

Art exhibition at the Botanics – Connecting Histories

Historical drawings from the rich collection of Indian botanical art held by The Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE) will be exhibited for the first time in a new exhibition.

The art will provide an insight into how plants have crossed the world, connected regions and left imprints on diverse landscapes.

Connecting Histories, marks RBGE's long and historic links to India, features botanical illustrations of familiar and less familiar plants depicted with both scientific and spectacular artistry. Filling two rooms in the John Hope Gateway gallery, Connecting Histories includes botanical art from RBGE's collection of more than 3,000 works gifted by Indian-born Scots botanist Hugh Cleghorn, wallpaper features showing Indian botanical artists at work and glass cases containing herbarium specimens and other artefacts.

Visitors to the exhibition will see botanical illustrations, dating back to the 1850s, including a watercolour, dated 1857, by Indian botanical artist Govindoo depicting an Australian Chestnut (*Castanospermum australe*); a tomato (*Solanum lycopersicum*), artist unknown, and Black-eyed Susan (*Thunbergia alata*) by Govindoo, 1858.

Head of Arts, Emma Nicolson explained that Connecting

Histories dovetails perfectly with Shipping Roots, the major exhibition at Inverleith House in which artist, [Keg de Souza](#) draws on RBGE's collections to tell tales of the intentional and unintentional movement of plants, exploring stories of eucalyptus, prickly pear and fleece fugitive seeds through the British Empire and specifically linking Australia, India and the UK.

Emma said: "The exhibition unveils a remarkable collection of botanical art, showcasing the extraordinary works of talented Indian artists who worked under the patronage of the East India Company and Scottish Botanist Hugh Cleghorn. These skilled artisans, crafted breathtaking and meticulously detailed life-sized depictions of plants, capturing their colours and nuances with remarkable precision. Blending European influences with their own rich traditions and distinctive styles. This exhibition offers a captivating glimpse into this fascinating artistic legacy."

Connecting Histories, which runs until 14 April 2024, is an Edinburgh Art Festival 2023 partner exhibition and is supported by players of People's Postcode Lottery.



Head of Arts, Emma Nicolson takes time out to view the exhibition which runs until 14 April 2024 PHOTO – Neil Hanna



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Communications Assistant Caitlin Paterson takes time out to view the exhibition which runs until 14 April 2024 PHOTO Neil Hanna



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