



**George Telfer Bear (1876–1973), Tulips, c. 1940s, McLean Museum and Art Gallery, Greenock.**

Tulips are notoriously hard to paint as they continue to grow even after being cut. However, in *Tulips* of the 1940s, George Telfer Bear (1876-1973) rejoiced in the resulting curving stems and opening petals of a bunch of the flowers. A son of Greenock, Telfer Bear was born at 24 Wellington Street; his father ran a nearby hatter's business. The family had moved to Glasgow by 1881 and Telfer Bear studied at Glasgow School of Art. He spent several years in Canada and married Sarah Macquarrie in Kilmacolm in 1906. They later settled in Kirkcudbright, including at 9 High Street, where he became a member of the local artists' colony. Telfer Bear exhibited at the Royal Scottish Academy and the Royal Glasgow Institute and was a member of the Society of Eight exhibiting group, established by F. C. B. Cadell and others in Edinburgh in 1912. He is perhaps most celebrated for being one of the six artists included in the landmark exhibition *Les Peintres Ecosais*, along with the four Scottish Colourists and Ronald Ossory Dunlop (1894-1973), held at the Galeries Georges Petit in Paris in 1931.

The focal point of this painting are the titular tulips arranged in a vase. They emerge from a central cluster in various directions, reaching upwards and drooping over to left and right. Two stems look in danger of falling out and joining the other couple laid on the table. The sophistication of the floral arrangement and the draped white material in the foreground contrasts with the simplicity of the wall and curtain of the background, enlivened by a painting partially obscured by the flowers. The profusion of colours of the petals is balanced by fields of blue in the tablecloth and curtain, whilst a book and bowl are carefully and discreetly described at the centre right.

Telfer Bear presented *Tulips* and another of his still life paintings, *Summer Flowers*, to the McLean museum before his death in Kilmacolm in 1973.

More info can be found here: <https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/tulips-183161>