

Norton Simon Museum

Art-Making Activity Create a Floral Bookmark

Growing up, Rachel Ruysch (1664/5–1750) learned about the natural world in depth while assisting her scientist father with his collection of plants and insects. Later she applied this scientific knowledge while creating dynamic paintings of flowers and insects that made her one of the most successful painters of her time.

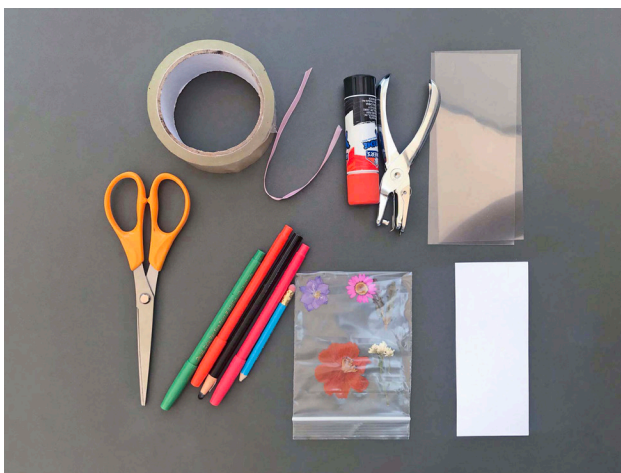
During her lifetime, the Netherlands was the largest importer of new and exotic plants and flowers from around the world. A growing interest in natural history and the science of botany as well as a new appreciation for flowers as a source of beauty, fragrance and status led to a thriving market for floral still lifes. Ruysch's *Nosegay on a Marble Plinth* features snapdragons, roses and gerberas, among other flowers, depicted in various stages of bloom.

Inspired by *Nosegay on a Marble Plinth*, create a floral bookmark that reflects your interest in nature and the world around you. Take a closer look at this painting and follow

along in an art-making video on our website with Museum Educator, Hanna Meshell.



Rachel Ruysch (Dutch, 1664/5–1750), *Nosegay on a Marble Plinth*, c. 1695, oil on canvas, The Norton Simon Foundation



Materials

- A bookmark-sized piece of card stock paper (in a dark color if possible)
- Flowers
- Self-laminating sheets or clear packing tape
- Pencil
- Glue stick
- Coffee filters or some other kind of absorbent paper
- Some heavy books
- Colored pencils, pastels, or crayons

1



Gather flowers and leaves from your yard, your neighborhood or a local garden. Try to choose plants that you find visually engaging with bright colors and interesting shapes. Make sure they're small enough to fit the size of your bookmark.

2

To press your flowers, you will need a book, some absorbent paper like coffee filters, flowers and a heavy object like a stack of books. Place your flowers in between two sheets of the absorbent paper. Then put your flowers and

absorbent papers in between the pages of a book. Finally, put your stack of heavy books on top of the closed book with the flower in its pages. You can press your flowers for as long as you like.





3

Inspired by Ruysch's interest in science, identify the plants you pressed for your bookmark and research them. Then either choose several facts about your flowers that you found especially interesting, or write a poem about the flowers using what you learned from your research and scientific observations. Record your poem or facts on one side of your card stock. If you've used dark colored cardstock, you can either write on a smaller sheet of light-colored paper and use the glue stick to paste it onto your bookmark, or you can write in light, bright colored pencil or pastel so it stands out against the dark background. If you'd like, you can also use colored pencils or oil pastels to create botanical illustrations around your writing.

4

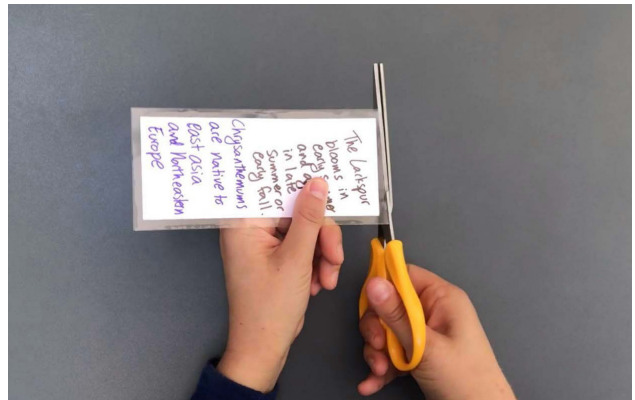
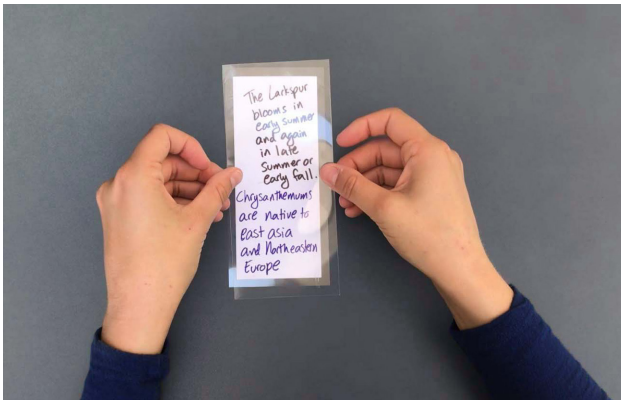
On the other side of your bookmark, play with different ways of arranging your pressed flowers. You might consider arranging them at a diagonal like in *Nosegay on a Marble Plinth* for more interest. When you are ready, glue them down on the bookmark.



5

Peel the paper off of one of the self-laminating sheets or cut a piece of packing tape (or multiple pieces) large enough to cover your bookmark. Then, carefully place the sticky side of the sheet or your tape onto your bookmark so that it covers the entire bookmark. When you are ready, turn your bookmark over so the unlaminated side is on top.

Then peel the paper off of your second self-laminating sheet or cut more pieces of tape and stick it to your bookmark, again covering the entire bookmark. If you have large borders of laminating plastic or tape around the edges of the bookmark, you can trim the edges.



Put your bookmark in your favorite book, and use it throughout the school year to remind you of all there is to learn and enjoy in the world around you.

Flower Facts

Learn more about the pressed flowers included in your Norton Simon Museum Art Kit:



Chrysanthemums are autumn flowers because they bloom in early November! They come in a variety of colors including pink, red, lavender and yellow. The name chrysanthemum comes from the Greek words, chrysos meaning “gold,” and anthemum meaning “flower.”



Larkspurs bloom from April through September. Larkspur flowers grow on tall stalks that look like rockets! These stalks can grow to be almost 2 feet tall. Larkspurs come in shades of pink, white and dark blue.



Cosmos Sulphureus flowers are native to the Americas. They have long stems and usually grow to be about 1–3 feet tall but can potentially grow to be 6 feet tall! Their flowers bloom between June and September and love the sun. A fun fact about Cosmos Sulohureus flowers is that they attract butterflies.



The Achillea flower was named after Achilles, the Trojan War soldier who was known to treat soldiers’ wounds with plant extracts. Ground Achillea can be applied to cuts and burns as a salve. Achillea comes in a variety of colors including pink, red, yellow and white. It also attracts butterflies!