

New collage designed for the outside of Castle Mills

Edinburgh artist goes back to nature for his new work of art

Local artist Mark Doyle is designing a 3D collage for the outside of the former North British Rubber Company head office at Castle Mills. He has used a model of a leaf from a *Hevea brasiliensis*, otherwise known to you and me as a rubber plant, at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh.

Mark is creating three collages to reflect the history of rubber production in the capital. He will use things that reflect the source and extraction of latex, its many uses and artefacts connected with the manufacture of rubber products including waterproof boots, hot water bottles and tyres.

When creating the blueprint for his designs, he realised he would need a living leaf from a *Hevea brasiliensis* to create a mould. It was then that he turned to the Botanics for help.



Mark with Louise Galloway Glasshouse Supervisor and Pat Clifford horticulturist

Tropical botanist Dr Peter Wilkie explained: "Mark was in luck

and we were happy to assist. We have a specimen of *Hevea brasiliensis* that has been growing in one of our Glasshouses since 1985. It was collected by an RBGE researcher George Argent, now retired, whilst he was undertaking fieldwork in Brazil. We were able to provide Mark with some leaves that were cut from the tree.’’

Mark commented: “I really want to make all the objects that I include in the work as authentic as possible. In this case that meant trying to get a selection of leaves from a living rubber tree. Fortunately the Botanics was willing to help with this and also answer some of my questions about sources of natural rubber.’’

RBGE plans to tap latex from the tree in the near future and is appealing for anyone with experience in rubber tapping to get in touch. Indoor Supervisor Louise Galloway said: “I have undertaken research into the tapping procedure but I have not actually done the incisions and tapping. It would be helpful to have guidance from someone with experience.’’

Mark Doyle is a multi-disciplinary artist. Graduating from Edinburgh College of Art in 2005, he received a first-class degree in painting, as well as a number of awards, such as the Andrew Grant Bequest and George Jackson Hutchison Memorial Prize.

At his Edinburgh studio he worked on self-initiated print and installation projects, as well as a number of collaborations and residencies. In 2014 Doyle was the recipient of a Creative Scotland Artists Bursary and in 2015 was shortlisted for the Royal British Society of Sculptors First @108 Award, and was also shortlisted for the Steven Campbell New York Scholarship in 2016. He was the 2017-2018 artist in residence at The Edinburgh Academy.