

A Catalogue for

Colouring Outside the Lines

**Pedagogical Illuminations
from an A/R/Tographic life.**

**Exploring Art Making and Art Pedagogy
as Important Sites of Learning for Adults.**

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Colouring Outside the Lines

A catalogue of artefacts
Alice Bennett

with contributions from Andrew Pike, Ella and
artists anonymous



Welcome

This is Volume Two of a doctoral thesis that invites adults to think about **art-making** and **art learning spaces** as potentially powerful activities and places. I believe they can help us to know more, become more, and flourish in our lives.

I wanted to make it because I felt that, as adults, we are sometimes expected to stay *within the lines* of what is expected of us. I believe that a life which is lived, *full of art*, can help us go beyond those expectations.

The artworks and poems which I call artefacts, trace a long journey of research, art-making and teaching, and they draw from my experiences as an A/R/Tographer, that is, an artist, teacher and researcher across my life history. Some of that history took place in Africa a long time ago, some is very recent and takes place in Ireland. Over this life history, I have learned that Art can help us to know more about *Resilience* and *Resistance*, *Recognition* and *Resonance*, *Repair* and *Reclamation* in our lives.

There are some references to theorists and some ideas which I believe are important to include here, but there are fewer words, and I have tried to use the 'Plain English Guide when writing them.

This volume of the thesis is a space for contemplation with the senses rather than with thoughts, so I invite you to rest in the images and poems - allow your heart to resonate with the messages so that they might mean something special to you.....



'Artefact' is the word chosen to describe a self-contained creative illumination which manifests the perfect expression of a phenomenon or experience.

These may be artworks that I and others have made, or they may be poems.



To be her

To be her,

remembering what she knows, to comfort this small animal with
still, strong, gentle hands,
to be quiet in the wilderness,
to listen for the growing pulse beneath her.

To be her,

taking crayon to paper in worship,
living in line, dot, squiggle
of chameleon skin, autumn leaf. Of floating seedhead,
water walking insect, Trapdoor Spider and Rhinoceros Beetle.

To be her,

scribbling outside the lines, learning to dwell in small places.
Where heartbeat whispers truth,
where skin, blood, hands outstretched, say –

Come, you know the way.



the earth's shifting unperceptible underground
your roots velvet forest floor my miles of minuscule seeds
whispering pulse promise
into a

We can make meaning out of our lives if we tell our own life story as truthfully and as clearly as we can. Randall (2014) tells us that it's important that we do this so that we can learn from them and help others, too.

We can do this with words or images.

(Randall 2015)



Contemplating Roots and Shoots-watercolour, pencil crayon-Alice Bennett- 2022

Resistance & Resilience

Resistance

The action of resisting, opposing, or standing up to someone or something.

It can also mean not wanting to remember repressed memories, thoughts, feelings, or desires.

Resilience

The ability to recover quickly or easily from a misfortune, shock, or illness. It means that we are strong and adaptable.

Memory Vessel

This little box was made to hold all the experiences and events of my young life and deep learning in Zimbabwe and South Africa. Not literally but symbolically. In my research, I told stories, wrote poems, painted images and used collage to remember my childhood and adolescence. I used art-filled research to gather them all up so that I could learn from them.

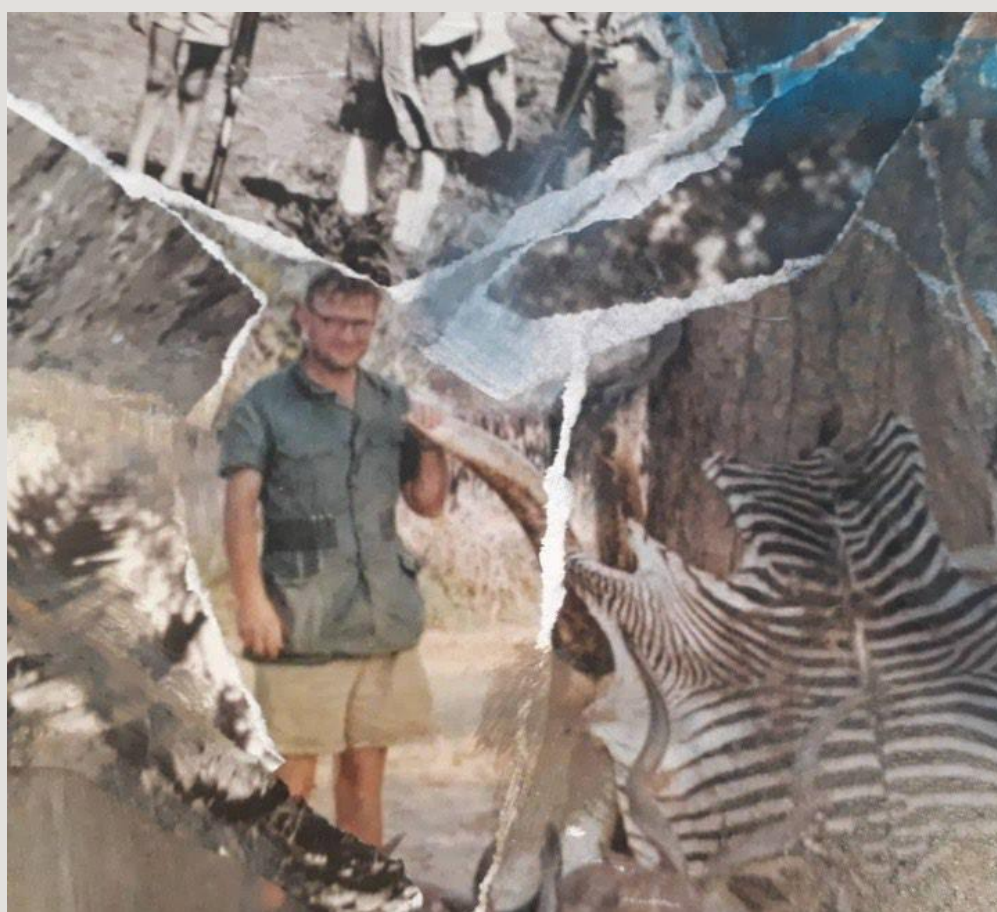
This 'vessel' symbolically gathers the artworks, stories, and poems that trace my journey. It holds the essence of my childhood and adolescence.

Feathers, seeds, and quills — carried with me for years — now come to rest here. Alongside them, a deep, embodied connection to all that I was.....





Memory Vessel-Africa-stitch and construction-Alice Bennett-2025



Who draws the lines?-detail collage –Alice Bennett-2020



Who draws the lines?-detail collage –Alice Bennett-2020



Innocent until guilty

Who draws the lines? Revisited - detail - Alice Bennett-2024

your hands



Who draws the lines? Revisited- paint and collage – Alice Bennett-2024

His name is Rudo Zivai

Rudo walked me home from primary school for several weeks before anyone noticed there was a black boy by my side. Everything about Rudo fascinated me. The moment he slipped in behind the headmaster through the door of the classroom, standing like a shadow, half hidden. His whole being eclipsed my senses. He looked me straight in the eye. He sat near me during the morning lessons. At break time, we found each other on the playing field.

His apple rolled in the dust towards me where I stood alone, apart from the other kids. I picked up the apple and wrapped it in the hem of my uniform, rubbing it clean before taking two steps towards him, holding it out in front of me, as far as I could. He walked towards me, looking me straight in the eye.

From then on, we were inseparable, and Rudo walked me home every day. The whispers around us only wrapped us more tightly into a new world of our own making. One day, he didn't leave me when we got to the border of the garden gate, we crossed all the way over, up the long driveway, through the front door and then into the living room.

I saw fear grip my mother's body, flash in her eyes. She turned pale.

Rudo and I, standing side by side, looked at each other. The air filled with electricity. I tasted the storm, metallic at the back of my throat.

Rudo took my hand.

I knew then what needed to be done.

'Mum, this is Rudo Zivai. He's black' I said.





lost child- pencil drawing- Alice Bennett-2022

lost child

You grew in me, made me feel
each word forming,

building to burst
in birthing
the new,
the unexpected,

the love lines that would go

on and on

on and on

until I held you again.
Tiny Miracle.
My Lost Poem.

Recognition & Resonance

Recognise

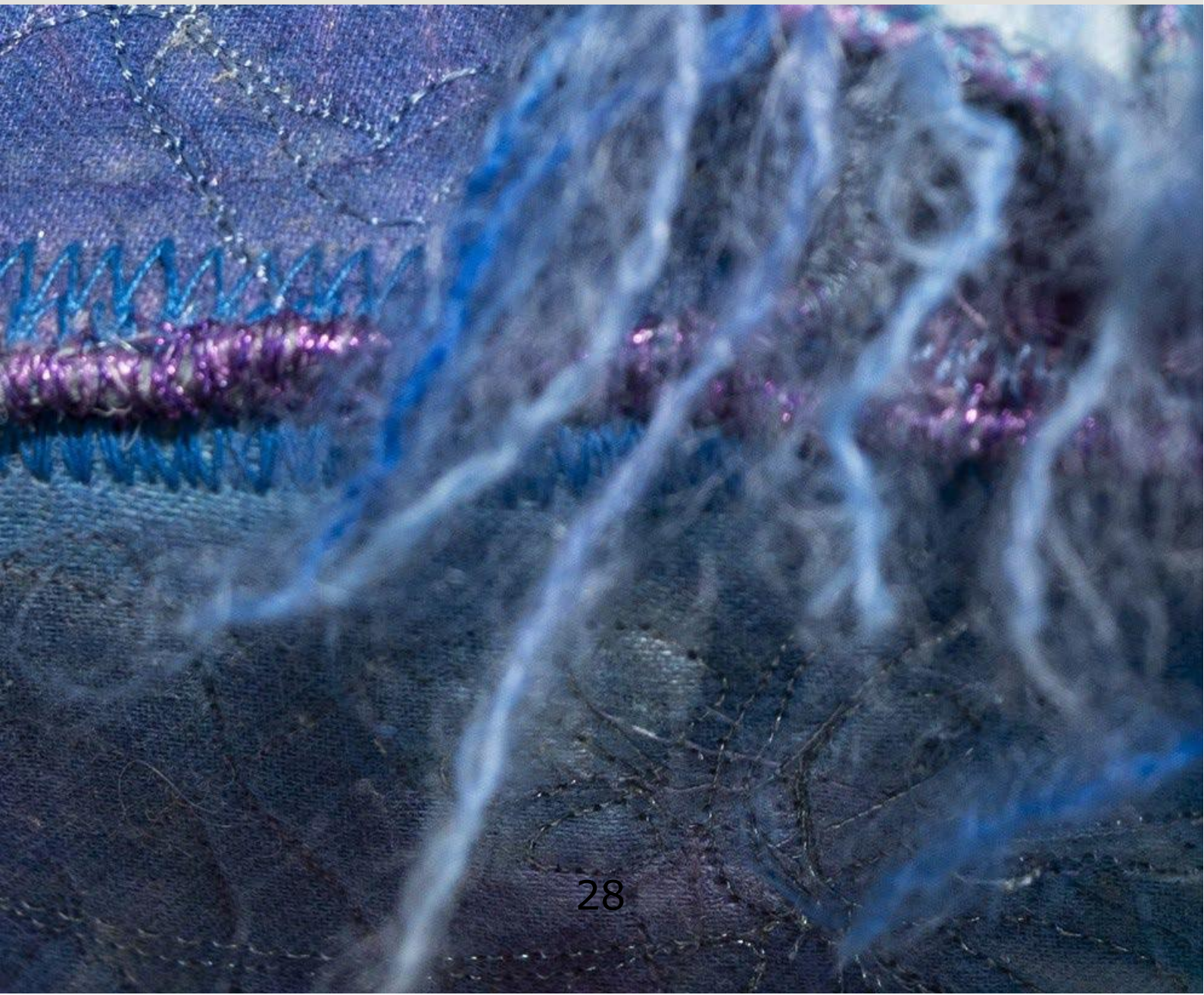
This means that we acknowledge and accept a person or thing, clearly so that we might understand them better. It can also mean that we see something or someone that we knew before.

Resonance

Resonance is about responding to someone or something with connection. It can also refer to the power or quality of evoking or suggesting images, memories, and emotions.

frayed and worn- then stitch
dye it Pike blue- then stitch
layer tissue on tissue - then stitch
paint hope on hope -then stitch.

*A meditation on fragmentation,
on connection.*

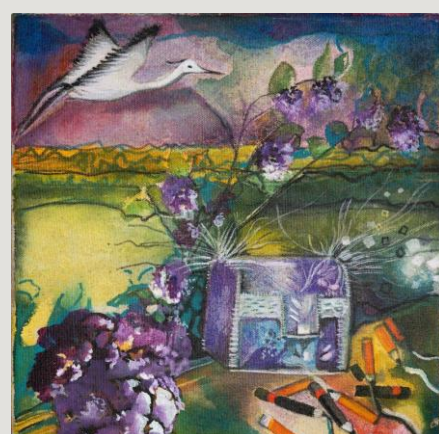


Community Vessel

I made this fabric 'box' as a Community Vessel, to hold all the memories, relationships and learning I had made in a special Arts Centre, called KCAT (Kilkenny Collective for Arts talent). The people in this centre taught me so much about art, art spaces and what makes them special. In COVID times, we used it to keep the messages we sent to each other. Later, when I left my job in KCAT, we used it again to keep more messages and beautiful memories in.



Community Vessel- stitch and construction- Alice Bennett-2022



Colours
On the wall, on the floor
But also in me & you.
Lovely people
Laughing, hugging
And sometimes crying
Emotions
Felt too deeply
For me to explain.

KCAT brought me back to
something I important I lost.
I found it Here and brought
it to a place I NEVER
imagined. - NOW I AM BACK,
because I know that sharing
that something IMPORTANT
radiates, reflects and
enriches LIVES. -BRINGING
it to a place I can
IMAGINE

Community Vessel- stitch construction and paint on canvas - Alice Bennett-2022
insert messages made by community artists



explain.

working in stu
Deep well and be happy w
Love

Acceptance

KCAT
a safe place for
creative people to be
colour ful and happy.
A place to be together
in our difference and protect
ourselves through unity in
art.

Tom G. 2018



Community Vessel Painting with collected pencils- Alice Bennett 2023



KCAT Arts Centre- acrylic ink on canvas-Alice Bennett-2020

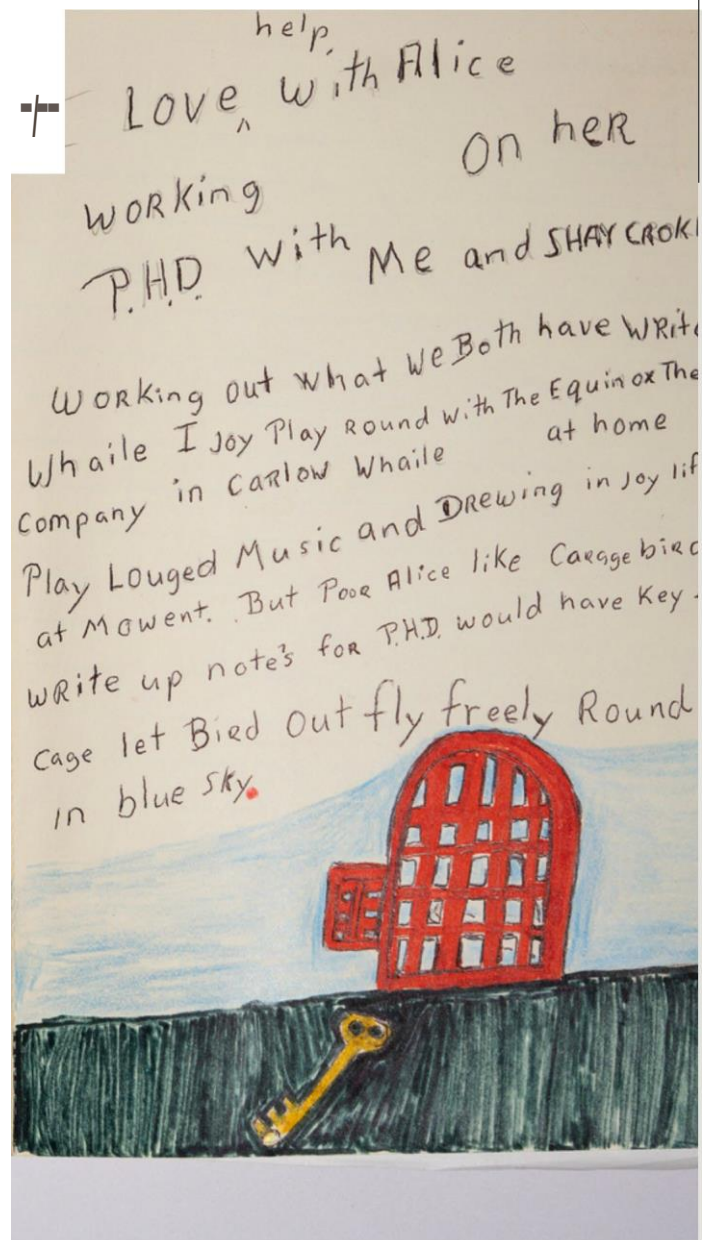


KCAT Step Inside-Film-Alice Bennett and Freddie Greenall-2024

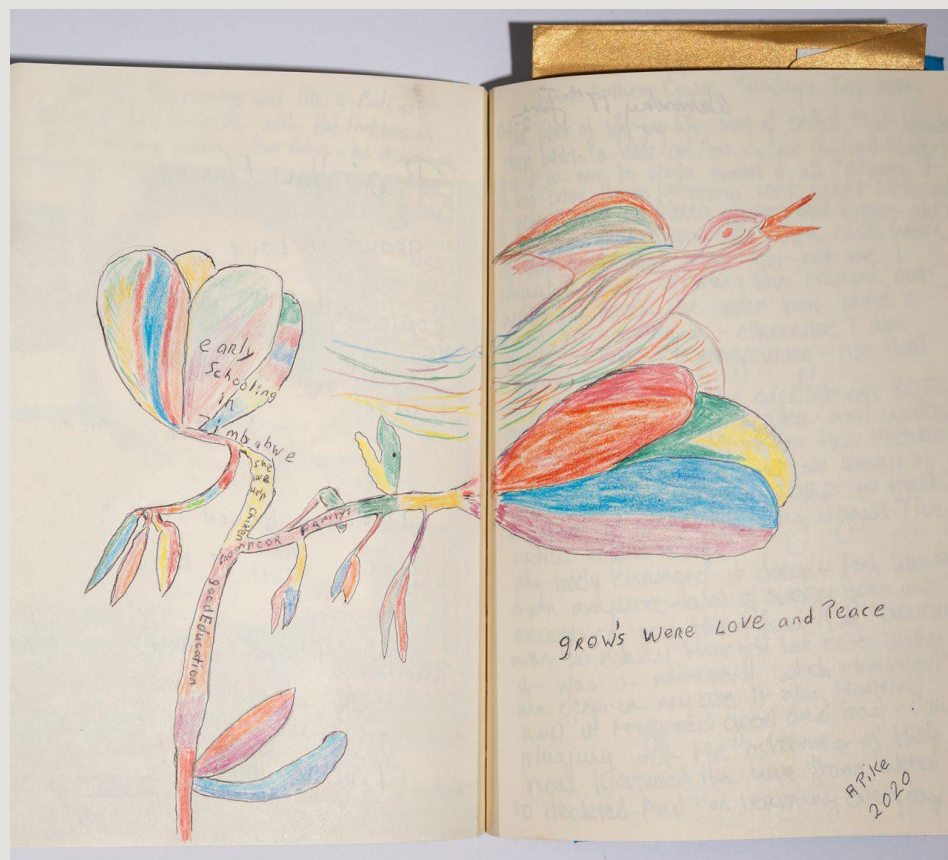
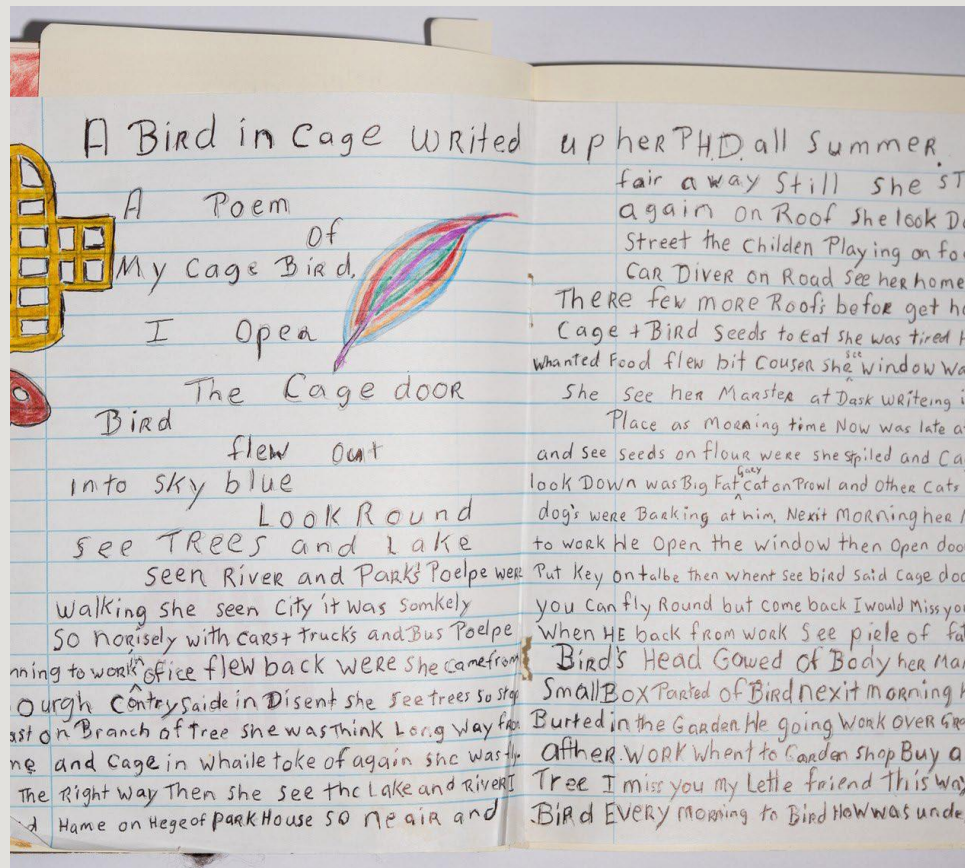




Outsider Art-Ink on canvas-Alice Bennett-2020

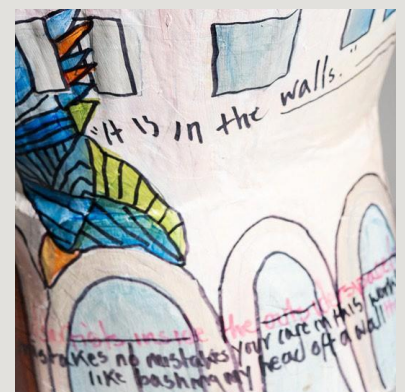


Sketchbook Page- Portrait of Alice -Andrew Pike -2020



Sketchbook Page- A bird in a cage - Andrew Pike-2020

Sketchbook Page-Alice Bennett- Andrew Pike -2020



KCAT Crown-cardboard construction and paint- Alice Bennett-2020



Angel - pencil crayon on paper - Ella -2017

Ella

You walk to the front door.

It is closed. But still you stand, and I open it for you. It is raining.

And still you stand,

a purple hood, laced with drops, water on your face like tears.

And yes, you are very sad today, you tell me.

You tell me every Monday.

You are sad because you miss your sister. I am sorry, I say,

as I do every Monday.

And I am.

Your sadness is torrential. It engulfs me.

Your lashes hanging rain drops.

Let's sit on the couch together for a little bit, I say, and we do.

The rain was only a shower and as we talk of plane trips, and airports and holidays

your smile breaks through.

Sun on our shoulders warms us and you are ready to work now.

When I come to see you later, you are drawing an angel with rainbow wings.

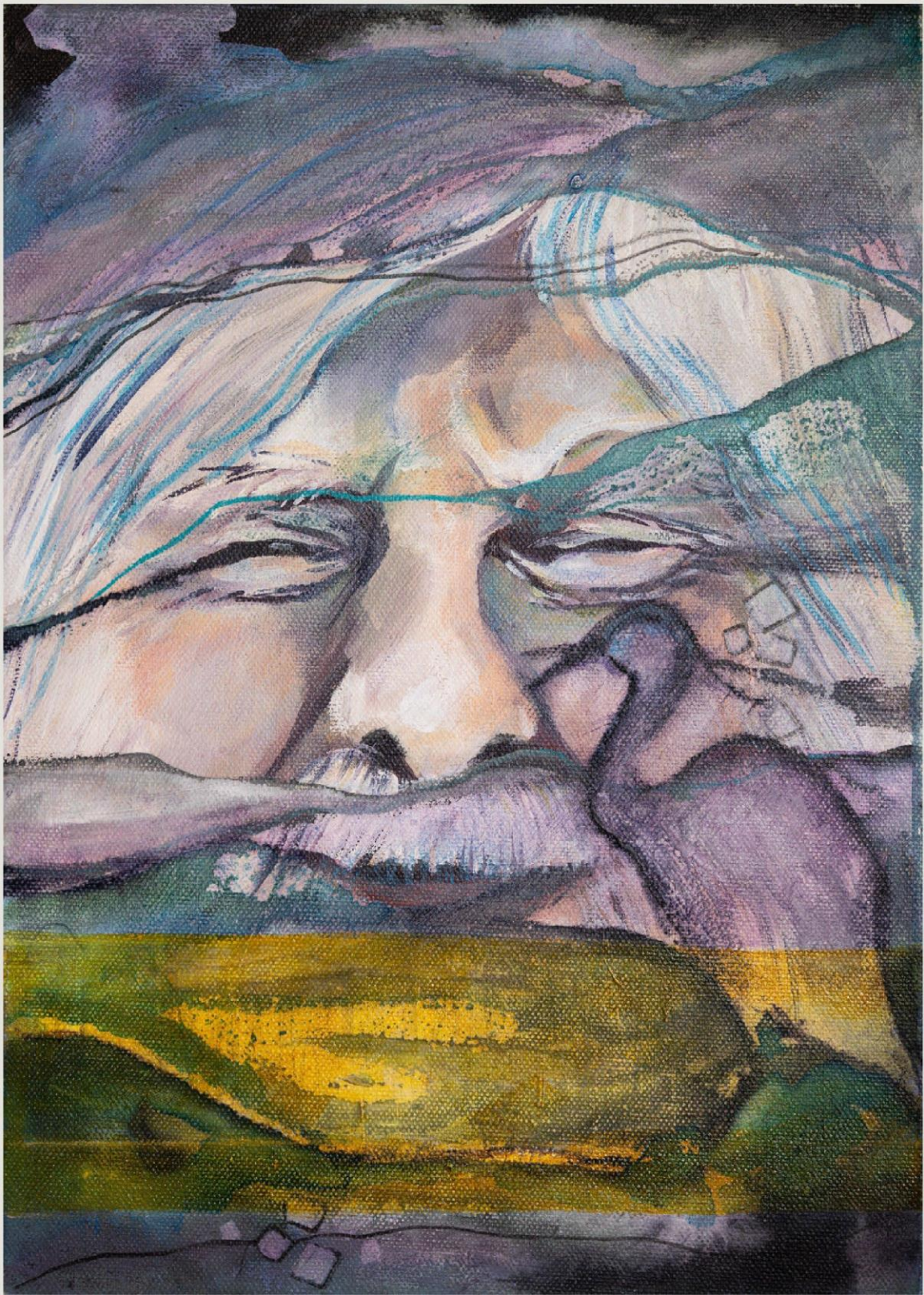
'Research also has its moments of falling apart, moments when the work falls out of the hands of the researcher, when the work resists the conscious intentions of the researcher and begins to twist and turn in another way. Such moments are crucial to an approach to re-search that would keep soul in mind because they signal a shift from the researcher's ego-intentions for the work to the intentions that the work has for itself.'

Romanyshyn, 2007, pp. 47-48





Leaving KCAT- ink on canvas - Alice Bennett-2021/2022



Andrew -ink on canvas- Alice Bennett-2022

Reclamation & Repair

Reclamation

Reclamation happens when we reconnect with a relationship or person, or something we may have lost.. It also happens when we re-evaluate something more positively or suitably.

Repair

Restoration of a system or other unity to good or proper condition; an instance of this.

Healing Vessel

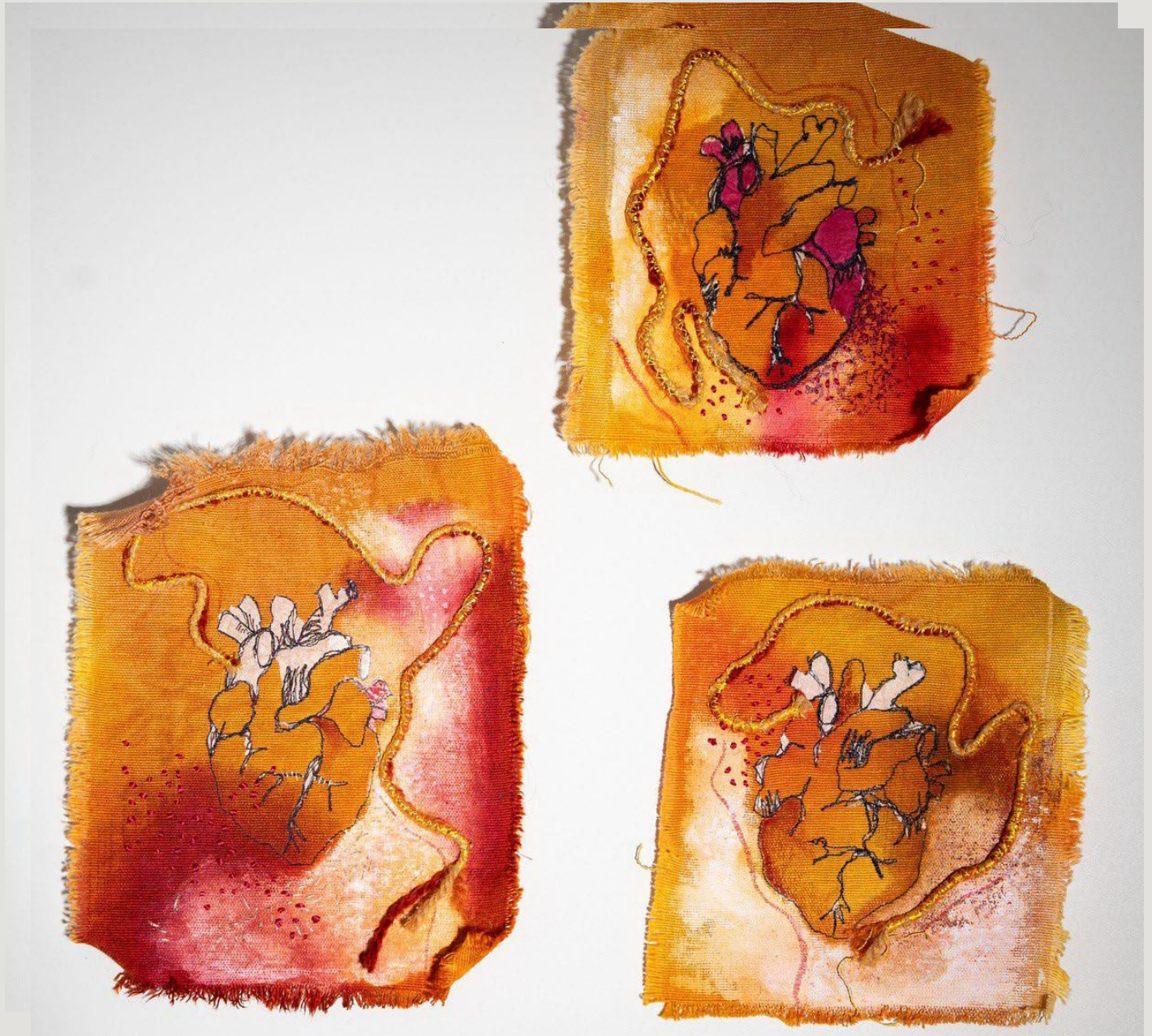
I began making the Healing Vessel toward the end of my research journey, and it is not yet finished. It will probably never be completed. Healing is an ongoing process. it reminds me to spend more time making art and taking time just to be an artist and to enjoy my connection to the process of making.

The Healing vessel is a symbolic 'box' which 'holds' affirmations, self-acceptance and validates my role as a creative, playful person.





Healing Vessel- stitch and construction- Alice Bennett-2025 - unfinished



Healing 1-stitch and ink-Alice Bennett- 2025- work in progress

'first the loss, then the courage and creativity required
to develop new premises'

Green, 2023,

Tonight I found my poem

I was stirring garlic into mushrooms
reducing white wine with chicken stock
stirring,
 stirring,
 sipping,
sipping red wine from a glass in one hand
swaying in the waves of 'dance me to the end'
through steam and sizzle.

The phone interrupted.

A message on the screen of my phone,
slung on the shore of my Friday night.

She had written, 'This is him, Alice'.
I typed 'HIM?'.
She said,
'Yes, this is your birth son'

She sent me a photograph
He was looking straight at me.

I didn't recognise him.
He was a grown man in a wedding suit,

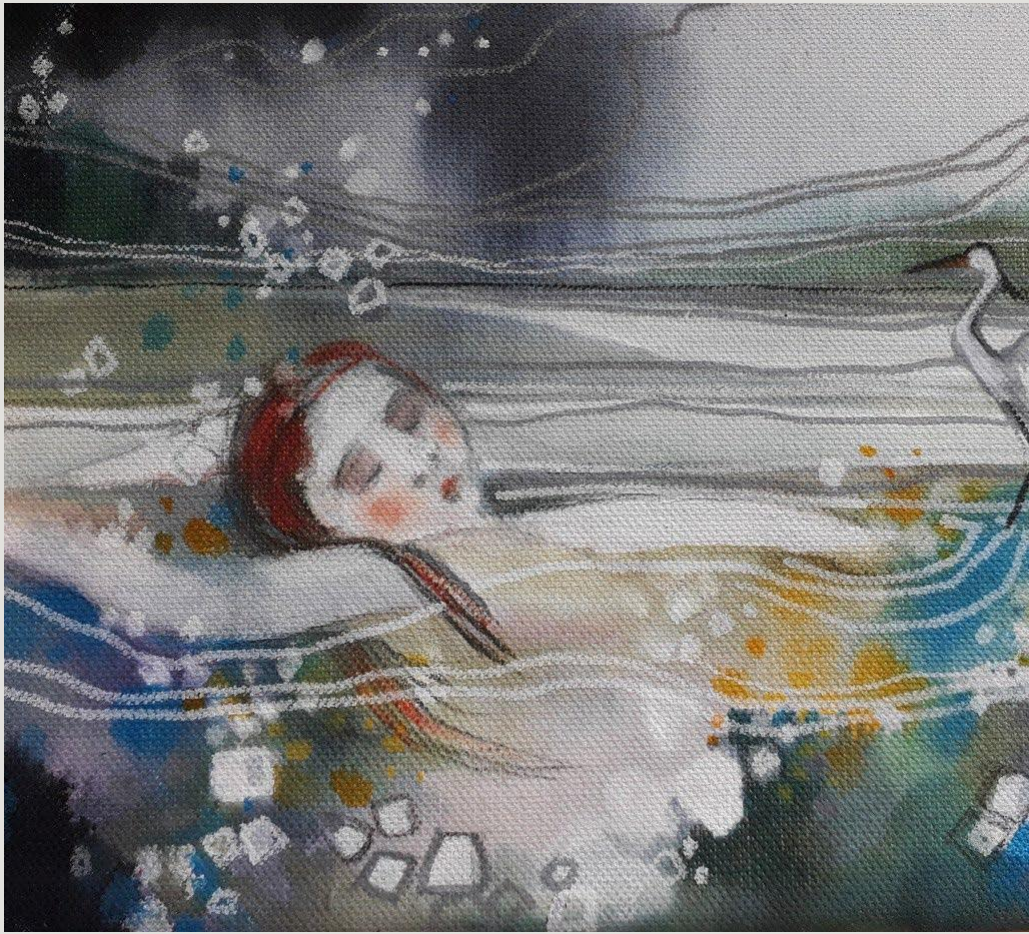
a woman's hand on his chest.
She was wearing red nail varnish

I will try to sleep tonight, but I don't think I will.

Heron

There is no more space between us. I am there with him. Watching for small movements below the surface, alert and alive. A gentle wind ruffles the small crown of feathers on his perfect head, and small gusts of air finger the skin on my face.





Heron 1 and 2 -ink on canvas-Alice Bennett-2022

I am her

I remember now that I am her,

that I know
how to comfort this small animal with still,
strong, gentle hands,

I know
how to be quiet in the wilderness,
to listen for the growing pulse beneath me

I know
how to take crayon to paper in worship,
how to live in line, dot, squiggle of chameleon skin,
autumn leaf.

Of floating seedhead,
water walking insect,
Trapdoor Spider and Rhinoceros Beetle.

I remember
how to scribble outside the lines, dwell in small
places.
Hear the heartbeat whispering truth,
I know the way.....

Come, let me show you.

List of artefacts

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40. Ella-2020 – Alice Bennett-poem- 2017
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50. Healing Vessel- stitch/construction- Alice Bennett-2025 - unfinished
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52. Tonight I found my poem- Alice Bennett-2022
53. Heron-Alice Bennett-2022- Poem
54. Heron 1 and 2 -ink on canvas- Alice Bennett-2022
55. I am Her- Alice Bennett-2024- poem

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“Habit is a second nature which prevents us from knowing the first, of which it has neither the cruelties nor the enchantments.”

Marcel Proust



With love and deep gratitude to my colleague and friend, Andrew Pike, and to all those who have walked beside me on this journey.

May you be blessed with art-filled lives, always.

