....in





#383 Delphinium and Bee oil canvas 20"x 20" 2012



#388 Delphinium and Bees oil canvas 20"x 20" 2012

Art on the Wall – Home Away from Home



The Pembina cabin kitchen 2025



Alberta Tiger Lilies in the woods on July 2, 2025



#397 Lilies at the Land oil canvas 38"x 28" 2015

Why Art Matters to me



“...This leads me to talk about “why art matters.” One must love your own mark making. Whether it is only a form of confidence, or a bit of hype. This is essential for you to be an artist. There is a story of Leonardo da Vinci being asked to submit an example of his work before he could work for a Pope. Drawing a simple circle on paper, he sends it back to the Pope. Was it a perfect circle? Did it matter? What I think mattered was the confidence of the artist. I also believe that one has to have confidence in your sense of artistic taste. You become a judge of your world and your community.”