

100 FLOWERS TO BLOOM DAVID JACQUES

“An encyclopaedia of ‘non-native’ plants in Ireland according to students from St. Joseph’s Primary School, East Wall, 2005–2006”



Carly Walsh.

love-in-a-mist

Erica O'Neil

bird's nest heart

Stinking hellebore

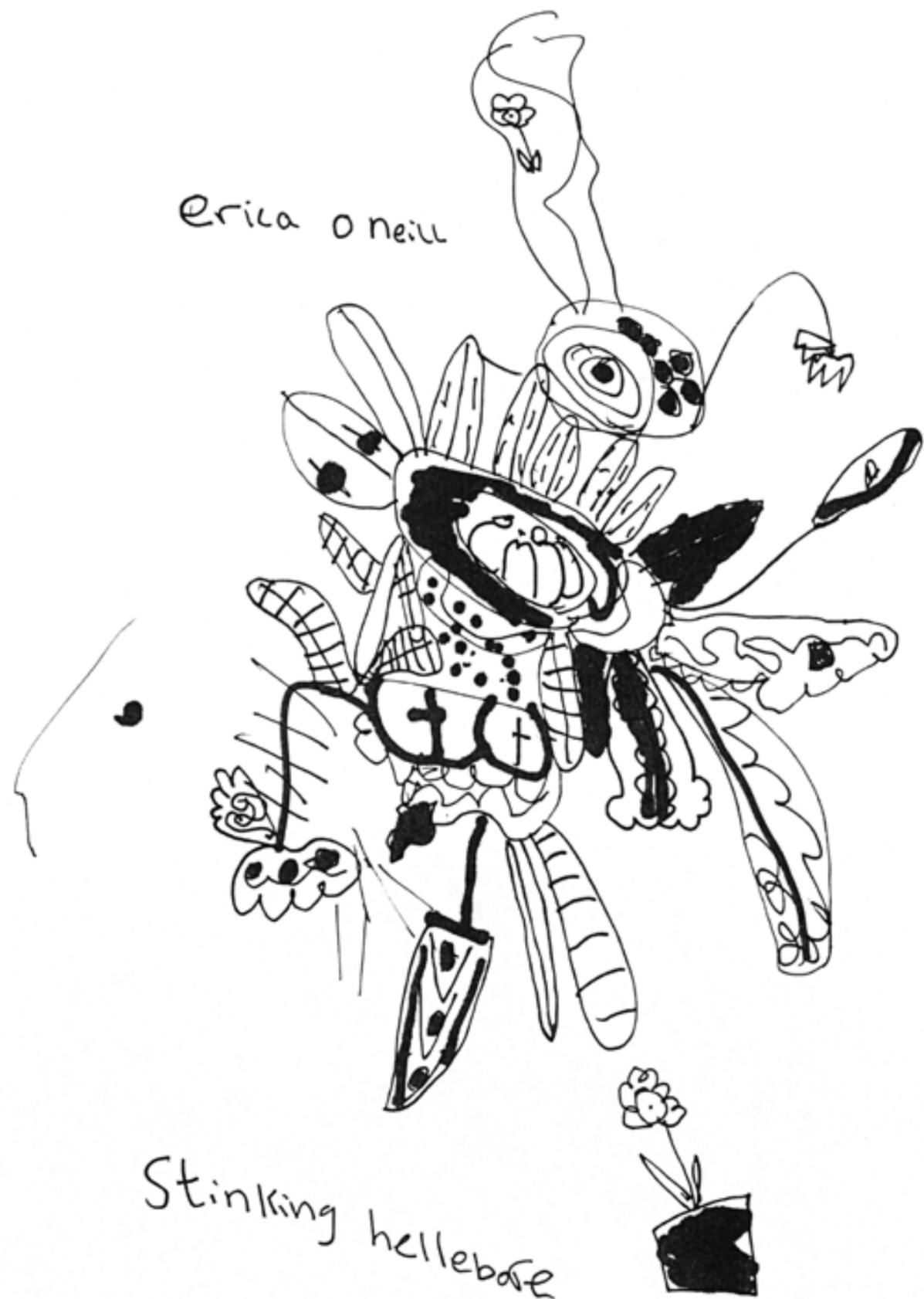
Stinking hellebore





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TO BLOOM
DAVID
JACQUES



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P.E.G (Parents Education Group).
National Botanic Gardens.
CREATE

Design by Language

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'...a hundred flowers to bloom' is a public art project by artist David Jacques commissioned by the Fire Station Artists' Studios in partnership with Dublin Port Company. It came about from an innovative commissioning process based on a partnership between a semi-state company and an arts organisation. Dublin Port Company has an artistic agenda that has to be commended. The Community Liaison Manager, Charlie Murphy and Managing Director, Enda Connellan were integrally involved from the outset and discussed with the Fire Station their vision to bring art to the industrial landscape of Dublin Port and it was with the art expertise of the Fire Station that we agreed on a process to realise that vision.

It was initially decided to set up a selection committee of art professionals who would invite four artists to develop proposals that would bring visual art to the industrial landscape of Dublin Port and engage meaningfully with the local community. Local community was described as the communities that live in the surrounding areas of Dublin Port including East Wall, North Wall and Ringsend as well as the approximately 4,000 people who work in the Dublin Port area.

The four selected artists were David Jacques, Jesse Jones, Ailbhe Murphy, and Philip Napier in collaboration with Michael Hogg. Each developed extremely innovative proposals over a five month period and a selection committee made up of art professionals, community representatives and the commissioners chose the proposal presented by Liverpool based artist David Jacques. While each of the proposals was extremely exciting yet very different from each other it was decided that '...a hundred flowers to bloom' best fulfilled the criteria set out by the commissioning bodies.

The artist David Jacques' project proposal described a process of very coherent and meaningful engagement with the pupils of St Joseph's National School over a full school year. This involved an extensive study of 'alien' or non-native plant life brought into Ireland through the port over the years. Each child focused on a particular plant, researching it and producing a series of detailed ink drawings. These drawings were later realised into silk embroideries, which are now permanently on display in St Joseph's National School. The public outcome of this residency was one hundred hand painted banners depicting each child's drawing and name, which were installed along Tolka Quay Road in Dublin Port.

Originally intending to last three months, due to the extreme weather conditions along this road, it was soon realised that the banners needed to be relocated. It was at this time that the commissioning partners had to come together with the artist and find a solution. Finally after much debate and research it was agreed to hang the banners in the main terminal at Dublin Port and that is now where the public can view and experience the work. Additionally a selection of the silk embroideries and photographs documenting the project by Chris Harrington are on display in the lobby of Dublin Port's head office on Alexandra Road.

This project was a success for a number of reasons and most importantly because of the professional work practice of the artist David Jacques. He gave confidence to the supportive and committed school management at St Joseph's National School which ensured thoughtful collaboration with the pupils. It was also a success because of the true commitment of both commissioning partners. Dublin Port Company and the Fire Station Artists' Studios gave time, resources and money to develop the initial proposals over a five month period which ensured well researched and viable project proposals to select from. In addition both organisations gave the same time and commitment to David Jacques throughout the duration of '... a hundred flowers to bloom' and worked together to find creative solutions when needed.

This project is a great example of public art commissioning getting it right!

Clodagh Kenny, Director, Fire Station Artists' Studios 2007

Dublin Port Company has always recognised that not only is the port a part of its local community but that the community is part of the port. Over the last number of years there has been significant investment by the port in local environmental, social, sporting and cultural projects. As part of this ongoing work a collaborative arts project was devised to celebrate the many non-native plant species that grow here now as a result of being brought to shore in ballast of either rocks or clay by visiting ships from far flung destinations.

The Community Liaison Committee of Dublin Port Company worked together with the Fire Station Artists' Studios on managing this collaborative arts project involving a year long residency by Liverpool based artist David Jacques with one hundred school children from St. Joseph's National School in East Wall. The end result of this very successful residency is a permanent exhibition of over 100 silk embroideries in St. Joseph's School, as well as 100 colourful banners that adorned the Port as part of a year-long exhibition. A selection of these banners remain up in Teminal 1 Building in Dublin Port.

The '...a hundred flowers to bloom' project has achieved its aim of making a positive contribution to the local community as well as to incorporate the visual arts in a meaningful way into the landscape of Dublin Port and the surrounding area.

We were again delighted to support this phase of the project which documents the history of the project. This book again highlights just how successfully business can work with their local community to deliver mutually beneficial results.

Enda Connellan, Chief Executive Officer, Dublin Port Company



Dublin Port Company

Dublin Port is managed by Dublin Port Company, which was established in 1997. It is a limited company owned by the state and manages Ireland's largest and busiest port which plays a vital role in the daily trading and economic life of this country.

Dublin Port is a 260 hectare area spanning both the north and south banks of the river Liffey. It handles an average of 300 shipping movements every week. This includes import and export of goods, as well as passenger ferries and Cruise liners.

As one of the biggest industrial estates in Ireland, Dublin Port is also a major base for employment. 4000 people work in the port area – approx 5% are employed directly by Dublin Port Company. The remainder are employed by haulage, ferry, stevedoring and oil companies and shipping and storage agents.

Dublin Port Company has long placed significant emphasis on good corporate citizenship. Its community liaison committee plays a vital role in building greater links between the company and local communities, both nationally and internationally, supporting a range of social, environmental, sporting, educational and art initiatives over the years.

2007 is a landmark year for Dublin Port Company, as it celebrates its 10th year as a corporate entity as well as its 300th anniversary.

Fire Station Artists' Studios

Located in Dublin's North East Inner City, the Fire Station Artists' Studios was established in 1993 to address the needs of professional visual artists. It primarily provides subsidised combined live/work studios for Irish and international artists, sculpture workshop facilities and training opportunities for artists.

A key policy of the Fire Station is to contribute to the debate on collaborative arts practice through initiating and developing contextual arts projects of innovation and excellence. We aim to disseminate our distinct model of collaborative arts practice with a view to impacting on models of engagement and ensuring parity of esteem for this art practice. We believe to effectively carry out this aim all projects that we commission, partner or project manage must have a publication of artistic and critical merit produced.

Past projects commissioned and project managed by the Fire Station include Inner Art (1997), The Memorial, Home (1998-2000), Consume (1997-2000) and Daedal(us) (2003), Moore Street Lending Library (2005), 100 flowers to Bloom (2006) and 12 Angry Films (2006). Since 2002 the Fire Station has run an annual 'Artist in the Community Studio Award', which supports professional visual artists who work in community contexts. Previous winners are Natascha Fischell, David Jacques, Ciara O'Malley, Rhona Byrne, Christine Mackey and the Third Person.

Further information on the Fire Station Artists Studios is available on our website www.firestation.ie.

St Joseph's National School

St Joseph's Co-ed Primary School is located in the heart of the Dublin Docklands. It was built in 1961 and continues to provide a first class education to the 180 pupils presently attending the school. The school has an energetic and enthusiastic staff of 11 teachers. The school motto 'Confidence, Education, Respect and Tolerance' accurately reflects the aims of all involved in the school. The Parents Education Group (PEG) is actively involved in the school and meets there on a regular basis.







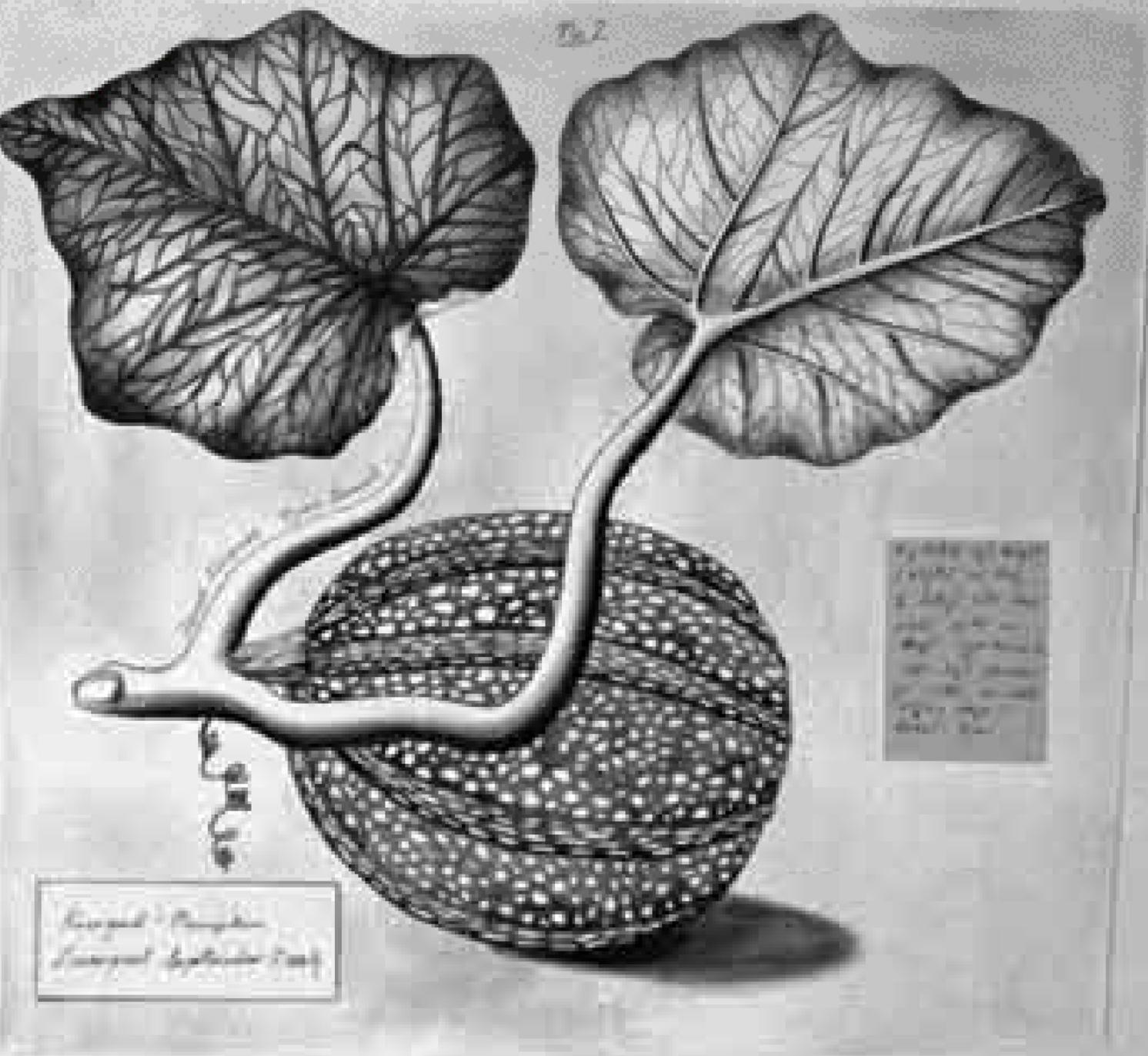
Borderlines: David Jacques' Garden

*'Early artwork is one of the most powerful means available to the human mind for orientating itself in the environment. The world to which the senses awaken is far from being an easily understandable place... the young mind generates the impulse to take hold of the world, to understand it, and to bear witness to its wondrous wealth'*¹.

In her essay in the recent series of *Perspectives on Equality*, Dr Mary Shine Thompson explores the degree to which children can fully participate in society and 'actively hone their understanding of citizenship.' She states that school 'is where common interests emerge, and where diversity is encountered' and is the environment where, when 'underpinned by respect, caring, other orientation, dialogue and collaboration' children will be facilitated to contribute 'to wider society' and be enabled to have their voices heard². Thompson refers to the poet Derek Mahon's reference to school as a place where 'a thought might grow'³.

Hanging in the Dublin Port Terminal are a series of banners which have each been hand painted and depict a child's contour drawing of a plant. This is one half of a collective artwork, the other half depicts the same plants rendered in embroidered threads and hangs in the entrance of St Joseph's School in East Wall, Dublin. This collective artwork is the outcome of a collaborative project undertaken by the artist David Jacques, through a commission from Dublin Port Company and the Fire Station Artists' Studios. The banners are striking as they celebrate a child's direct representation of an observed plant as described in the aesthetic mark-making that is the signature of childhood. The embroideries employ a more intricate series of drawn threads that bring to mind the exquisite work of the Brazilian artist Arthur Bispo do Rosario who, among many approaches taken in his prolific output is perhaps most associated with his extraordinary hand embroidered garments and sculptural objects.

In December I met with David Jacques to discuss '*... a hundred flowers to bloom.*' During this meeting Jacques spoke of how the idea for this commission was seeded many years ago in his native Liverpool. As a child, his father who was originally a docks worker, told him of the various exotic non-native plants that found their way to Liverpool through the thousands of ships that passed through the port over the years. When making his proposal for this commission, the artist decided to investigate the non-native plants particular to Ireland that would have been introduced through similar means.



We also discussed the work of the artist Arthur Bispo do Rosario. We shared our fascination with his process of fabricating artwork and his intense need to order and classify his world, which he did through collecting and recording, in meticulous detail, objects that were important to him. These objects ranged from scraps of textile and newspaper to metal cans, and rubber boots and became the raw material for his mysterious artworks, which were also drawn or written over with the unravelled threads from old pale blue hospital uniforms.

David Jacques' concerns in previous work shown in Ireland have also been with issues of social justice and migration⁴. His source for this project about alien plants was the botanist Sylvia C.P. Reynolds, who developed a taxonomy of 920 plant species of which ten per cent are reflected in this project and represented by the work of one hundred children. When he was researching the project idea he searched the web and discovered that St Joseph's School has a garden and that Seamus Murphy, the Principal, is a passionate gardener, which informed his choice of school.

At the start of his residency, after introducing himself as an artist, David Jacques told the children the stories of the non-native or 'alien' plants, that have seeded and flourished in Ireland over the years. Each child was associated with a specific plant through a lottery. The concept of the lottery as conceived by David is a valuable one. The children did not choose either the plants they would investigate or their final destination but the pattern of seed bed and random planting reflects the way people live in contemporary society often not choosing their neighbours and having to live as harmoniously as possible with diversity. The teachers incorporated the project into the curriculum and with the children tracked each plant to its source.

Central to the artist's practice is his interest in the relationship between the object as seen rather than imagined and the personal response to it. When they began to draw each child was encouraged to study a photocopied image of their plant and imbue it with their own personal response to what they saw. David said that his interest lies in 'the space between the recognition of the photocopied plant and the child's drawn image'. Rudolf Arnheim, the distinguished psychologist and educator, discusses early schooling and art education in his essay *Thoughts on Art Education* and offers us a reading of this process when he states that 'early schooling by its nature places inordinate emphasis on classification.' He gives the example of early reading while calling the child's attention to the word 'tree', seldom calls the child's attention to what is distinctive about 'this tree'.

He says, the arts, and 'particularly the visual arts, call children's attention to particular qualities of the world, especially for children beyond eight or nine years of age'. Visual art is important, as it promotes individuation by encouraging children while drawing something to 'really pay attention' to it.

Meeting with three bright and articulate children, James Hopkins, Lauren Byrne and Sinéad McDonnell, from sixth class in St Joseph's, I was held in an engaging and insightful dialogue about their experiences of working with David Jacques last year. These children all aged twelve know what they like and do not like – from drama to football. They know clearly when an experience has been good and why... All of this was revealed when they recalled some of the most memorable moments of the experience of working with David Jacques on '*... a hundred flowers to bloom*'.

The children now also know what the essential qualities of a successful arts education project are as a result of the experience of this process, their first time opportunity of working with an artist in their school. In the brief time that I had with them, I was struck by how far the principles of good art education had been put into action by David Jacques, who had worked with them and another 97 children, their teachers and parents. Our conversation was not quite a formal evaluation of the project, but they and the Home School liaison, John Mangan, as representatives from the school, articulated clearly how this process met so many of the criteria that educationalists and artists look for in a collaborative arts project. These include 'creating a process that enriches the curriculum and compliments pupils own arts education, supporting learning in other curricula areas'. Engagement in an arts experience 'is critical as it gives a concentrated experience that provides exciting, direct learning opportunities as well as being the catalyst for further learning through subsequent reflection and action.' With 'appropriate preparation and follow up, or by ongoing engagement with an artist, there can be cognitive, affective and lasting benefits'. Collaboration with an artist can offer access to 'a multiplicity of concerns that artists engage in and often employs modes of research, discovery and sharing that complement other teaching and learning styles'⁵.

When asked what they would recommend to other schools that might be thinking of embarking on a similar process with an artist, these discerning young people were able to tell me about the qualities that brought about their successful interaction and collaboration with an artist. Reflecting on the experience with David they cited the interpersonal exchanges between the artist and the school community as essential to the success of this type of process and they were able

to state affirmatively that an artist 'should not be allowed to run amok'. When asked to explain what he meant by this, James said, that the artist should respect the people that he was working with and not impose his ideas on them. He felt that the artist had respected each and every one of the children in the project and while encouraging them to express themselves, he empowered them to concentrate and try their 'hardest' to produce their best drawing. James who along with the artist David Jacques is a keen Liverpool FC supporter, could see the parallel with the discipline needed for footballers in developing skills and techniques.

Both Sinéad and James spoke about his choice of drawing as not always being the one that they personally thought the best one. Sinéad told me that she 'didn't like the drawing that he picked of mine'. But when we discussed why he might have chosen that particular one (No. 42 White Bryony) she acknowledged that he knew that the drawing would later be translated into an embroidery or painted onto one of the banners and therefore he also knew which one might best suit that process. Her pride in her own piece of work became evident when she told me that she had lost her copy of it. When I offered to photograph it for her she looked again at her work and her previous self-evasiveness gave way to a proud smile. What better affirmation than that to show approval and declare ownership?

The Home School liaison, John Mangan spoke about the artist's energy and commitment and attention to every detail describing him also as an excellent teacher. Lauren added '... he explained the project and what we had to do.'

The artist's respect for each child and his determination that each child be included in the process is evident in the anecdotal retelling of the experiences by the children and teachers. Sinéad told me about not being able 'to go on the first trip to the 'Botanics'⁶ because of the Camogie match but that David arranged for another trip there for any child in the school that did not make the first'.

We talked about the embedded narratives in each of the embroidered panels, about seeds being carried on the wheels of trucks and in birds' droppings and how plants are reseeded away from the place of their origin. David had discussions with the children about the connections between the journey of the seeds and how this connected with the history of the local docklands, the familiar background for many of the children in the school. The children had grasped these concepts of migration and transience and our discussion led

to exploring why people move away from their home. We discovered that of the group of us, assembled on that day, all of the adults had moved from our birthplaces. We too, had re seeded ourselves and taken root in new places. We talked about Italians and chippers and pizza and Chinese food ... and of how much the children loved these non-Irish foods, agreeing that where we might have originally come from does not matter or mark us out as different in a negative way but that people can assimilate into their new homes bringing richness to the native residents.

David Jacques has successfully imbued this process with parallel themes of migration of plants and of people. He has raised awareness of the arrival of new communities into Dublin in sensitive child-centred pedagogy, planting seeds of tolerance and awareness in the hearts and minds of these children. The process that he uses promotes respect and discipline for the process of art making and encourages new relationships. By celebrating the outcome of the project, each child is empowered to leave a mark of themselves in the place (their school) that has fostered this project, and in one of the public spaces that marks transience in Dublin, the Dublin Port Terminal.

The engagement between David Jacques and the children was passionate on both sides. When he talked about working with the children his respect for them matched their respect for him. His description of them working was one of admiration for the levels of concentration that each child gave to the development of the final drawing and the personal investment that each child gave to their given plant. This was his first time to work with children and he was struck by each child's unique drawing style, and felt very strongly that it is important that each child place value on his or her own work.

His interest in banners, evolved through an interest in the trade union movement and his research in Manchester Museum of Labour History. His attraction to embroidery is both visceral and aesthetic. He celebrates how silken threads sewn onto silk shimmer and loves the tactile qualities that it creates. The installation of the final artwork in the school had to be of gallery standard and this was remarked upon by all of the staff of the school when they told me of his countless attempts to finally sign off the best display of the work.

This arts project '... a hundred flowers to bloom' is an example of what the educator and proponent of 'critical pedagogy', Henry A. Giroux describes as 'border pedagogy'⁷ Giroux defines this as 'a curricular space in which teachers and pupils interrogate

and cross traditional boundaries (borders) of power, epistemology, decision – making, cultural and social representation in curricula, and in the process’. Mary Shine Thompson’s call for the school to become a forum and facilitator of fuller inclusion in public society, and ‘the locus of democratic actions that are disseminated to a wider society’ has been well met in this interaction in St Joseph’s, between an artist from Liverpool and children from Dublin’s docklands area. Perhaps the borders of power and social division can be subverted, enabling ‘children to challenge issues of inequality and silence.’⁸ The process of creating metaphorical borders of flowers in a garden full of seeds of openness and tolerance has begun.

As I close on my reflections on this process I find that I am thinking about drawing as the artist Rob Smith⁹ described it in 1983 as ‘a way of relating oneself to the world. A cross-over of internal to external. Finding a place in which to sit in the jungle of contemporary living...’

I also believe that the intervention that the artist David Jacques has created on this side of the Irish Sea is similar to a plant seeding itself in a strange territory. In a sense the artist is seeding the cracks and crevices of experience in the lives of the hundred children with whom he has worked in a similar manner to the way ideas and attitudes root themselves in our psyche. I wonder if Derek Mahon’s concept about school as a place where ‘a thought might grow’ is not answered in this project where, in the hearts and minds of each and every one of the children David Jacques has seeded his message about humanity, there are indeed ‘... a hundred flowers to bloom’.

[Helen O’Donoghue, Head of Education and Community Programmes
Irish Museum of Modern Art \(IMMA\)](#)

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‘I’d love to
do it again.’

Lauren Dunne
Kelly-Anne Byrne
Aoife Cummins
Casey Davies
Chloe Moore
Sophie Afonseca
Lauren Byrne Roberts
Dillon Donnery
Garry Ivers
Gareth Farrell
Brendon Hawkins
Seán Teeling
Brad Whelan
Glenn Shannon
Marius Paun
Catalin Dumitru
Guliston Kaya
Tia Olariu
Rashida Tikla

Jack Cleary
Carl Flynn
Craig McDonnell
Rebecca Vickers
Darren Kearney
Darragh O’Callaghan
Rachel Shannon
Anthony McDonnell
Rhyss Davies
Scott Graham
Jordan Greene
Ryan Pettigrew
Lisa Dooner
Conor O’Reilly
Kevin Coyne
Aaron Fleming
Alannah Crehan
Klaudija Terexscenkaite
David Dumitru

Lauren Byrne
Sarah Kinsella
Gareth Murray
Jason Devlin
Stephen McDonnell
Natasha O’Neill
Ciarán Doyne
Stephen Doyne
James Hopkins
Sinéad McDonnell
Declan Donnery
Nicole O’Callaghan
Kim Downes
Mason Teeling
Jasmine Mooney
Aoife Rooney
Lauren Goulding
Cian Bowe
Sarah Ormsby
James Sheridan
Robert Markey
Vedal Kaya

Garden Pea
Wild Oat
Ribbed Melilot
Michaelmas Daisy
Oat
Crown Vetch
Aliske Clover
Large Flowered Pink Correl
Indian Balsam
Annual Scorpion Vetch
Birds Foot Trefoil
Clustered Bellflower
Fodder Vetch
Common Vetch
Sickle Medick
Broad Bean
Large Trefoil
White Melilot
Treachle Mustard

Sea Buckthorn
Spurge Laurel
Sticky Groundsel
Sainfoin
Sea Buckthorn
Spurge Laurel
Pineapple Weed
Sainfoin
Red Clover
Ivy Leaved Toad Flax
Ivy Leaved Toad Flax
Yellow Vetchling
Wild Mignonette
Sticky Groundset
Garden Angelica
Pineapple Weed
Sainfoin
Red Clover
Garden Angelica

American Winter Cress
Berry Catchfly
Sand Catchfly
Common Amaranth
Rocky Mountain Bee-plant
Pitcher Plant
Red Bistort
Corn Spurrey
Tall Rocket
White Bryony
Rose of Sharon
Fiddle Dock
Corncockle
Rose Campion
Small Mallow
Spring Beauty
Coralroot
Japanese Knotweed
Soapwort
Dame’s Violet
Chinese Mustard
Tall Tutsan

Ross Kennett
Davina Gilchrist
Shane Craig
Sonia Moore
Tony Kinsella
Kevin Cleary
Courtney McHugh
Lee Shannon
Michelle Masterson
Carl Greene
Desislav Petkov
Megan Bryers
Katie Connolly
Alice Dunne
Cara Bowe
Erica O’Neill
Jonas Teeling Irvine
Kellie Gregan
Carly Walsh
Jonathon Boyle
Rebecca Duff
Rebecca Wigglesworth
Liam Vickers
Aoife Horan
Kavisha Hareen

Jamie Taaffe
Jordan Lee
Nikita Larkin
Lisa Marie Rafter
Gareth Donnery
Chloe Donnery
Avril Meade
Bébhinn Kinsella
Stacey O’Callaghan
Patrick Deegan
Daniel O’Halloran
Aaron Byrne
Demi Moore
Chibeze Nduka
Gráinne Hulton
Karl Kelly
Lee Carabini
Leah Redmond

Sean Neary
Andrew Macken
Fatima Kaya
Eric Redmond
Jade Scully
Jason Connolly
Alan McManus
Fiona Neary
Shane McClean
Ceira Byrne

Mexican Tea Plant
Green Hellebore
Himalayan Clematis
Asarabacca
Love-in-a-Mist
Rough Poppy
Dewplant
Barberry
Yellow Corydalis
Fig
Monk’s Hood
Tamarisk
Larkspur
Bleeding Heart
Oregon Grape
Stinking Hellebore
Spineless Saltwort
Hop
Hottentot Fig
Darwin’s Barberry
Blue Anemone
Roman Nettle
Oak-leaved Goosefoot
Yellow Anemone
Bay

Garden Radish
Ternate Leaved Cinquefoil
Salmonberry
Annual Wallrocket
American Willowherb
Dotted Loosestrife
Hairy Rocket
Hoary Mustard
Swedish Whitebeam
Garden Rocket
Steeple Bush
Small Alison
New Zealand Pigmyweed
Australian Blackwood
White Stonecrop
Japanese Rose
Gold of Pleasure
White Mignonette

Rape Plant
Flax
Lesser Swine Cress
Honesty
Wallflower
Smalltoadflax
Field Pepper Wort
Chamomile
Pot Marigold
Least Pepper Wort

Many thanks to all who contributed.

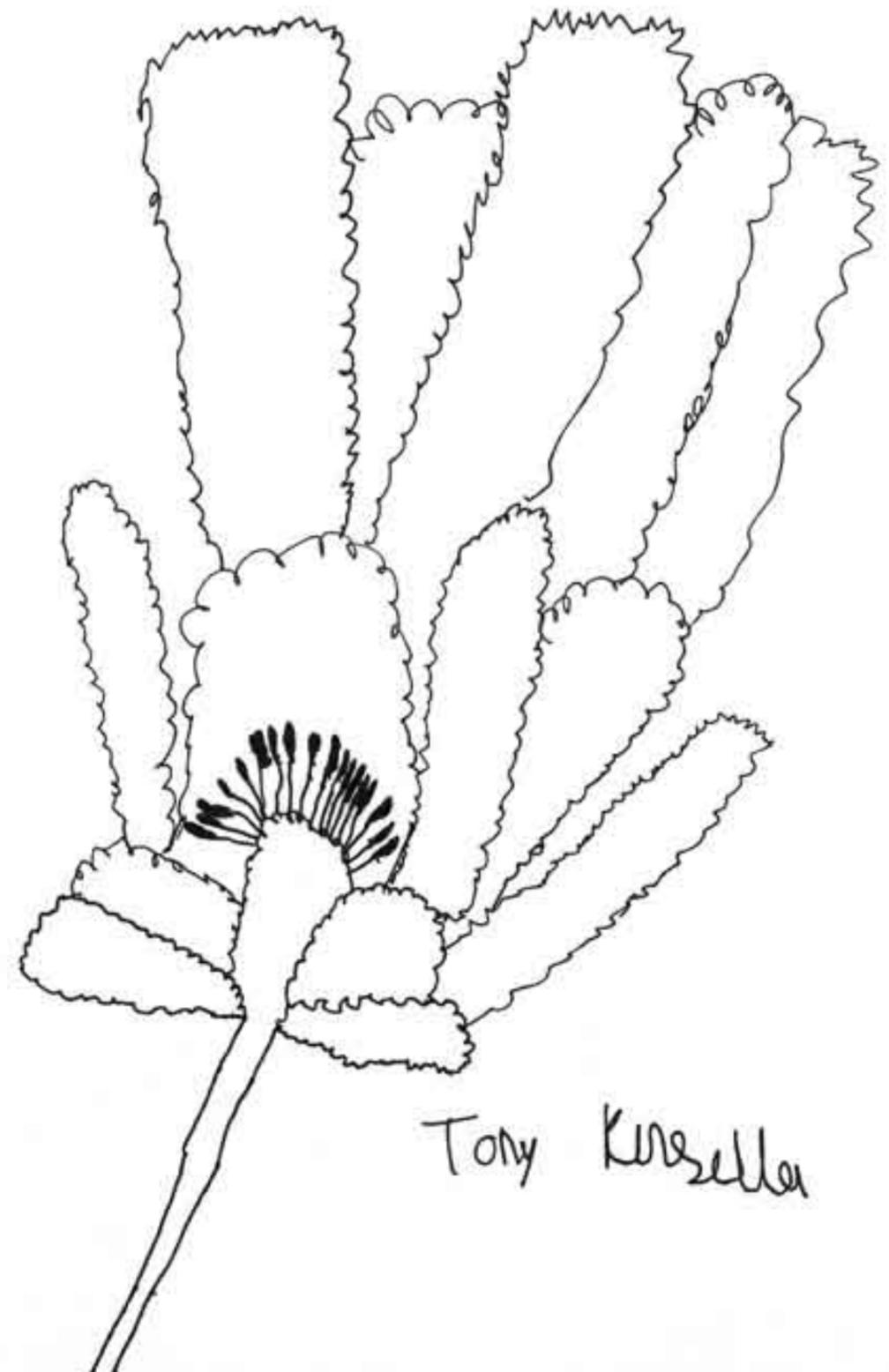
'I brought my embroidery home with me and had it framed. It's up in my bedroom'





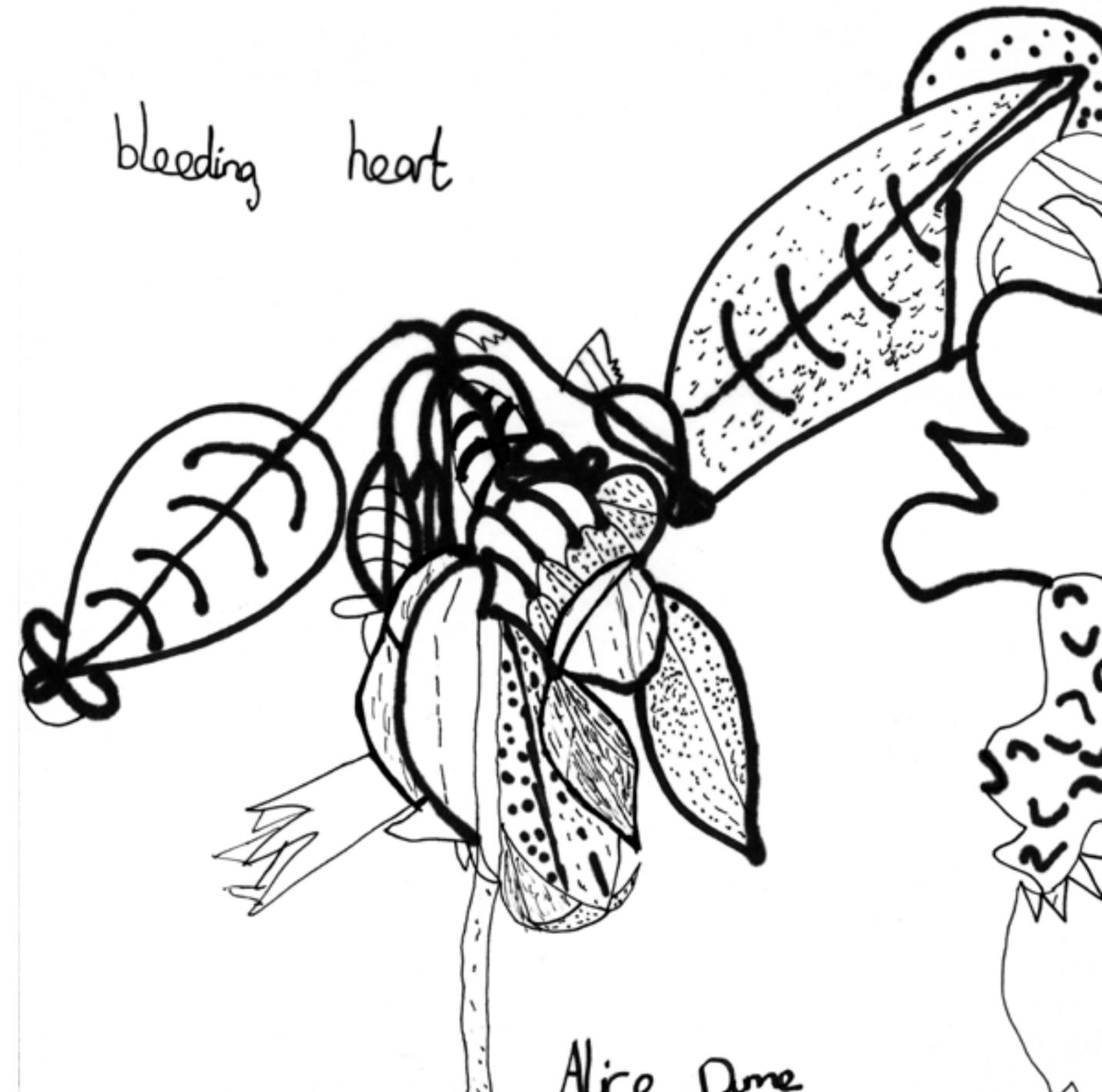
'There was this one plant in the Botanical Gardens and it had a cage around it. I asked where did it come from and there was a cage around it to protect it cause its rare'

love-in-a-mist





‘I thought it was deadly. It was fun cause the names of some of the flowers were funny’





‘When we went to the Botanic Gardens I found a bean and I asked what it was and he said to plant it in my garden so I did but it hasn’t grown yet’

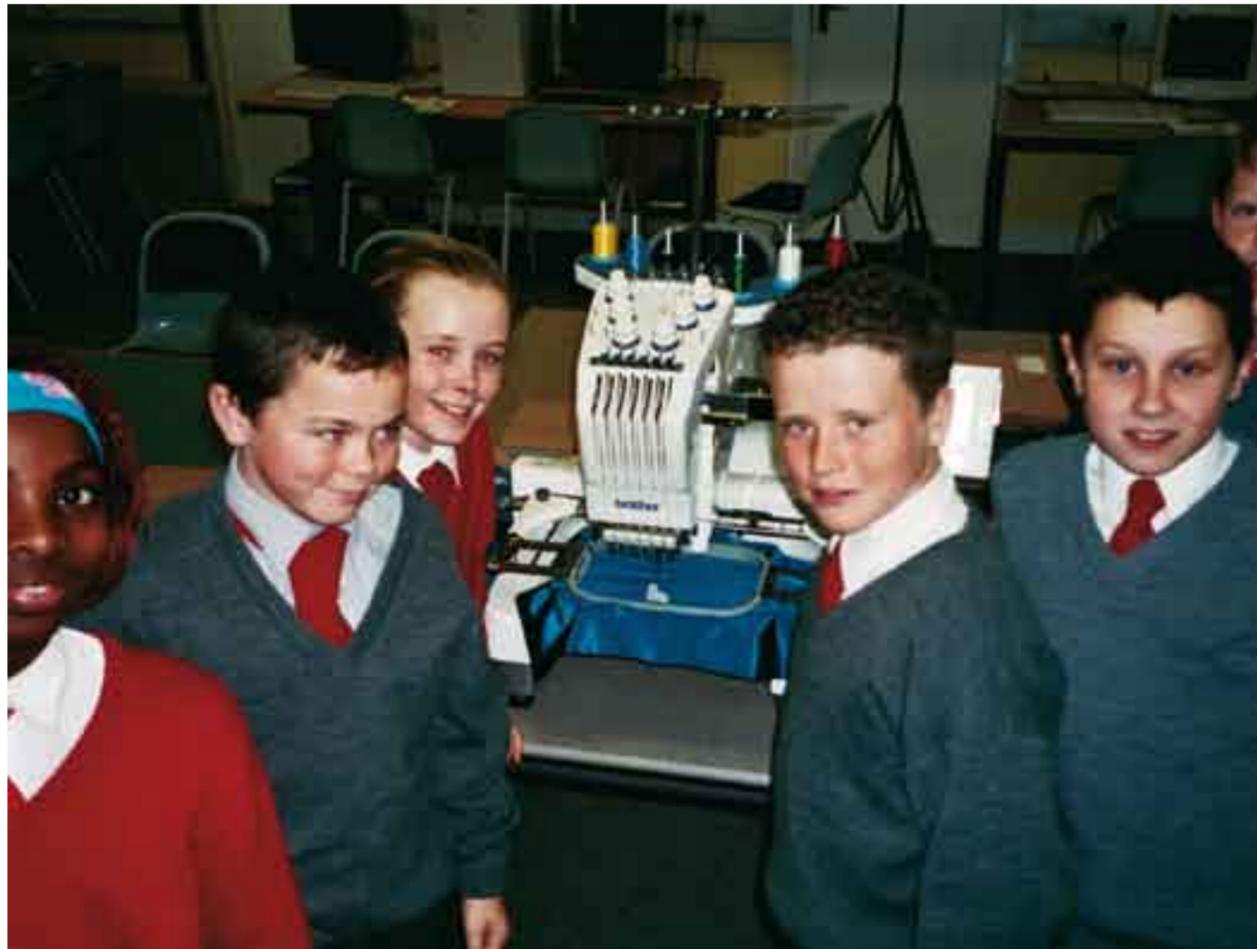
Hottentot - Fig



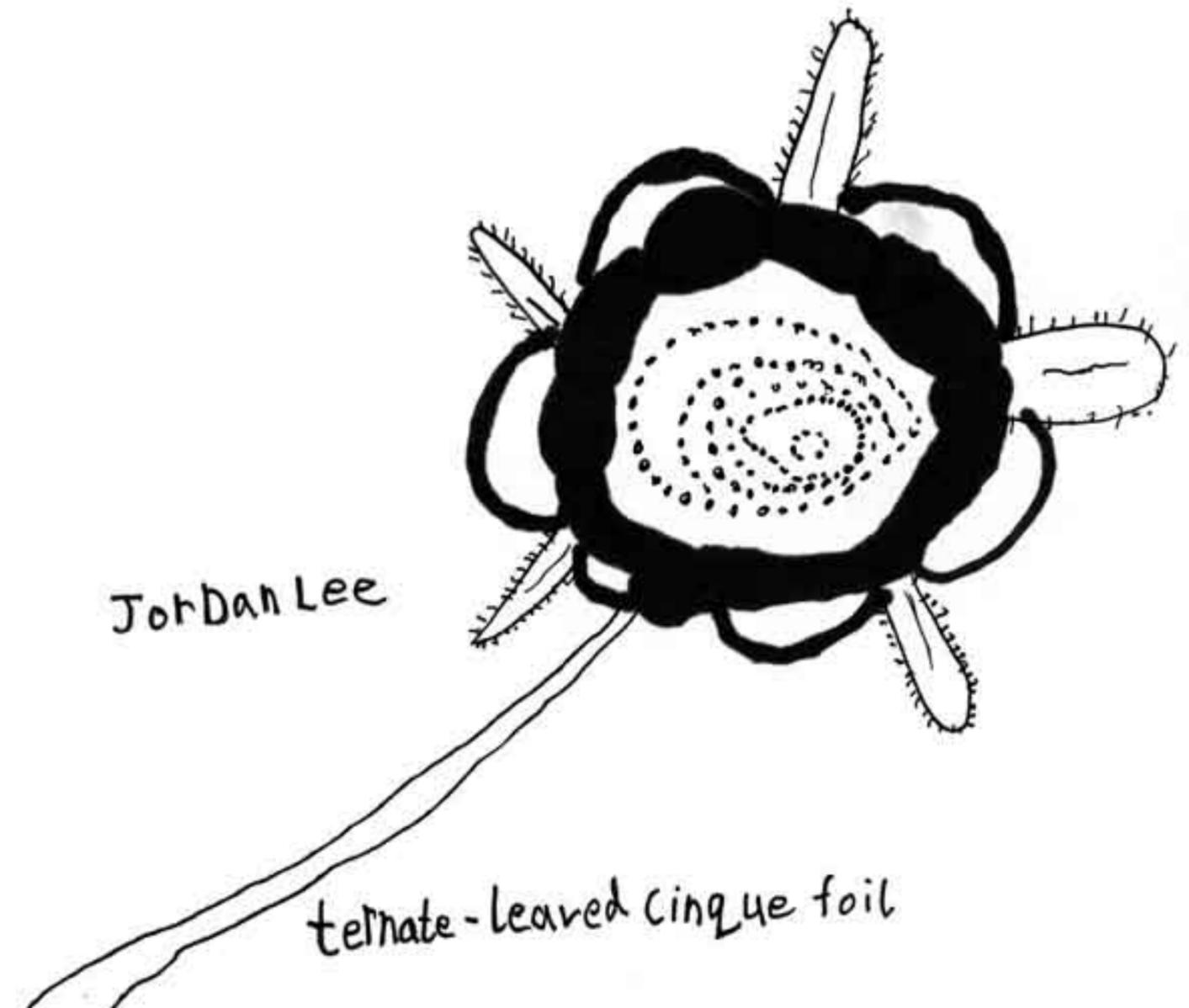


'I didn't like mine
at first, but then
I got into it and
now I really like it'



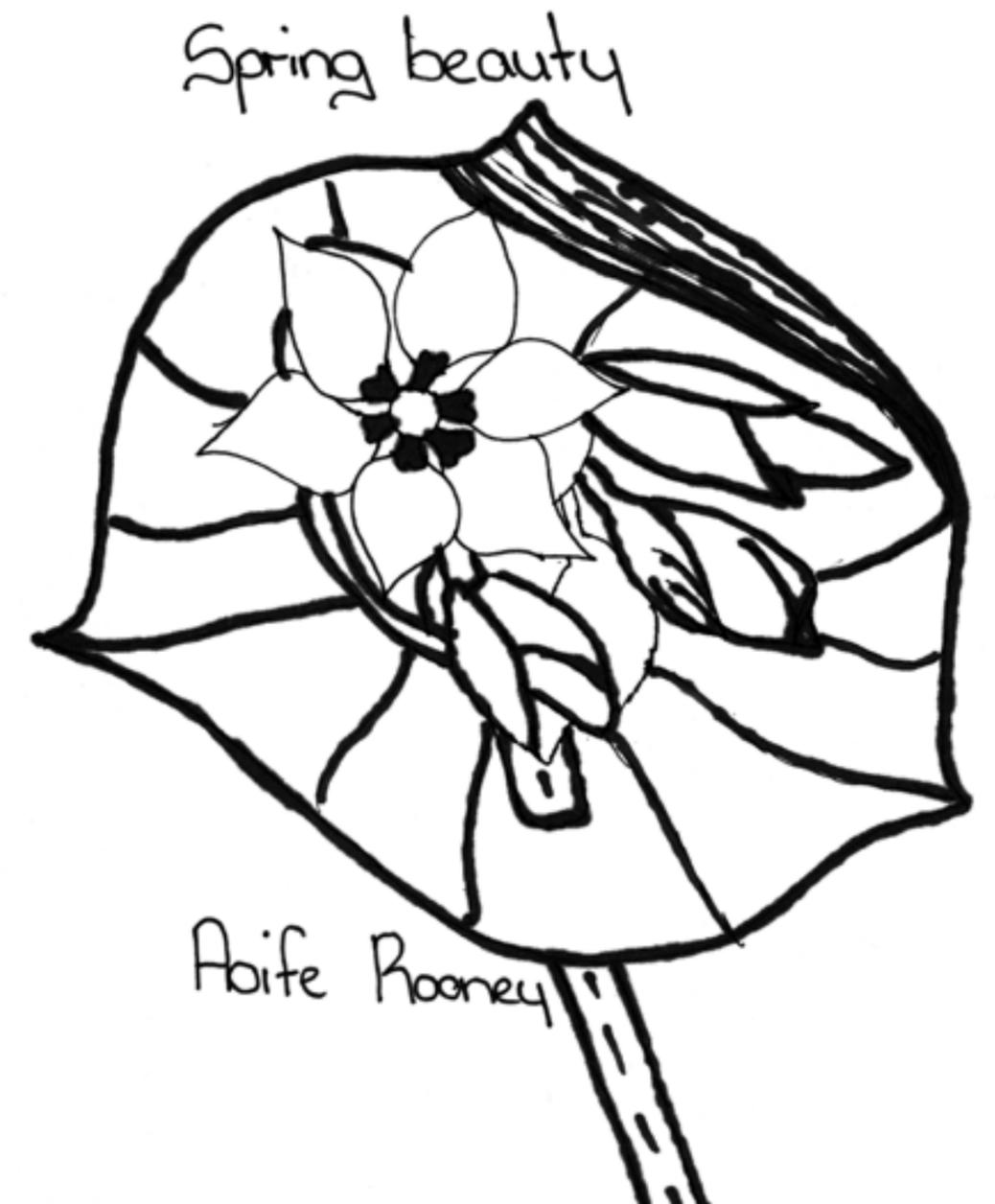


‘David showed us loads of pictures to get ideas from’





‘David took us to this big massive green house and there were these big massive trees there’





‘David told us all about the plants and how they got here on the boats’

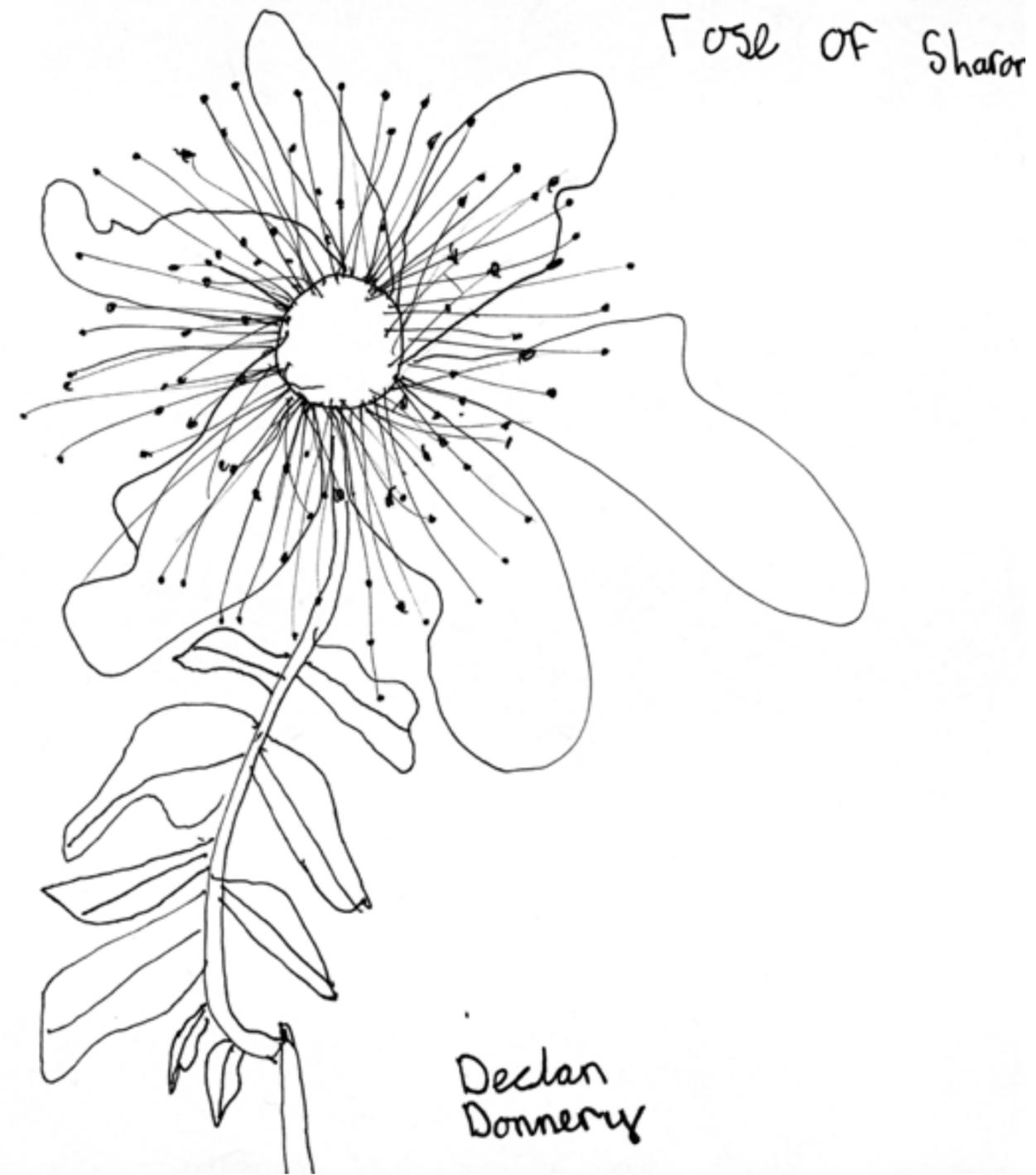
Mason Teeling

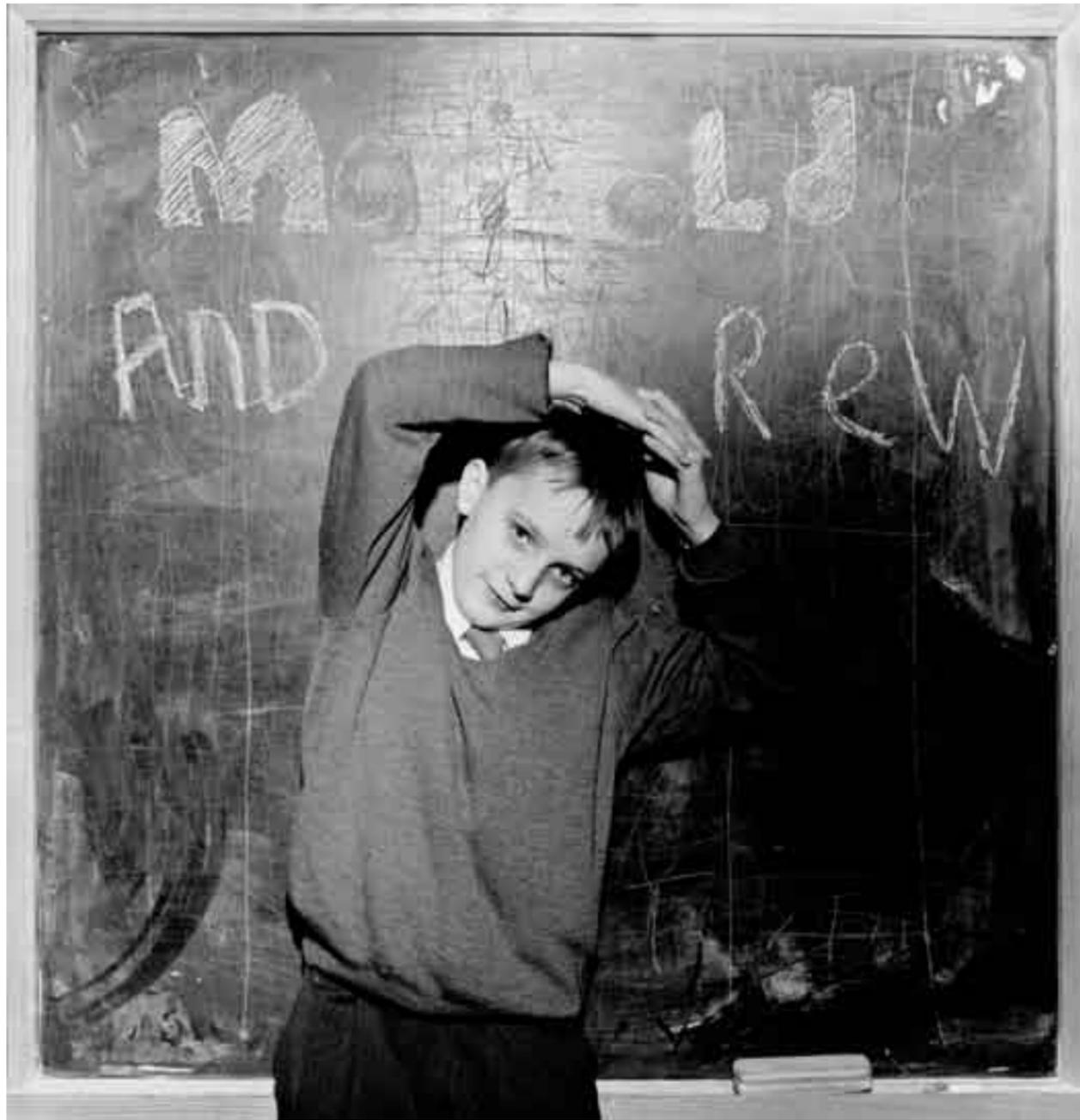


Rose Campion



‘Maybe next time if we did it again, we could design our own flowers and make up a name for them ourselves’





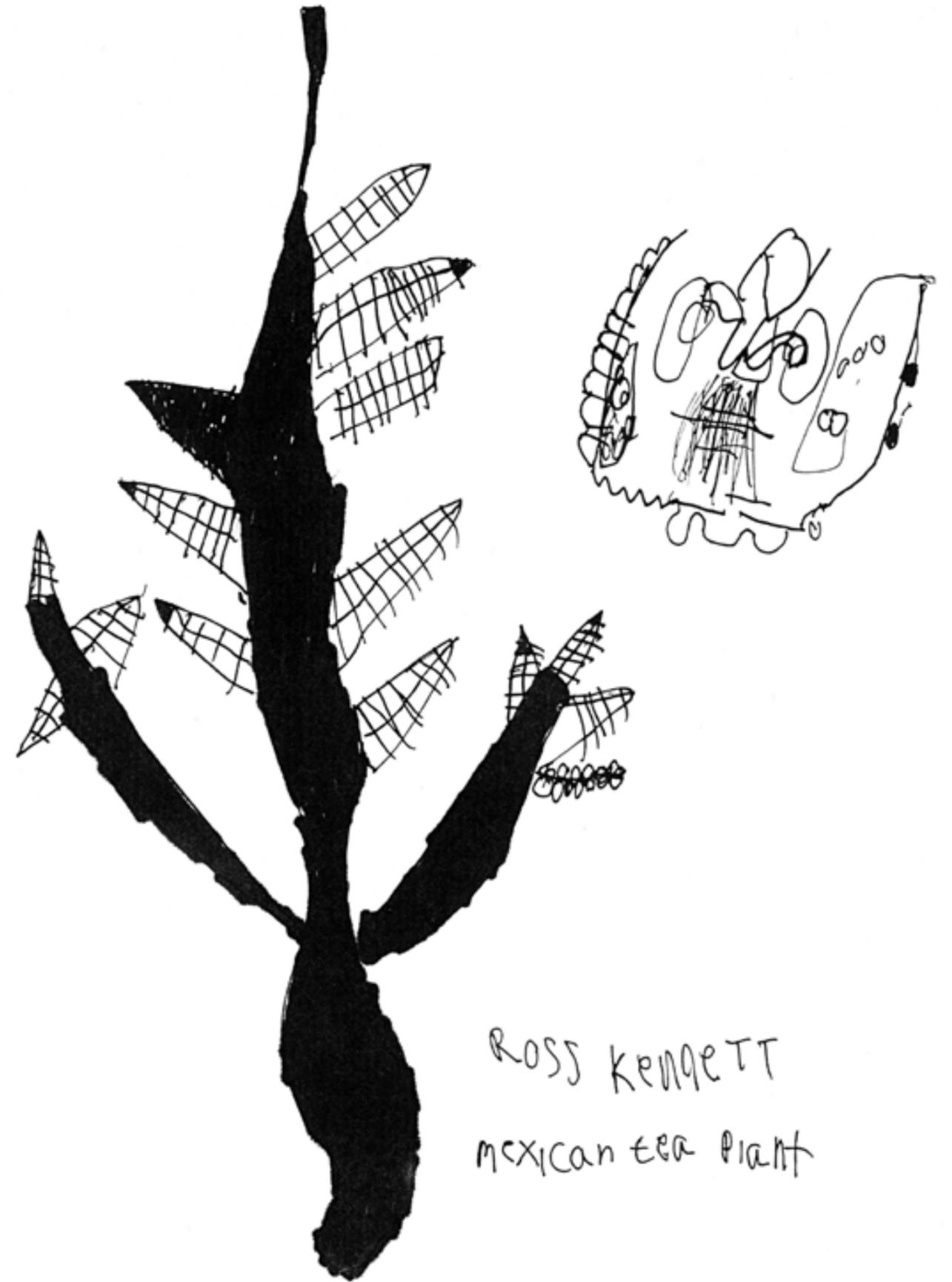
‘I think some of
the harder flowers
to draw came
out the best’



Coronopus Didymus



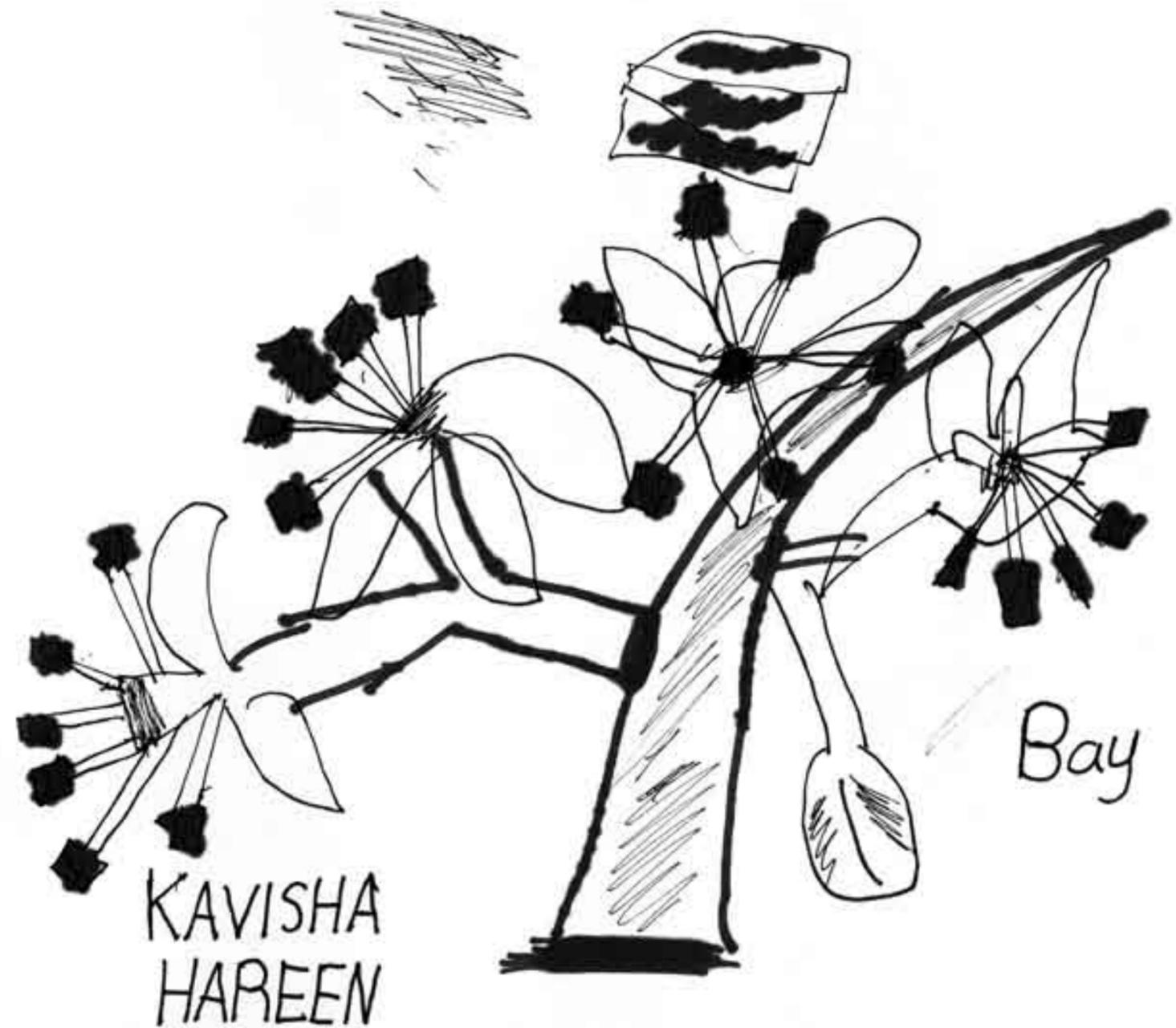
‘I like the way he
did photography.
We had our pictures
taken with David’



ROSS KENNETT
mexican tea plant



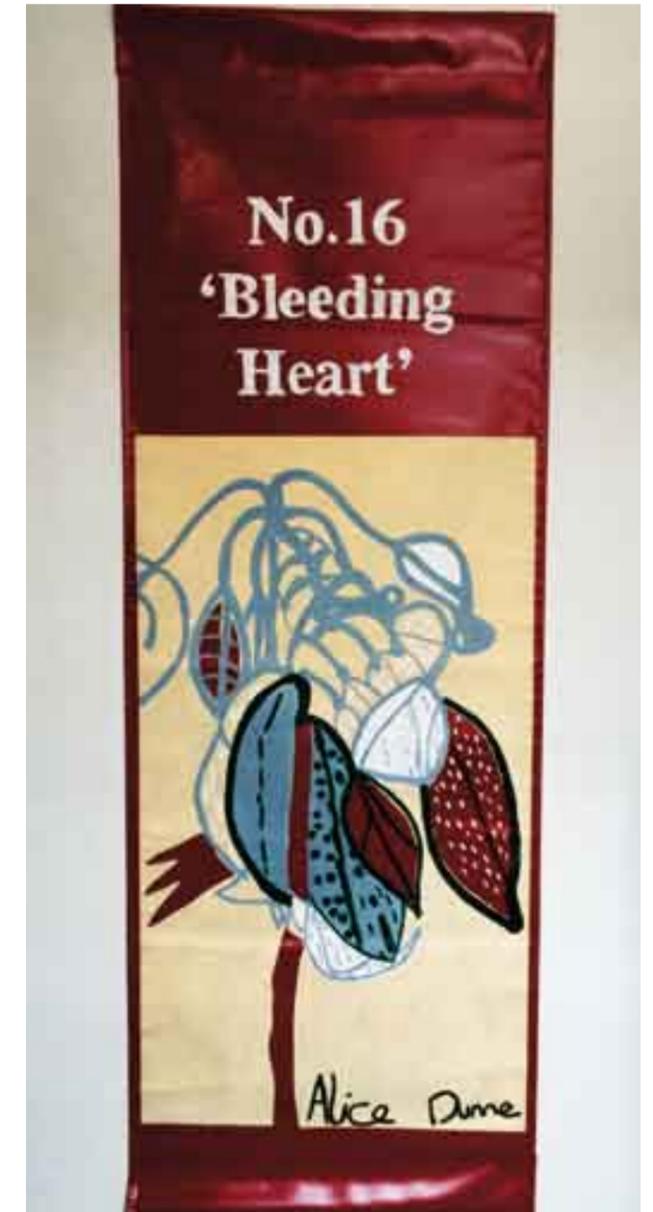
‘I thought the best time was in the Botanical Garden. If you scrunch up paper inside your pockets, he said the squirrels come over to you and they did’





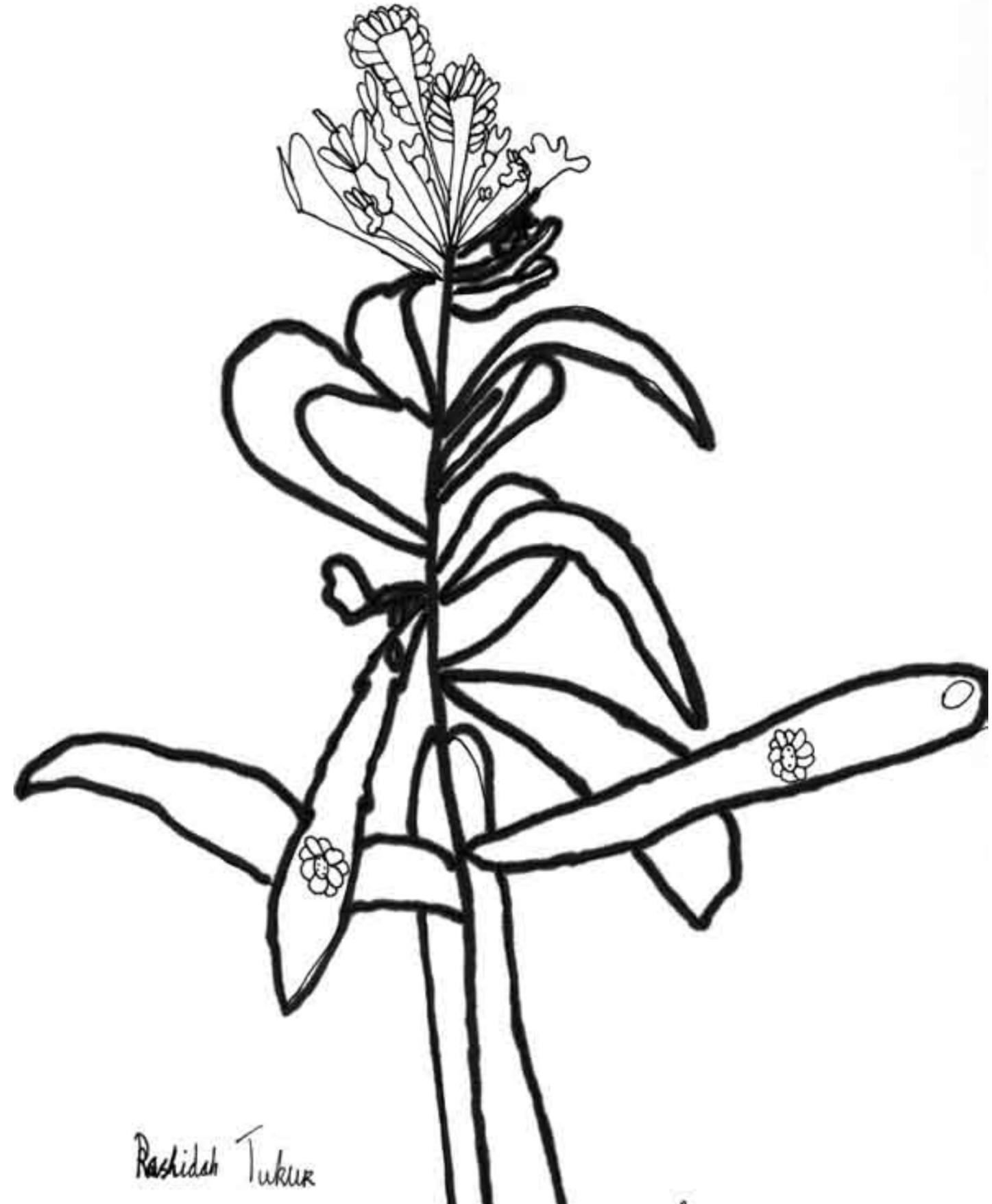
'It meant we got off from school work'





‘I asked David who did he follow and he said Liverpool, so I gave him a Liverpool sticker’

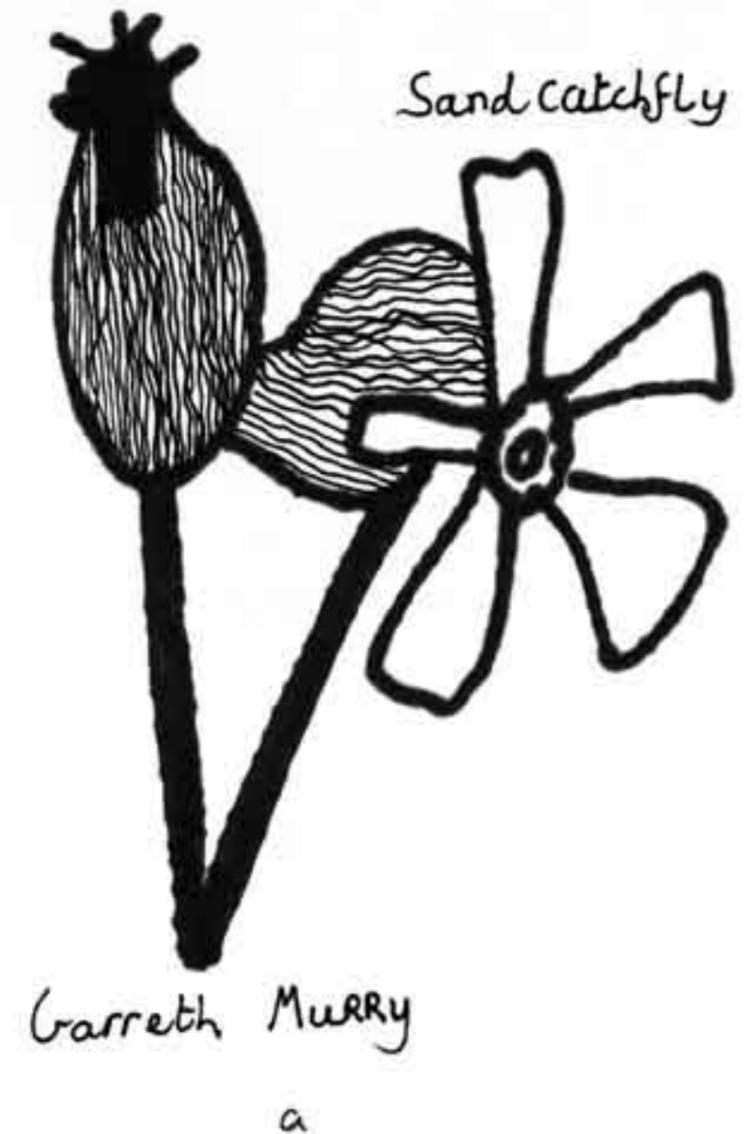
Treacle - Mustard

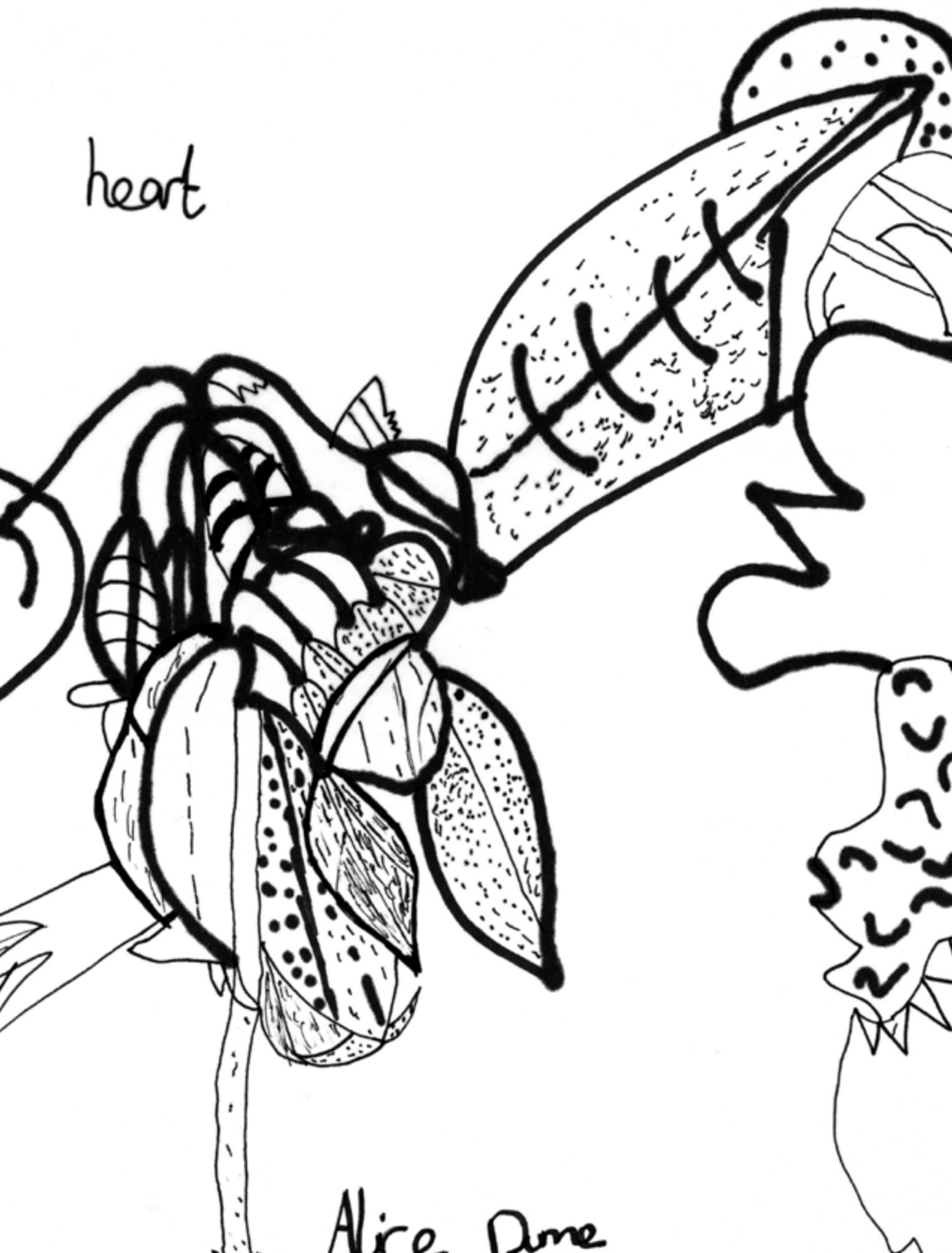


Rashidah Tukur



‘All the plants we
drew were from
different countries’





'Creating the space for a hundred flowers to bloom'¹

For the record, I'm by no means a botanist or an educationalist. Tackling a specialist subject such as 'non-native plant life' and doing so in collaboration with a Primary School was, for my part undertaken from the perspective of a visual artist. This particular approach was not only identifiable through the project's outcomes, but also by our methods of investigation and engagement along the way.

The collaborative plan for our project entailed the involvement of 100 children from St Joseph's Primary School, East Wall over a period of some eighteen months. The school's teaching staff and Parents Education Group helped in connecting with educational issues. Whilst our introduction to botany was aided by staff at The National Botanic Gardens and the use of Sylvia C.P. Reynolds' published research work on alien plant life in Ireland².

'...a hundred flowers to bloom' is essentially a project which addressed a fairly problematic and often under-represented field within botanical studies; that of the uncultivated 'alien' or 'non-native' plant. It also involved a critical approach to the use of classification, taxonomy and cataloguing.

Reynolds' extensive research of non-native plants in Ireland offered a starting point from where we could initiate any enquiries of our own. These would ultimately reveal that the actual attribution of the term 'non-native' is often open to question. However, along the way we came across anecdotes relating to how and why many of these species had arrived. We came to realise that non-native plants had been existent in Ireland for centuries. That a relatively small number are deemed 'invasive' and likely to cause widespread problems. That they are significant in regards to gauging levels of bio-diversity and despite their lowly reputation, we discovered that they can present as incredibly beautiful and interesting specimens.

Site

Dublin Port and the neighbouring East Wall community played host to our project's productions. 100 painted banners were temporarily installed on lamp posts running the length of the port's main arterial route, Alexandra Road (then latterly at the Port Terminus). In addition 100 embroidered works were sited within the entrance of St. Joseph's School and a further 100 copies taken home by the children.

The port generally cuts a formidable terrain; heavily industrial, exposed to the elements and subject to high levels of H.G.V. traffic. That Reynolds cites a substantial number of 'casual', non-native plants continually surfacing here, we saw as an amazing example of nature's adaptability and resilience (many of these species featured in our studies) and maybe confirmed the appropriateness of this site for the project.

Taken as the country's main port of entrance, Dublin and its docklands has accounted for the arrival and passage of a good number of non-native species. Primarily, by means of ballast deposits, dispersal from freight and also around the city's horticultural 'discards and escapes'. The broad historical picture we encountered took in the centuries old seafaring and trade links to the port. Reaching as far back as the neolithic period through to the Viking settlers, whom it's reputed brought and cultivated herbs for culinary and medicinal use. These distinctly archaic examples prompted a discussion amongst the 6th class pupils centring around when and how would a species become 'naturalised'? Further instances of non-native introduction included; the arrival of Oxford ragwort in building materials used to construct defence structures along Ireland's East coast, as well as a shipwreck holding Indian corn off the Wexford coastline probably being responsible for the establishment on shore of 'Yellow-eyed-grass'.

Referencing this specific body of research and the proposed location for our artwork could ultimately be seen in a particular context: That of interpreting landscape as a repository of history – of *reading the landscape* – to uncover evidence of historical events and ephemera, sometimes those seemingly 'missed out', overlooked or forgotten.

Drawing

For the main part, the children's creative output within the project came from a series of fairly intensive drawing sessions. These involved each child generating a number of line drawings, relating to maybe two or three colour reproductions of a single non-native plant. Being rendered in pen and ink, there was no scope available for erasing 'mistakes' and we had also forged an agreement whereby abandoning a drawing and starting anew wasn't an option. Consequently the concentration levels were high ('zen-like' at times) and the children's willing and determined application to the task at hand resulted in a phenomenal body of work.

Drawing as a process of engagement with the subject has often been referred to as an act of *taking possession*. The intensity of our sessions, the 'hard won' gains in realising the final selection of successful images I believe brought this reference into sharp focus. The drawings also came from a significant challenge, which on the face of it, the children reckoned to be a straightforward 'copying' exercise. They were to tackle the rendering of these photographic images solely in black ink on white paper. This they did, quite unperturbed by the fact that the photographs were in full colour, with gradually blurred or totally out of focus elements, hard edged elements, foreground – background differentials, often incredibly 'busy' visual matter. Even given to working with a restricted set of drawing materials, a couple of hundred or so works of incredible detail and variety emerged.

Any idiosyncratic tendencies associated with children's drawings from this age group were generally absent (eg. the windows placed in the far corners of the house, the 'ground' being the bottom of the paper itself etc.). This possibly being a consequence of not depending on a purely imaginative take on the subject. Instead, our specific approach threw up an array of very individualised, *mannered* renditions. Consequently, in a collection of finished works, it was easy to tell 'who did what' as each child had presented their own set of 'signature' drawings. Of these, 100 works would form the basis of an expansive, composite artwork.

Classification

Numerous examples exist of writers, artists, and theorists who have initiated critical engagements with processes of cataloguing, taxonomy and classification systems³. Often revelling in the absurdity of *impossible enumerations*, the pathological pursuits of 'completeness'. Moving into the 21st century, questions inevitably arise regarding the production, authorisation and sustainability of systems attempting to order a world being rapidly re-shaped by globalisation and digitalisation.

*'Yet every classification system is haunted by its exclusions, separations and forced hierarchies, its conversion of fluid emergent processes and events into stable categories'*⁴

The contentiousness surrounding alien plant studies within botanical circles was then, a related point of interest and a definite factor in the proposition of this project. It's easy to locate where 'aliens' have been placed within the botanical worlds given set of instituted values. The associative definitions arising

in non-native classifications often include terms such as ‘invasive’ and ‘escape’, while the title ‘alien’ itself bears all the etymological hallmarks of Victorian xenophobia (Britain’s first set of immigration controls came under the heading of ‘The 1905 Aliens Act’).

As examples of classification systems go, the genre of botanical art provided us with an ideal reference point. In the formal sense it’s eminently recognisable – with the archetypal ‘study’ often incorporating indexes, taxonomies, nomenclatures etc. While the children produced their drawings, numbered them, added the plant’s name and signed the work with their own name, they were reminded of the ‘template’, of how a botanical study was constructed, of the information needed and how along with the imagery, the whole thing is arranged⁵.

With regards to a textual illustration of classifications, we had at hand a copy of Sylvia C.P. Reynolds’ ‘*A catalogue of alien plants in Ireland*’. An immense undertaking (approximately ten years in the making) Reynolds’ catalogue is very much the recognised ‘inventory’, the type of ordering system indelibly connected to and informed by a lineage of other academically recognised works. Though her research work (generally in essay form) which cumulatively informs the catalogue was a continual reference point, the example of a cataloguing process marked the juncture from where we embarked upon our own somewhat playful take on creating an ordering system. This enabled the children to inhabit and contribute to the process themselves, possibly even expand upon it⁶.

Accordingly, an alternate title for our project could have run as:
‘An encyclopaedia of ‘non-native’ plants in Ireland according to St. Joseph’s Primary School, East Wall. 2005-06’.

Process

The hundred non-native taxa selected for our collection from the 920 Reynolds documents, occurred by viewing the vast amount of non-native plant images available via the internet and then deciding which ones were the best to draw. Those chosen were generally the most dramatic or visually interesting – the flowering types, usually shown in full bloom. Each selected plant was then indexed numerically, from 1 to 100.

Next we initiated a lottery, each in turn had to choose a number to find out – or better *discover* their plant. We decided to refer to the plant’s common names for the duration of the project (many of the Latin titles were proving difficult to remember). Though the hints at identification (what they look like, how they grow, where they’re from) in both the Latin and common versions of the plants names were investigated; *trefoil, murale, alpina* or, *New Zealand Pigmyweed, Japanese Rose, American wintercress*.

The research work could and did continue in other lessons. Though once we had enough information and a good set of drawings the time came to realise the works in banner and embroidered form. One final decision surrounding the use of colour was determined by adopting a simple colour coding system to identify the work of each class. Logistics determined that the bulk of the work had to be executed away from the school. Though workshops conducted for the parents and children in large-scale painting and use of the embroidery machine hopefully offered an experience and understanding of this stage of the production.

‘...a hundred flowers to bloom’

Often commissions of this scale can culminate in an intense drive to meet the scheduled dead-line – and this project was no exception. The production of a hundred large-scale banners, painted both sides and a couple of hundred machine embroidered images (averaging 80,000 stitches per work) can leave behind a certain detritus. The studio where the work was carried out had finished up with scraps of paper taped to the walls showing reams of hastily scribbled numbers overlaid with symbols accompanied by a range of words repeated ad infinitum ‘RED’ – ‘DONE’ – ‘COPY’ etc. Another *ordering system* of sorts, apparently done by me...

Working with the children, staff and parents at St. Joseph’s was a joy. The process of production was long, but invaluable. Every aspect of the process helped shape and inform the finished works, as well as the memory of the whole experience. Hopefully then, we’ve created a ‘repository of knowledge’ in the East Wall – if you want to know the story behind ‘Spring beauty’ (No.27) consult Aoife Rooney (5th class), or for ‘Large trefoil’ (No.93) ask Gulistan Kaya (4th class). For that reason, I genuinely believe we realised our own ‘encyclopaedia’ - a ‘complete’ understanding of the space we’d created.

David Jacques

1. Ngugi Wa Thiong'o 'Moving the centre' 1993. Includes the essay; 'Creating the space for a hundred flowers to bloom'.
2. Sylvia C.P. Reynolds 'Distribution of alien and adventive plants at ports and on roadsides in Ireland in 1989' *Ir. Nat. J.* Vol. 24 No.2 1992. 'Alien plants at ports and in coastal habitats on the East coast of Ireland' *Watsonia* 21: 53-61 1996. 'A catalogue of alien plants in Ireland' National Botanic Gardens 2002.
3. Maria Esther Maciel 'The Inventory of the world: Peter Greenaway and Arthur Bispo Do Rosario' in 'Poetics of diversity', which also brings the work of Jorge Luis Borges into the equation amongst others.
4. Mike Featherstone & Couze Venn 'Problematizing global knowledge & the new encyclopaedia project' in 'Theory, culture & society' SAGE 2006.
5. See Sue Hunter 'Allotment' David Jacques, Carl Hunter, Clare Heney 'CONTEXTS arts & practice in Ireland' Vol 4. Issue 4. 2005, discussing a critical engagement with botanical art.
6. A useful reference; in her essay 'The Inventory of the world: Peter Greenaway and Arthur Bispo Do Rosario' Maria Esther Maciel proposes that the Brazilian 'outsider' artist Bispo's work had been composed out of a; 'knowledge outside the canonical order of erudite culture and therefore, in a state of displacement, novelty and a radical alterity in relation to the known encyclopaedic models.'











No. 94
Red Clover,



No. 81
"Camomile"



Fiona
Cruif
2002

No. 51
"Lemon
Sprinkles"
Cress



Fati

No. 87
"Weed"



No. 66
"Mignonette"



No. 57
"Lemon
Lime"



No. 56
"Cress"



No. 44
"Lemon
Lime"



No. 33
"Lemon
Lime"



No. 22
"Lemon
Lime"



No. 11
"Lemon
Lime"





No. 87
"Pineapple
Weed"

No. 58
"Mignonette"

No. 87
"Groundsel"

No. 56
"Laurel"

No. 94
"Red Clover"

No. 81
"Camomile"

No. 55
"Le
Swine"





No. 87
"Apple
seed"

No. 58
"Wild
Mignonette"

No. 96
"Spurge -
Laurel"

No. 97
"Garden
Bellflower"

No. 82
"Leaved
Flax"

No. 75
"Yellow
Vetch"















No. 74
Common vetch









No.96
'Spurge – Laurel'
Common to Eurasia
By Carl Flynn Darragh O'Callaghan
'non – native plant life in Ireland'

No.94
'Red Clover'
By Rhyss Dwyer
Maudy
Terfscenlaid

No.87
'Pineapple Weed'
Common to Central Europe
By Conor O'Reilly
Craig McDonnell
'100 flowers to bloom'

No.75
'Yellow Vetchling'
By Rachel Shannon
Aaron Fleming
St. Joseph's School
East Wall

No.97
'Garden Angelica'
By David Dimitru
Kevin Coyne

No.82
'Ivy – Leaved Toadflax'
Common to Italy
By Jordan Greene
Scott Graham
'non – native' plant life in Ireland

DUBLIN
PORT

No.5
'Green Hellebore'
By [illegible]

No.4
'Blue Anemone'
Common to Southern Europe
By Rebecca Hall
'non – native' plant life in Ireland

No.16
'Bleeding Heart'
By Alice Pine

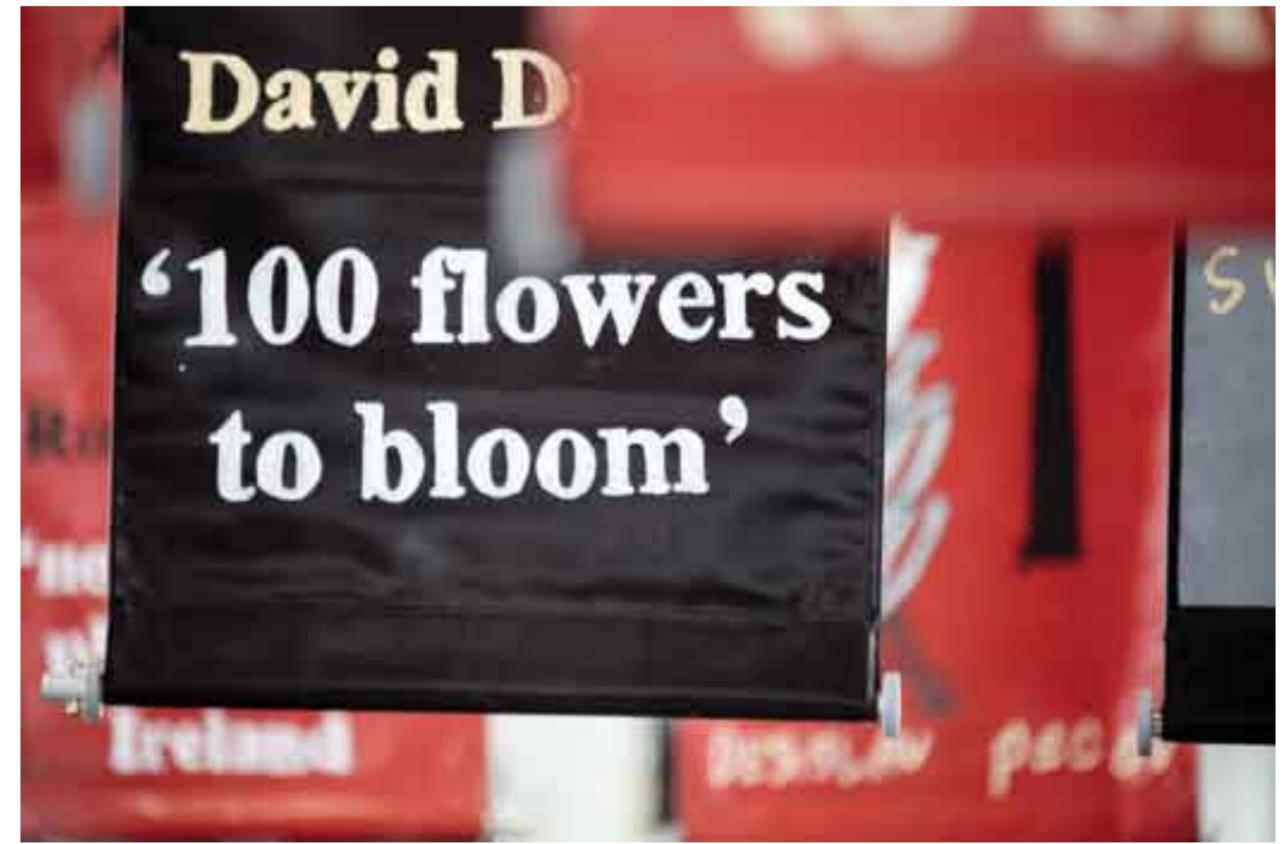
No.17
'Australian Blackwood'
Common to Australia
By Michael O'Leary
'100 flowers to bloom'

No.6
'Love – in – a mist'
By [illegible]

No.15
'Oregon – Grape'
Found in North America
By Cara Bower
'non – native' plant life in Ireland

No.1
'Bay'
By [illegible]

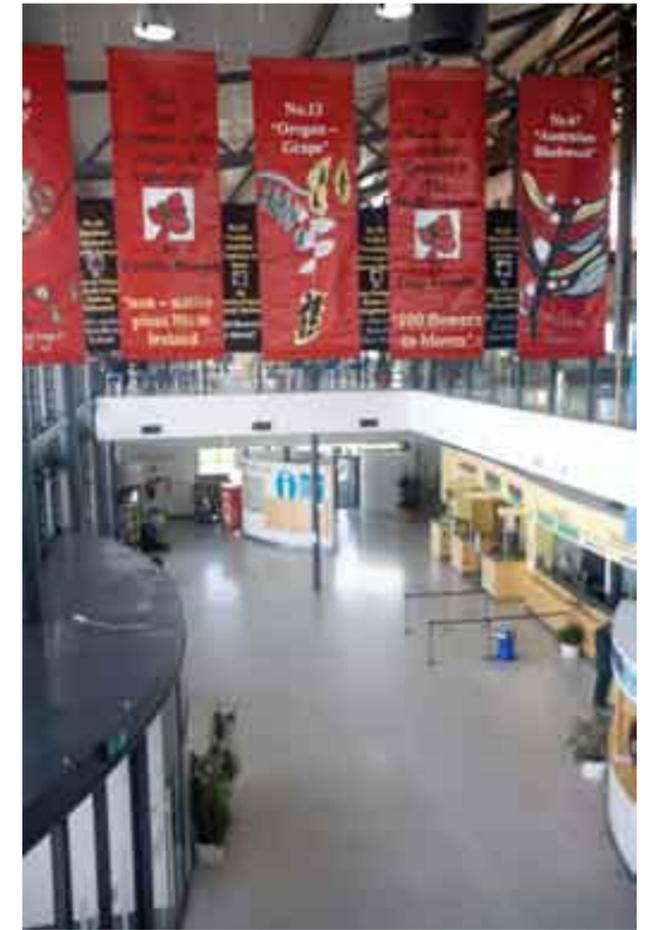
No. [illegible]
'[illegible]'
By [illegible]
'non – native' plant life in Ireland



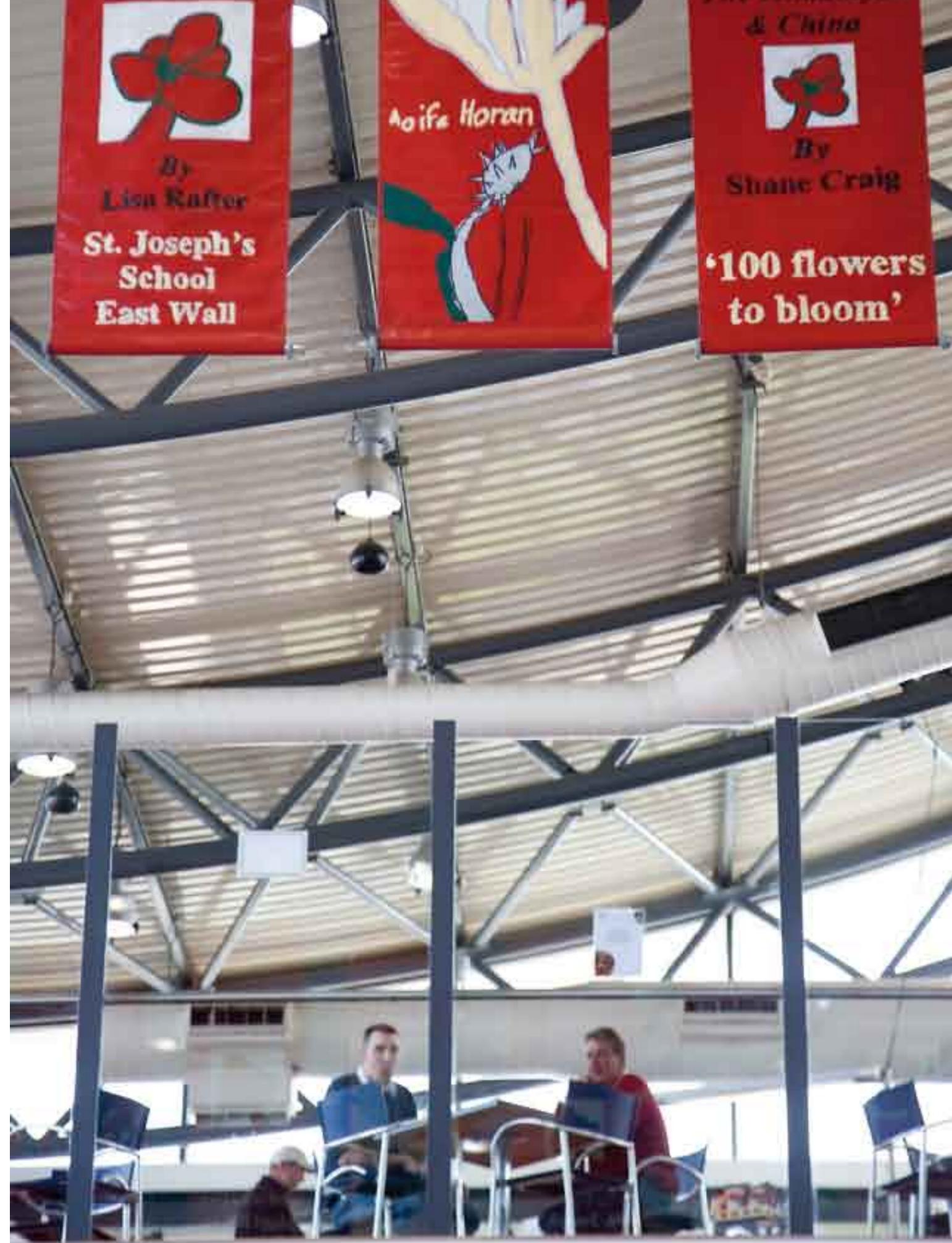
No.75
'Yellow
Vetchling'



Keshava
Jatagam pitiya
RYAN PETER Grew











No.14
'Barberry'
Renee - 2 June 2001

No.60
'New Zealand Figmyweed'
Demi Moore

NO SMOKING

NO ENTRY
AUTHOR
PERSON
ONLY

David Jacques was born in Liverpool in 1964. He studied Mural Design at The Chelsea School of Art and gained a Masters Degree in Public Art from Dundee University.

He has undertaken a variety of travelling scholarships, most notably in Mexico, California and Berlin. His work has been exhibited nationally and internationally with showings at The National Portrait Gallery London, The Walker Art Gallery Liverpool, solo exhibitions in Cologne and a touring show in Spain. His work is included in numerous public and private collections.

David Jacques won the Fire Station Artists' Studios 'Artist in the Community' award 2003-04 during which time he produced work for a touring exhibition 'As if in a dream dreamt by another' which visited Dublin's Temple Bar Gallery, The Triskel Arts Centre in Cork and Sligo's Model & Niland Gallery.



Christopher Harrington is an American-born photographic and video artist based in Dublin since 2003. Christopher's practice interprets the human form, considering shared, spatial context and subtext. Christopher is interested most in exploring, within the picture plane, fluctuating boundaries, especially of spiritual and geographic transitions of place and displacement.

In 2007 Christopher received a Projects: New Work Award from the Arts Council for a year long, conceptual, multi-disciplinary project called Collect Em All. In 2006, Christopher and a partner (John Travers) received an Artists in Community Award (administered by CREATE for the Arts Council) for a project Placeways through SPIRASI, an NGO serving needs of asylum seekers and survivors of torture.

Christopher was educated at Duke University in the USA. He has lived and worked extensively in St. Petersburg, Russia and Paris, France, two cities which, along with Dublin, have inspired a triptych of projects of daily reveries from three cities of revolution in Europe. Christopher has exhibited in the USA, Russia, Sweden and Ireland.

www.cnharrington.com



colophon

Design
Language
www.language.ie

Print
Castuera Industrias Gráficas, S.A.

Text
Joanna
Bliss





Oregon - g. f. a. p.

C. R. & B. a. w. e

01

Rashidab T. b. k. u. m.



Treacle - Mustard

KAVISHA
HARDEN

Bay

'...a hundred flowers to bloom' involved an extensive study by the schoolchildren of St. Joseph's Primary School East Wall with the artist David Jacques, of the 'alien' or 'non-native' plants within the local landscape of Dublin Port. Being historically the main point of entry for thousands of ships from all over the world, Dublin Port would have accounted for the arrival and dispersal of a significant number of 'botanic migrants' or 'non-native' plant life into Ireland since Neolithic times.

This book traces the various stages of this collaborative arts project, from the initial research stage and detailed ink drawings completed by the schoolchildren, through to the project's more public manifestation in the form of silk embroideries and hand painted banners, sited within Dublin Port and the East Wall community.

In documenting this collaboration, this book highlights how a semi state company and an arts organisation can successfully partner on commissioning innovative public art projects that engage with and speak in a meaningful way to the community in which the work is sited.

Jacques describes the 'repository of knowledge' created amongst the school children of East Wall as an outcome of his residency. He suggests if you want the story behind the plant called 'Spring Beauty' (No. 27) consult Aoife Rooney (5th Class), or for 'Large Trefoil' (No. 93) ask Gulistan Kaya (4th class). An 'alternative encyclopaedia' of sorts has been created and continues to reside with a hundred schoolchildren within the community of East Wall.

