My hopes for my future life with HIV are...

Naomi Ferrett-Cohen

Much influenced by her Landscaper father, from a young age Naomi has been keen gardener. Since then, nature and gardening have formed the constant backdrop to her working and family life, whether pottering in her own garden or volunteering in the stunning and inspirational gardens at Parham House in West Sussex.

Before a career break to start a family, Naomi worked in the care sector with people with mental health problems and learning disabilities and has a firm belief in the importance of horticulture for human wellbeing, both physical and psychological. Now with a young family of her own, this interest extends into creating gardens for children and families, encouraging them into the garden together to explore and enjoy the nature and horticulture has to offer.

Inevitably, Naomi has been able to pursue these interests to a greater extent and, having attained her RHS Level II in Horticulture, went on to study with the world-renowned London College of Garden Design, gaining a Garden Design Diploma in 2015 and a Planting Design Diploma in 2016, both with Distinction.

Now heading up her own Landscape and Garden Design Practice nestled at the foot of the South Downs in Sussex, Naomi continues to find inspiration in the nature around her, working on design projects large and small.

This is the first show-garden Naomi has created since graduating from London College of Garden Design.

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The garden represents the journey faced by a young person living with HIV. It explores the stigma and marginalisation many encounter.

Due to the huge amount of stigma still attached to HIV, those living with the condition are often prevented from having open conversations about their experience. This garden represents the breaking down of this stigma and intends to show that anyone can live well with HIV. Although the message is applicable to everyone, the garden has been designed with adolescents and young people with HIV particularly in mind. It brings together two messages: that it is possible to live openly and healthily with HIV, and that we need to work hard to find a cure through dedicated scientific research.

Although HIV no longer features extensively in the news, it remains a major global problem. 37 million people live with HIV worldwide, with 2 million people being infected every year – that’s nearly one person every 15 seconds of every minute of every day. Around the world a child is infected every 3 and a half minutes. The Children’s HIV Association (CHIVA) currently supports over 1000 children living with HIV in the UK. Many have suffered multiple bereavements, whilst others take on caring responsibilities. All must manage growing up with a highly stigmatised chronic illness and whilst HIV is now treatable, it remains a complex health condition in childhood and particularly in adolescence.

For more information about the work of CHERUB see: www.cherub.uk.net

The garden was conceived by Professor John Frater, from the University of Oxford, and his colleagues from the CHERUB collaboration (Collaborative HIV Eradication of Reservoirs UK BRC). This is a UK network of doctors, researchers and patients working together to find a cure for HIV infection.

Acer ‘Osakazuki’
Acer palmatum
Acer vitifolium
Aquilegia ‘Ruby Port’
Asplenium trichomanes
Astrantia Ruby Red
Baptisia ‘Grape Taffy’
Baptisia australis ‘Purple Smoke’
Brunnera mac ‘Jack Frost’
Campanula lactiflora ‘Mid Blue’
Dicksonia antarctica
Digitalis lutea
Digitalis purpurea
Drimys winteri
Dryopteris filix-mas ‘Cristata’
Euphorbia characias ‘Humpty Dumpty’
Euphorbia mellifera
Ficus carica
Geranium sylvaticum ‘Mayflower’
Hakonechloa macra
Hosta ‘Paul Glory’
Hosta ‘Blue Cadet’
Hosta sieboldiana var.elegans
Iris sibirica ‘Blue Moon’
Iris sibirica ‘Dreaming Yellow’
Iris sibirica ‘Persimmon’
Lunaria annua
Lychnis flos-cuculi ‘White Robin’
Melittis melissophyllum
Muehlenbeckia complexa Sealand
Peony ‘Zoe x Leonora’/‘White Wings’/‘Alabaster White’
Peony ‘agean’
Peone Breckland
Peon ‘Ibiza’/‘Early Eksa’
Peon ‘Dream Lover’/‘Pink Pillar’
Peon ‘Khregg’/‘Vesey Pillar’
Peon ‘Jelena’/‘Vesey Pillar’
Peon ‘suffrutitosa’/‘Vesey Pillar’
Pinus nigra nana
Pinus Beuronensis
Pinus densiflora ‘Low Glow’
Pinus strobus ‘Stowe Pillar’
Pinus thunbergii ‘Sayonara’
Pinus wallichiana ‘Vicky’
Pinus waterii
Pittosporum tobira ‘Nanum’
Pseudotsuga menziesii
Rhus typhina ‘Sticks and Stones’
Sorbaria kirilowii
Streptanthus rhodanthus
Tellima grandiflora

The white pod at the top of the garden represents the clinics the young people attend, a cocoon of safety from the outside world. The journey from the pod through the garden shows their journey towards a life of more freedom and the obstacles encountered along the way. These are represented by three dark obstructing walls that make the path difficult to negotiate.

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