

Bealtaine Artist in Residence in a Care Setting, 2017

Joanna Hopkins

Orchard Stories - Exhibition Statement

The final installation at Orchard Day Care Centre in December 2017 reflected my time spent at the Orchard from August to December 2017. I used the garden here at the Orchard to wander and talk with people, collecting flowers and plant materials. We created handmade paper using grass cuttings, flowers, leaves and plants. I collected stories, thoughts and memories from people that visit here, and recorded them via writing, sound, photography, video and drawing. I am interested in how stories and memories are recalled and remembered, how we change, embellish and create new stories from our memories.

Each time you recall a memory, it is more like an artists impression of the last time you recalled it. Memory is also like watching a play – as in a performance, memories might change subtly each time you re-play them.¹ I am also interested in the 'lightbulb memory', the recollections of emotionally charged events, long after these events have passed.

I am fascinated by how a brain with Alzheimer's can act like a portal to another world, one where time is not experienced in a linear or chronological format. I am intrigued by how the microscopic images of a brain depicting dementia and Alzheimer's resembles organic plant material, visually mimicking the twisting roots and tangles of plants and trees.

Where these tangles lie in the brain, our stories can become distorted, inaccessible or altered. Using multiple pruned branches from here at the Orchard, this temporary interactive installation celebrates the organic, ever changing memories that form the stories of our everyday lives. Disregarding whether these stories are true, it is important that they have been told, and listened to. Like roots hidden, growing in the soil, no story is too big and no detail is too small to flourish and come alive.

¹ Science Gallery Podcast, Memory, Episode 13, www.sciencegallery.ie