



CHATSWORTH

The Gorgeous Nothings Flowers at Chatsworth

A touring exhibition from Chatsworth House

About Chatsworth

Located within the Peak District National Park in Derbyshire, England, Chatsworth is home to the Devonshire family. It comprises a nationally protected house and stables, a 105-acre garden, a 1,822-acre park, a farmyard and adventure playground, and one of Europe's most significant private art collections, much of which is on public display.

Chatsworth plays an important role as a thriving cultural and educational destination, a nationally important historic landscape, and a working estate that operates with a mindful approach to the environment and sustainability.

The charity Chatsworth House Trust is dedicated to looking after the house, collections, garden and parkland, for everyone. Almost 1 million people visit each year from the UK and around the world. Visitor income and fundraising funds essential conservation and an ambitious programme of exhibitions, events, learning and community outreach.



Nature and Culture at Chatsworth

At Chatsworth, nature and culture have been closely connected for generations. The Devonshire family's long history of collecting and commissioning has shaped both the house and its surrounding landscape. From Joseph Paxton's pioneering glasshouse designs and the introduction of the Cavendish banana, to a rich tradition of gardening, architecture and exhibitions, Chatsworth tells a remarkable story of creativity and care.

Today, Chatsworth continues this legacy by curating major annual exhibitions: [*Radical Horizons: The Art of Burning Man* \(2022\)](#), [*Mirror Mirror: Reflections on Design at Chatsworth* \(2023\)](#), [*Imaginary Conversations: An ERDEM collection inspired by Duchess Deborah* \(2024\)](#) and regularly commissioning contemporary artists from around the world.

Touring Exhibitions

In 2025, Chatsworth launched its first international touring programme, building on its longstanding national and international loan programme (*Dürer to Van Dyck: Drawings from Chatsworth House*). The ambition is to share the many thought-provoking stories within Chatsworth House and the Devonshire Collections with a growing global audience, bringing into dialogue its historic collections with global contemporary cultural discourses.





Exhibition Overview

The Gorgeous Nothings: Flowers at Chatsworth is a visually rich, emotionally resonant exhibition that reimagines our relationship with flowers through the eyes of leading contemporary and historical artists. Drawing on the extraordinary botanical heritage of Chatsworth, one of Britain's most iconic country houses, the exhibition combines rare archival treasures with striking new works across paintings, sculpture, film, photography, design and installation.

This international touring show invites audiences into a world where beauty meets fragility, myth meets memory and nature becomes a mirror for the human experience. With powerful environmental relevance, global artistic voices and strong cross-generational appeal, *The Gorgeous Nothings* offers a fresh and poetic take on one of the most universal subjects in art and life.

Key Themes

- Mythology and Magic
- Gatherers
- Still Lives
- Gender and Sexuality / Sexuality and the Senses
- Beauty and Horror
- In Place and Out of Place
- Permanence and Transience
- Flower as a Symbol

Description

Flowers in all their forms - delicate, dramatic, otherworldly - take centre stage in this captivating exhibition. *The Gorgeous Nothings: Flowers at Chatsworth* was originally staged at Chatsworth from 15 March to 5 October 2025, drawing on rare botanical treasures from the Chatsworth Library and the estate's magnificent gardens and landscapes. Born in one of England's most iconic historic homes, the exhibition is now travelling the world inviting global audiences to experience this poetic celebration of nature's fleeting brilliance through the lens of art, science and imagination.

Gardeners and botanists have foraged, planted, conserved and protected an array of specimens at Chatsworth over the past 500 years. Together, they have created what amounts to a living compendium of the natural world that continues to be nurtured today.

"Botany is the science of beauty", wrote the notable 19th-century Head Gardener of Chatsworth and engineer Joseph Paxton. It is also the study of humanity. This exhibition explores a series of themes that reflect the lure of flowers and the human experience in all its contrasts and complexities: mythology and magic, gatherers, still lives, sexuality and the senses, beauty and horror, in place and out of place, permanence and the ephemeral, and flowers as symbols.

The exhibition takes its cue from the American poet Emily Dickinson's habit of composing poems on scraps of paper and used envelopes. These 'gorgeous nothings' she refers to in one such poem are vital matters to her. Gathering - to bring together and take in from different places and sources - is an act of preservation and often of survival. Works by contemporary artists and pieces made especially for the exhibition highlight parallels to the act of collecting - a practice rooted in the history of Chatsworth.

The exhibition reminds us of the urgency of the environmental crisis today, but also the resilience and persistence of nature. Each flower is associated with deep-rooted and geographically diverse histories and myths. Individually, they may be considered gorgeous nothings, but together, they manifest life and endurance against all odds.



Photo Credit: India Hobson

Highlights

A diverse group of artists from female botanical pioneers Maria Sibylla Merian, Anna Atkins and Elizabeth Blackwell dating from the 17th to 19th centuries to contemporary innovators whose works explore the poetic, political and material dimensions of nature through paintings, photography, sculpture, film and installation.

Featuring commissions from Kapwani Kiwanga and David Wiseman, this thoughtfully curated selection bridges generations and disciplines, offering fresh and unexpected perspectives on the natural world.

Featured creatives include

Eileen Agar (1899-1991)

Anna Atkins (1799-1871)

Frank Bowling (1934-)

Chiara Camoni (1974-)

Dorothy Cross (1956-)

Simryn Gill (1959-)

George Graham (1881-1949)

Donna Huddleston (1970-)

Konstantin Kakanias (1961-)

Kapwani Kiwanga (1978-)

Michael Landy (1963-)

Cecily Lasnet (2000-)

Liza Lou (1969-)

Jonas Mekas (1922-2019)

Alessandro Michele (1972-)

Alessandro Piangiamore (1976-)

Elias Sime (1968-)

Dorothea Tanning (1910-2012)

Emma Tennant (1943-)

Philip Treacy (1967-)

David Wiseman (1981-)



Photographs of British Algae: Cyanotype Impressions, vol. 1
Anna Atkins identified over 400 species of British algae and reproduced them photographically in one of the rarest and most seductive publications of the 1800s.



A Shepherdess
Follower of Hendrick Bloemaert
1635-1699



Grotto Mirror
The work reflects the artist David Wiseman's imagination of a grotto as 'a mystical cavernous realm, often portrayed in literature and myth as a portal to the underworld, a dwelling place of the spirit world, a place where the veil is thin.'

A wide audience appeal

- Art and design audiences
- Family, schools and educational groups
- Nature-lover or keen gardener
- Eco-conscious audiences

A unique show

- A fresh take on the universal language of flowers, blending archives, historic art and contemporary interpretation as well as mixing aesthetics, science and social history
- An original invitation to build on Chatsworth's unparalleled horticultural legacy (drawing from rare botanical books, herbarium collections and centuries of expert gardening) to understand our relation to nature today

A widely praised exhibition

Chatsworth has truly blossomed in this show
- *The Times* -

Flower Power
- *House & Garden* -

A meditation on the symbolism of blooms in arts, from the Middle Ages to the modern day
- *World of Interiors* -

Chatsworth's striking showcase
- *Harper's Bazaar* -

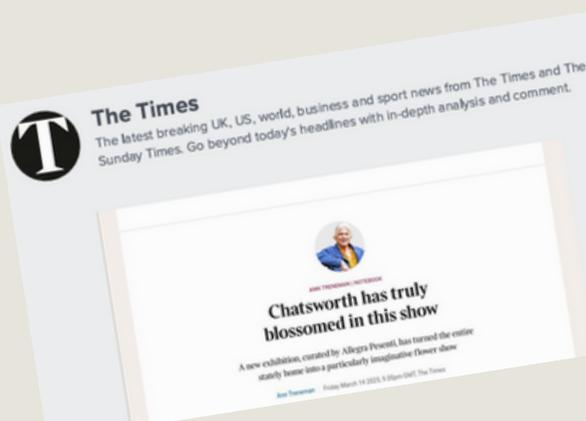
A pioneering estate both in art collecting and landscaping
- *Frieze* -

[the exhibition] traverses eras and art forms to raise questions about the environment, but also convey a message of hope
- *Country Life* -

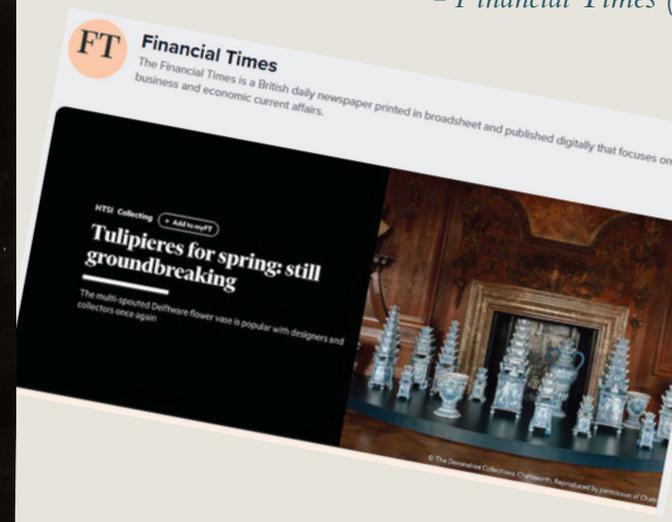
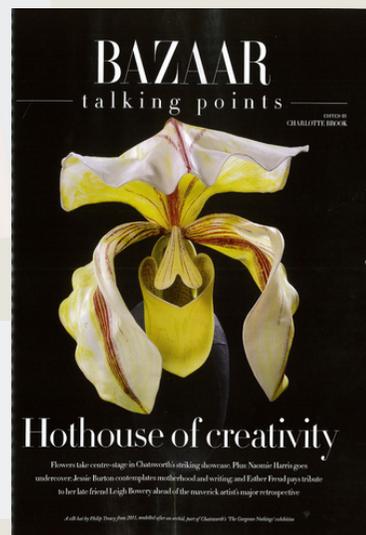
The outcome is eclectic, surprising and delightful
- *Blumenhaus* -

A unique exhibition
- *Bulgarian National TV* -
Floral offerings
- *Art Quarterly* -

one can glimpse the trials and triumphs of the estate's long history, as well as the richness and resilience of the human spirit.
- *Financial Times (China)* -



Dutch flower vases from the 17th century meet floral millinery and contemporary installations at Chatsworth's latest exhibition, which puts the spotlight on nature's vulnerability, but also its beauty and resilience



Engage your audience: connecting people with nature and sustainability

The Gorgeous Nothings: Flowers at Chatsworth invites visitors to explore environmental and sustainability issues and to rethink our relationship with the natural world. Beyond the gallery, it offers an excellent opportunity to engage audiences of all ages through creativity and wellbeing, while drawing on the growing global enthusiasm for gardening and the timeless appeal of flowers. The sold-out success of the public programme developed to accompany the exhibition stands as a testament to its resonance with visitors.

Chatsworth's public programme includes guided tours, walks, creative workshops and wellbeing activities designed to turn inspiration into action. These have proved highly popular, offering participants valuable opportunities to connect with nature and express their creativity. Partner venues are welcome to develop activities tailored to their own audiences, and Chatsworth can share programme details to support partners in creating inspiring experiences.



Embroidery
Jewellery making



Tai Chi
Yoga



Forest Bathing
Botanical Drawing



SOLD-OUT
public programme

Over **250,000** visitors came to see
the exhibition during its seven months!



The Marias by Kapwani Kiwanga
Photo Credit: ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2025

Terms and Conditions

Hire fee, on request, includes:

- Curation and exhibition concept
- Tour management by Chatsworth staff
- Exhibits
- Images and films
- Exhibition text in English
- Design brief

Costs payable by the venue:

- Hire fee, in instalments
- Selected mounts and cases subject to discussion
- Exhibition and graphic design adaptation
- Transport and crating costs
- Storage of empty crates
- Nail-to-nail insurance
- All costs relating to exhibition production
- Installation and de-installation costs
- Marketing

Mythology and Magic





Photo Credit: India Hobson

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The eclectic charge of the installations in this exhibition voices the urgency of the environmental condition in the world today, but also the resilience and persistence of nature.

Each flower represented here is associated with deep-rooted myths and symbolisms. Individually, they may be considered gorgeous nothings, but together, they manifest life and endurance against all odds.

Allegra Pesenti, Curator

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Photo Credit: India Hobson

HIRING DETAILS

CURATOR

Allegra Pesenti

ORIGINAL DESIGN

Pippa Nissen, Nissen Richards Studio

ORIGINAL VENUE

Chatsworth House, United Kingdom
15 March - 5 October 2025

SIZE

c.900 m²

EXHIBITION TYPE

Interdisciplinary: science, art, fashion and design

AVAILABLE FROM

2026 - 2029

CONTACT

To find out more about this exhibition, please contact:

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- Louise Shannon, Head of Collections and Cultural Programmes

