



Grounding; Growing Conversations in Mental Illness

Address: Bloom In the Park, Phoenix Park, Dublin
Stage: Complete, June 2019
Site Area: 100m²

With the aim of starting a national conversation around mental illness, Realise Landscapes was commissioned by Janssen in partnership with mental health organisations Aware and See Change to design a show garden at Bloom in The Park.

The concept stemmed from the theory of grounding; how walking barefoot in nature can have a stabilising effect, reconnecting us with the natural charge of the planet and in turn improving our sense of well being. A sequence of spaces were organised from communal areas to more intimate seating arrangements. The material palette had a sense of being dug from the earth and resonates with the theme of grounding. Water, weathered steel, and granite contrast with the large glacial limestone boulders that define the pedestrian area. Strong defined continuous lines ground themselves to the plot edge emphasizing the need to understand our own boundaries.

The success of the garden was in part due to the collaboration between Realise Landscapes and ambassadors from See Change and Aware. The final show garden accommodated two key concepts developed collectively in a series of workshops.

01: The narrative for the steel walkway was one key output. People with mental illness often suffer the stigma of "becoming" the illness, they're described as being bipolar or depressed. The walkway tries to take this apart. On one approach, the words "I am" can be read. Challenging that is the other approach, "Am I?" happy, resilient, angry, desperate, hopeful.?

02: The engraved oak cubes were the second workshop output. The Ginkgo Biloba tree was referenced in drawing workshops. Known as a living fossil, an ancient species, traditionally used to represent hope, endurance and resilience. The participants' sketches were laser engraved on oak, and used as a paving material in the garden. Tracing and engraving was the closest representation of the participants hand onto the threshold of the garden.

