



Heart of the Matter: Vol. 1
"The World Outside"

Hello!

*Welcome to the first volume of Heart of the Matter: an ongoing series about bespoke works
+ their back stories.*

*"The World Outside" details a bespoke piece created for Emily, who is a therapist and looking to further
support her clients along their path of healing.*

A gentle content warning: Emily works with people who have experienced sexual violence and trauma.

How we connected. Bespoke works hold a process and purpose that is unique to the person who requests them. Every bespoke piece I create is sent into the world with a specific purpose; I describe them as having a job to do once they leave my studio. That purpose is determined by my client, but it often extends beyond what was initially described.

Emily approached me through email, linked through a mutual friend. Before I begin any bespoke work, I ask a series of questions that are both practical and conceptual, to help uncover the heart of each piece. Emily's reply was unlike anything I had ever come across; I felt like this was a person who was intelligent and empathetic, and saw potential everywhere she looked. She wrote: *"materials which evoke the ways we are naturally connected to the world can be a jumping off point to potentially get people curious about their relationship to the natural world outside sexualized violence"*. How do we continue after experiencing trauma? We become irrevocably changed. Nature is changing all the time too; in an endless cycle of birth, death and rebirth. Emily saw potential healing for her clients by becoming rooted in that cycle, but also by gaining a bit of distance from the things that have harmed us — externalizing toward healing.



Works in progress: my sketchbook showing Emily's list of flowers and initial ideas, and the final sketch

Tentative steps. Emily had written a list of flowers she loved, along with elements from classic Dutch still life paintings that she found interesting, like fruit, moss, and eggs. Though she wasn't sure how they could all work together, I noticed a few themes immediately. I loved the way Emily described it: *"Without realizing it, I had, of course, hit on incredibly concrete items that are beautiful metaphors of growth, development and expression. The flowers I chose, columbine, muscari, sweet pea, and their delicate nature, the way they are mostly early season bloomers, remind me of the sometimes tentative steps needed in healing. Ferns and moss are shade growers, and they tuck into themselves in the most beautifully protective way, and the unfurling of ferns has been a favourite trope in poetry I have loved"*.

What grows together. To unite these elements, I proposed something reminiscent of a still life painting, but having broken free from the canvas. My intention was to create something that both captured and radiated life, was tactile enough to invite interaction and close observation, while also feeling safe in its familiarity. Nothing behind glass — I wanted this piece to be an open invitation, and displayed on a table for ease of engagement. I decided on a middle ground between a composed still life and a tiny pocket of life in the garden, displayed on a faux stone slab.

Emily's intentions created a piece full of vitality and potential, capturing flowers and fruit at peak maturity — suggesting a harvest that isn't confined to any timeline.

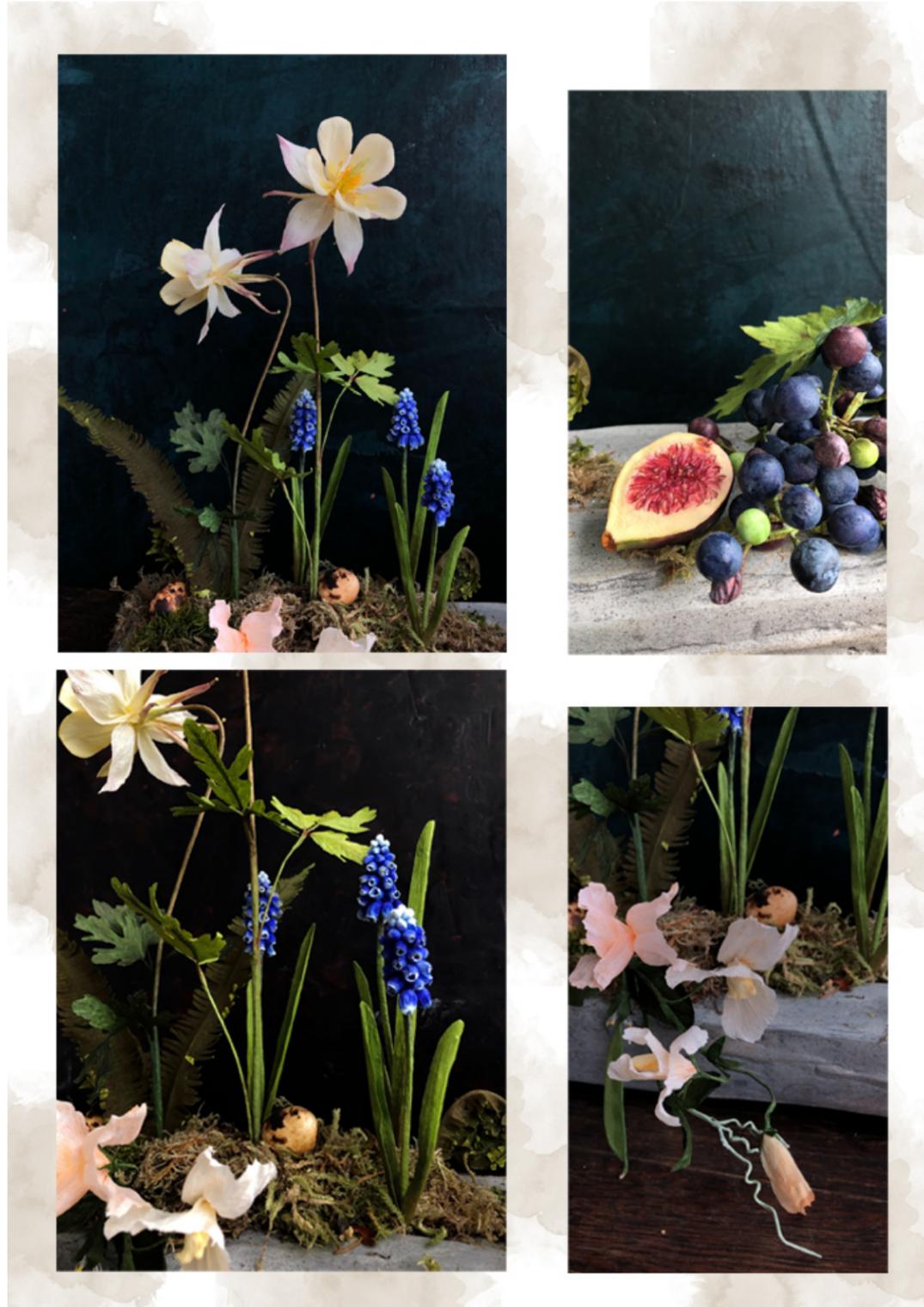


Emily's completed piece: Crepe paper Columbine reach up tall to meet the sun, and paper sweet peas on the vine reach forward, with a single immature pea pod hidden underneath the blooms. Muscari made from polymer clay suggests the new life that emerges after winter, and fern fronds shyly curl within a bed of preserved moss. Two quail eggs are hidden in the moss too, and a luscious cluster of grapes with a half fig complete the scene.

An open door. All of these elements are handmade, including the stone slab they are displayed on. Over the course of two weeks I created flowers, eggs and fruit, and composed them

together within dried and preserved moss. This is the most complex piece I have created so far, modelling the complexity of healing too. Of this bespoke order, Emily says: *"My piece is for my service users, who are very special people. The nature of my work is very personal, and ultimately, so is the healing journey. I feel like it is really important to have a way for my service users to access their own healing paths, and that means having lots of options of metaphorical doors they can walk through on their journey. This piece struck me as an idea for one possible door"*.

Adapting to grow. This piece is deepening Emily's connection to nature too: *"I have never seen myself as particularly connected to nature, much less flowers. Intellectually I have known I have been, but, over time, I have had a much more embodied knowing around that. Over the past number of years, appreciating the natural world has become a source of nourishment to me, including flowers. I love the unique personalities of different flowers, and the way they adapt to their circumstances to grow"*.



This work is love as energy: how it heals, transforms + how it grows.

*"When I first saw the piece, I had a very strange reaction. I felt loved. I can certainly tell you this is not something I have *ever* experienced when purchasing or receiving artwork. I don't know if it was Kathryn's intention that somehow came through the piece, but I felt loved in a way that I discovered I would also absolutely want my service users to feel!"*

Shining company. We all have stories to tell —ones about healing and trauma, connection and loss, gratitude and praise. Flowers have a language that can help us tell those stories, expressing what feels elusive or indefinable. They can also help us safely access those stories too, and in Emily's case — when accompanied by a trained professional — that access can even possibly lead towards healing, acting as an attendant on the course. *"Golden Age wasn't just the right way to tell my story, but the only way. Kathryn's sensitivity to the work connected with several deep layers of meaning I hadn't seen, including the significance of figs and how they ripen. If you don't know, do yourself a favour and look it up to hear another incredible way that nature fosters growth and maturity."*

Going deeper. Reading Emily's words, and watching as she took in her bespoke piece was deeply moving for me as well. This world doesn't always leave room for us to grow at our own pace, and trauma can leave us feeling adrift. All we have is each other to lift us up. My studio fire taught me that — burning a new path and revealing connection, service and gratitude. Each of your bespoke works are a step on that path, and are treated with care and respect, as Emily experienced: *"It was clear from her previous work, as well as interviews I had heard of her, that this was someone who was skilled not just in the physical craft of her work, but also the intellectual, emotional, and, dare I say, spiritual aspects of her work. That made the piece outstanding on a level far beyond something I would expect elsewhere".*

***Bespoke works are also beautiful gifts,
and can help tell the story of what's closest to your heart.***

**If you feel the call for a bespoke piece, simply [click here](#) and we can begin the process. Availability is open now, in time for Mother's Day!
Usual accommodation is a few bespoke pieces per month, and availability is first-come-first-served.**

Due to the complexity of bespoke works, they do have a minimum price requirement.