

**Kate
Davis**

**Natural
History**

Kate Davis made a series of drawings that employ 'frottage' techniques for her local library in Pollokshields. The frottages, or crayon rubbings, were taken from the interior and exterior of the library building. The drawings were presented as a limited edition artist's book, made freely available to pick up and take away for anyone visiting Pollokshields library.

Davis' frottage drawings take direct visual inspiration from the Surrealist artist Max Ernst (1891–1976) who further developed the method in 1925. Ernst published a collection of his own frottage drawings in 1926, titled 'Histoire Naturelle', and several of these depict animal forms. Other thematic starting points for Davis' own 'Natural History' are Deborah Levy's 2021 book 'Real Estate' from the author's living autobiography series, and a 1973 small press publication, 'An Intelligent Woman's Guide to Dirty Words: Volume One of the Feminist English Dictionary' by Ruth Todasco, which includes a chapter detailing the many "woman as animal" idioms. Davis refers to further inspirational titles including Kenneth Clark, 'Animals and Men' (1977), Jane Mills 'Womanwords' (1989), and Werner Spies, 'Max Ernst: Frottages' (1986), in her artist's book.

The term "high horse", which is reclaimed by Levy in 'Real Estate', provides a key motif for Davis' 'Natural History'. 'The Feminist English Dictionary' offers further animal metaphors which are given form through Davis' frottages.

Max Ernst described frottage as a means of making the unseen "visible". This idea extends Davis' interest in reconsidering histories and representations which are often absent, overlooked, or perhaps hiding in plain sight. Focusing on the library as a site for exploring language, 'Natural History' sought to question how familiar phrases might be unpicked and reimagined.

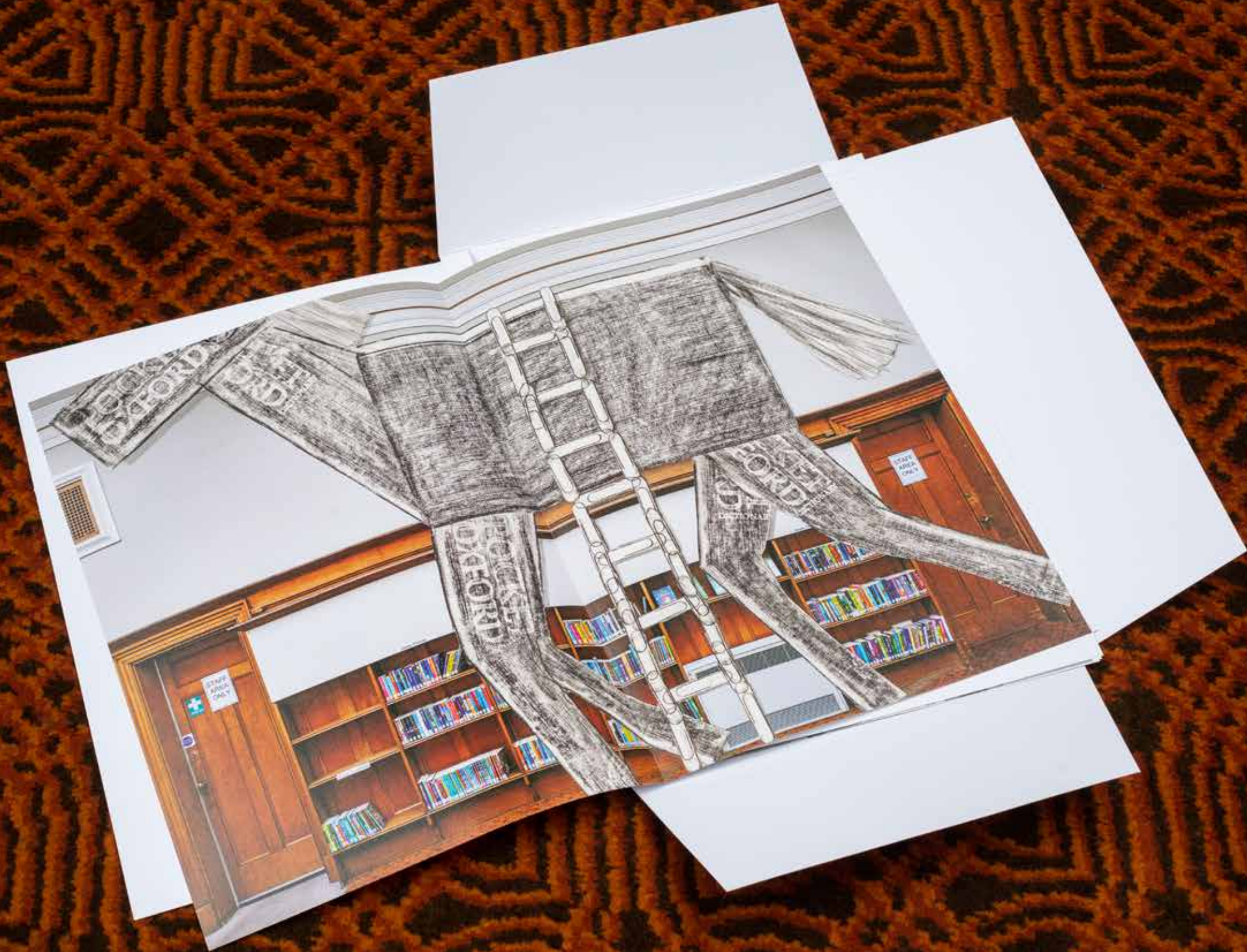
Davis also worked with children from Pollokshields Primary School to create their own fantastical creatures and imaginary beasts using collage and frottage drawing techniques. Their artworks formed part of the special presentation at Pollokshields library.





NATURAL HISTORY









ON

HER

HIGH

HORSE

CHARLOTTE HIGGINS