

2.6. Visual Codes of Tulip Images

Primary research
To typologize
The characteristics of tulip images

To avoid subjective interpretation, I adopted an experimental structure: the tulip image was analysed through five dimensions—root, stem, leaves, flower, and background.

The following two sets of tulip images respectively depict the severed root and the curved stem.

While the former was noted in earlier observations, it had not previously been linked to other features to form a coherent theoretical framework.



Without Root in tulip images



Curved Stems in tulip images



Delicate petals in tulip images

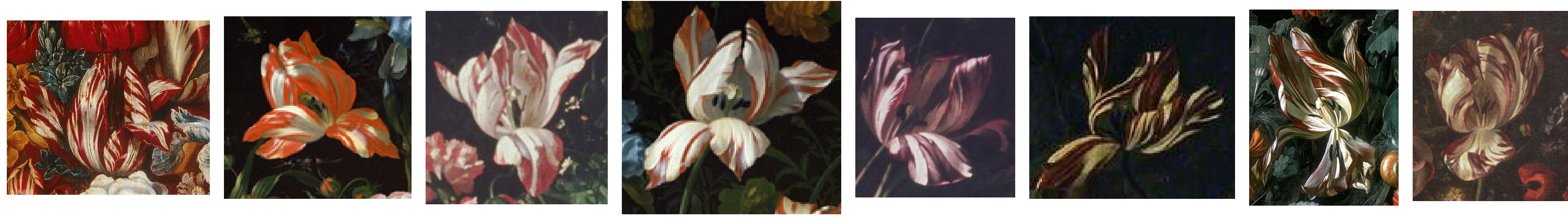


twisted leaves in tulip images

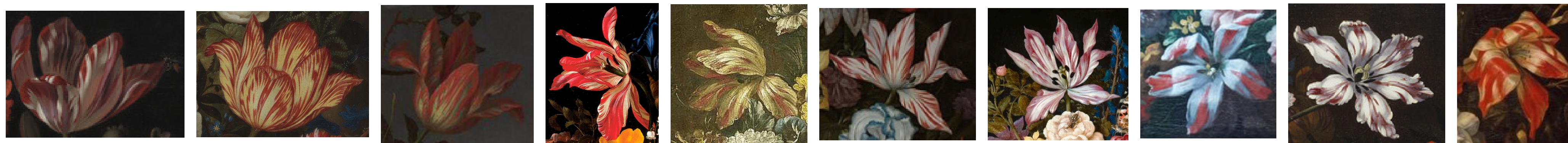
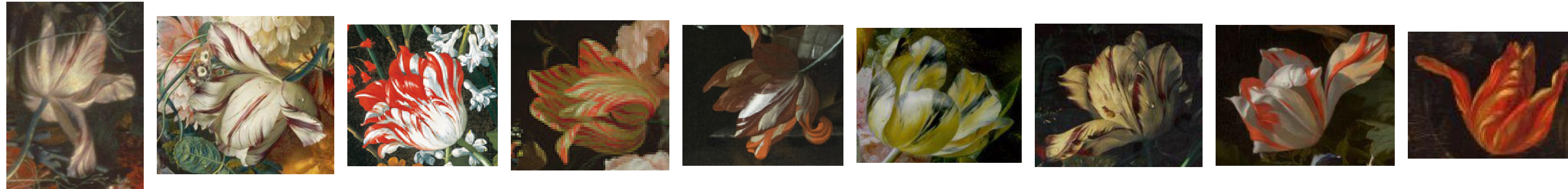
The petals and leaves of tulips are richly ornamented, though this is not essential to describing the tulip plant; it serves merely to make them appear more delicate and beautiful.



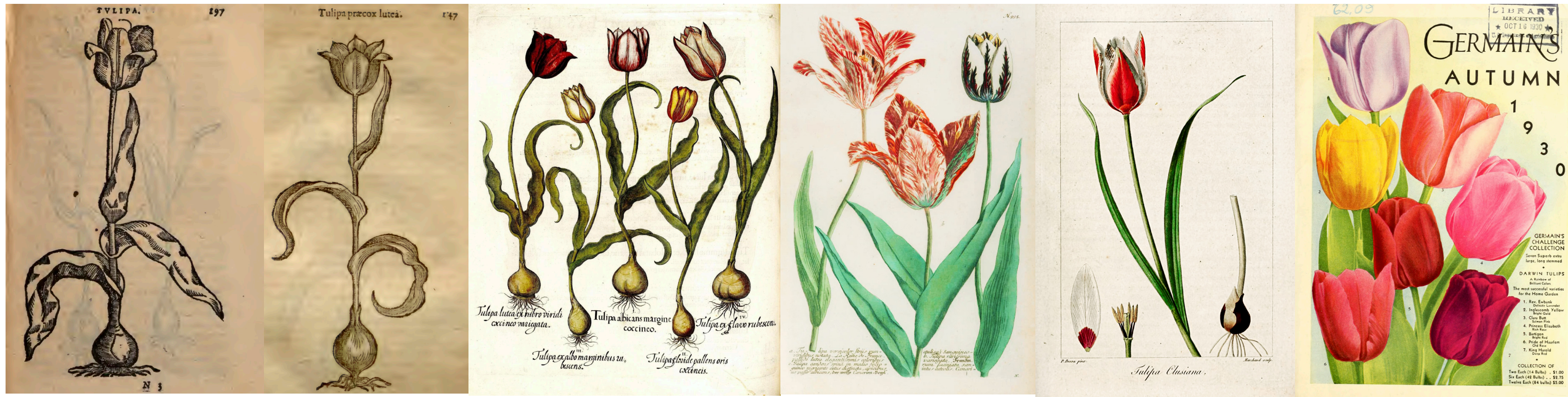
The state of flowering in tulip images



In depictions of tulips, they are predominantly portrayed in the bud to half-open stage, with very few appearing fully open to the point of decay.



The state of flowering in tulip images

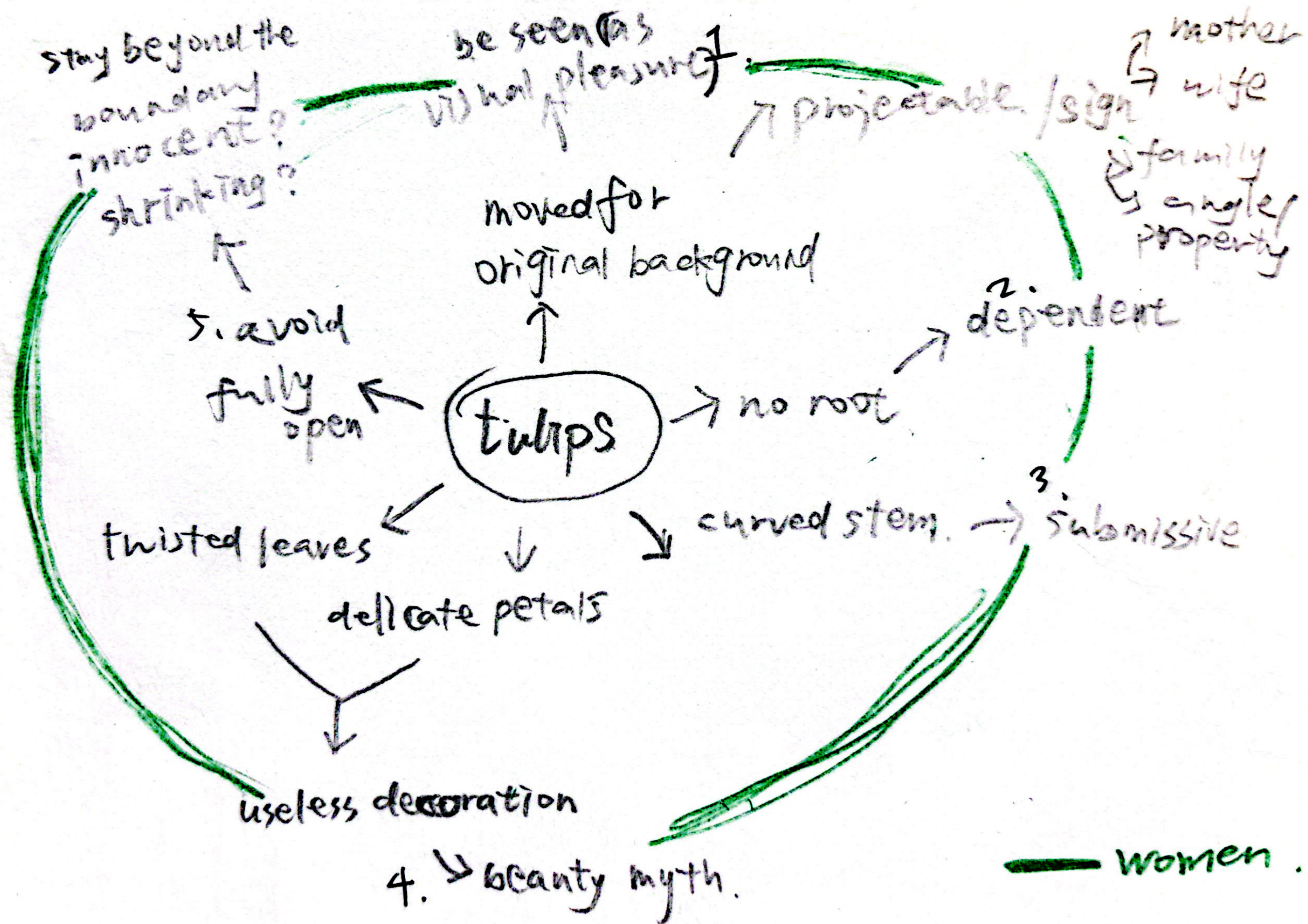


Tulips in a plain background

Tulips are removed from their natural habitat and placed against a plain background or within domestic settings as still-life decorations.



Tulips in a domestic setting



By comparing the characteristics presented in tulip imagery with those in female imagery, we find they can be linked, thereby exploring the visual mechanisms applied in their respective modes of presentation.

Primary research
To match

Backgrounds of images: Tulips VS. Women

Female images in magazines are often presented without contextual grounding.



Backgrounds of images: Tulips VS. Women



Beyond plain backgrounds, women are frequently situated in domestic interiors—dressed immaculately, sometimes even formally—yet reclining on beds in poses that subtly invite the viewer’s sexual attention.

C shaped stems **VS.** The submissive figure appearing in female imagery



Women are often made to bend their bodies in order to soften their perceived aggressiveness, while men remain upright—confident and authoritative.

Leaning/ Without roots **VS.** The dependent figure appearing in female imagery



Much like the tulip image that appears rootless—unable to stand on its own—why must women also be made to depend on something? Why is this fragile, suspended state accepted as a form of feminine beauty?

decorative petals/ leaves **VS.** The delicate figure appearing in female imagery



As petals and leaves in tulip imagery twist and invert, women too are made to twist—often into uncomfortable postures, seemingly to satisfy the viewer, especially under the heterosexual male gaze.

half open state **VS.** The withdrawing figure appearing in female imagery



Just as the tulip is deemed most beautiful in its half-open state, women are similarly expected to present themselves as “half-open”—delicate, mysterious, and quietly available.