

Portrait of a Boy

removed from his embalmed body



a collaborative provenance story

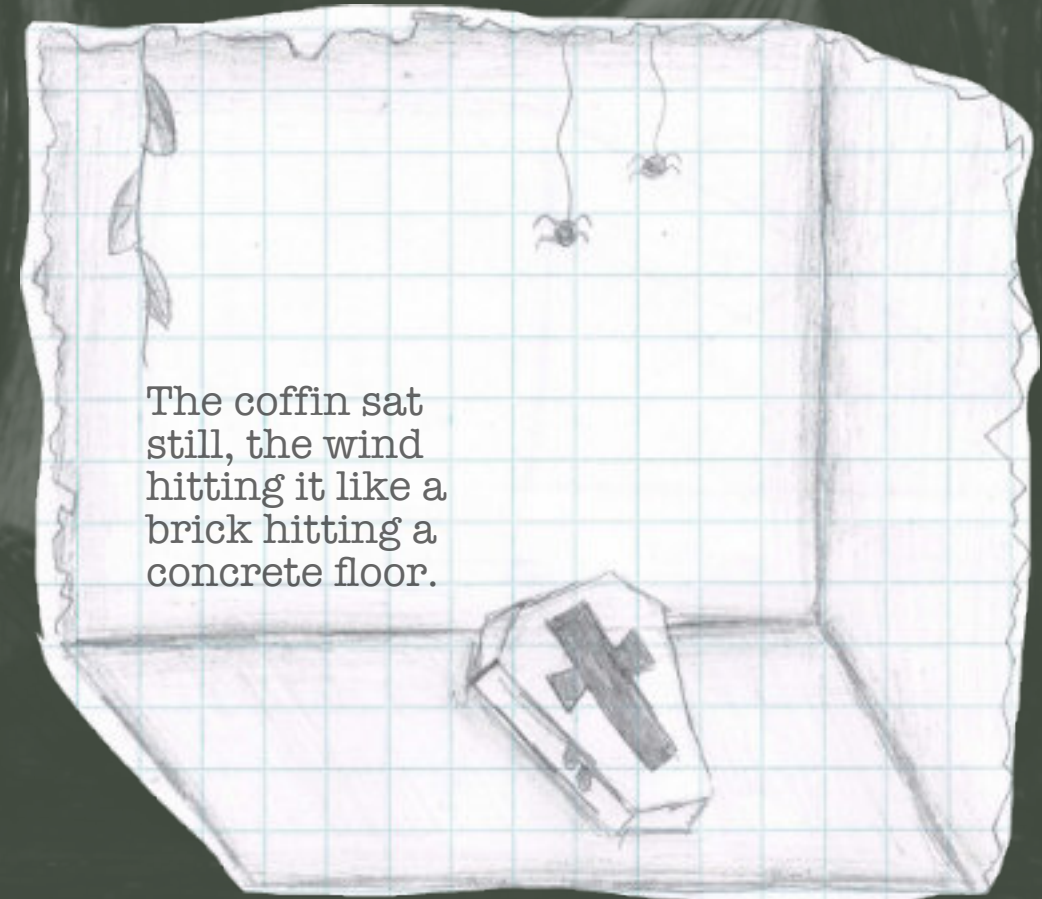
words and illustrations by Year 7 students
from City Academy Norwich

Standing next to the window, I can feel my heart beating. Im not allowed to move a muscle. I can hear my brothers playing outside. I went to itch my nose and the man shouted at me.

Then it became night, I was so bored and itchy. I hear my mum and dad in the other room. They say this is a privilege. I hate it.



I suddenly died, me, Alexandros. I was mummified and the portrait placed on top.



The coffin sat still, the wind hitting it like a brick hitting a concrete floor.

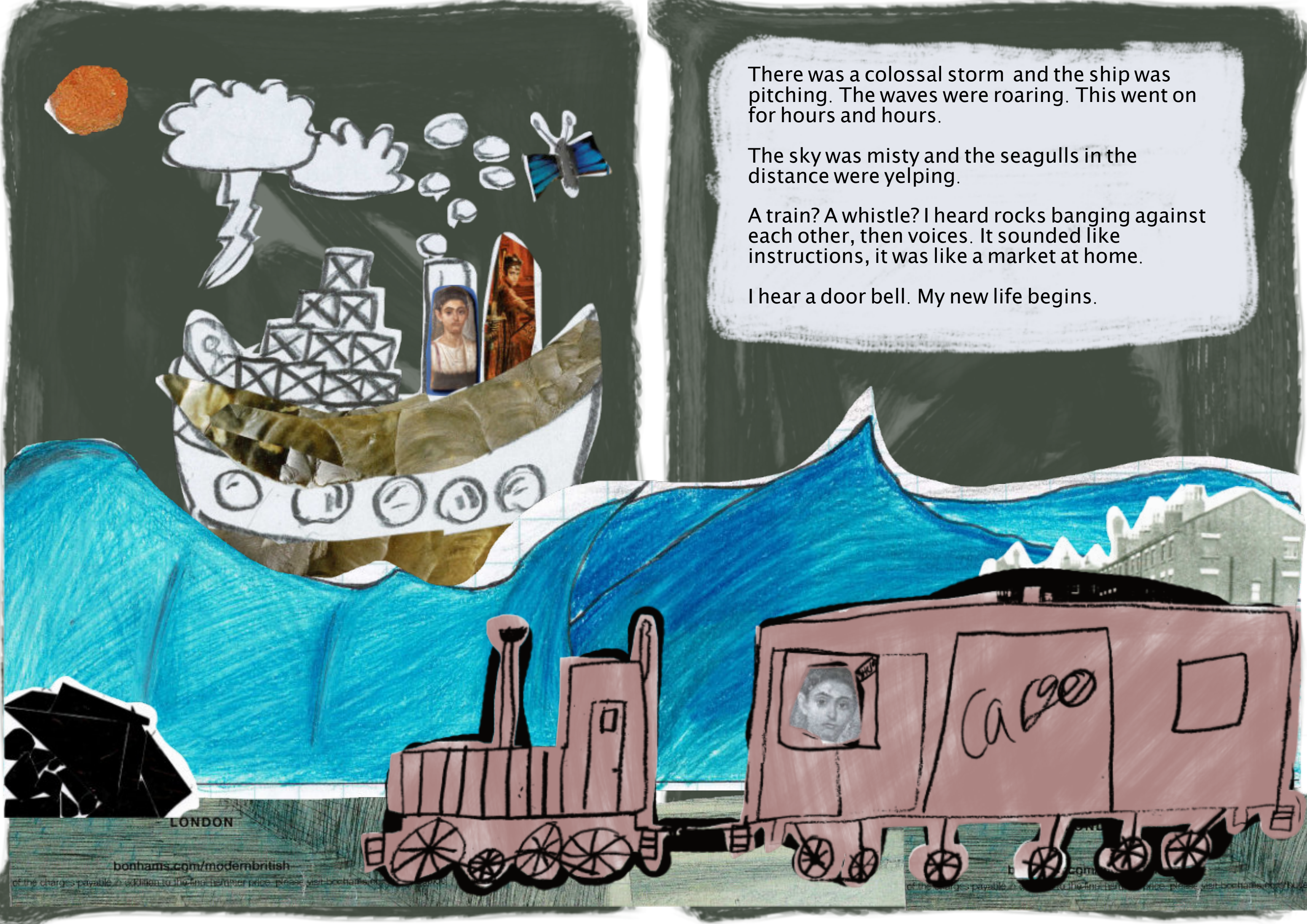


About 2000 years later, the portrait was pulled out of the tomb by Flinders Petrie.

This guy tore me away from my face. My soul lives on as I get pulled into the hot sun. I was in the dark for 2000 years, then he puts me in the sun. I feel like I am burning to death, but I guess I am already dead.

I was wrapped in white cloth, but he left my eyes to see. I was placed in a crate.





There was a colossal storm and the ship was pitching. The waves were roaring. This went on for hours and hours.

The sky was misty and the seagulls in the distance were yelping.

A train? A whistle? I heard rocks banging against each other, then voices. It sounded like instructions, it was like a market at home.

I hear a door bell. My new life begins.

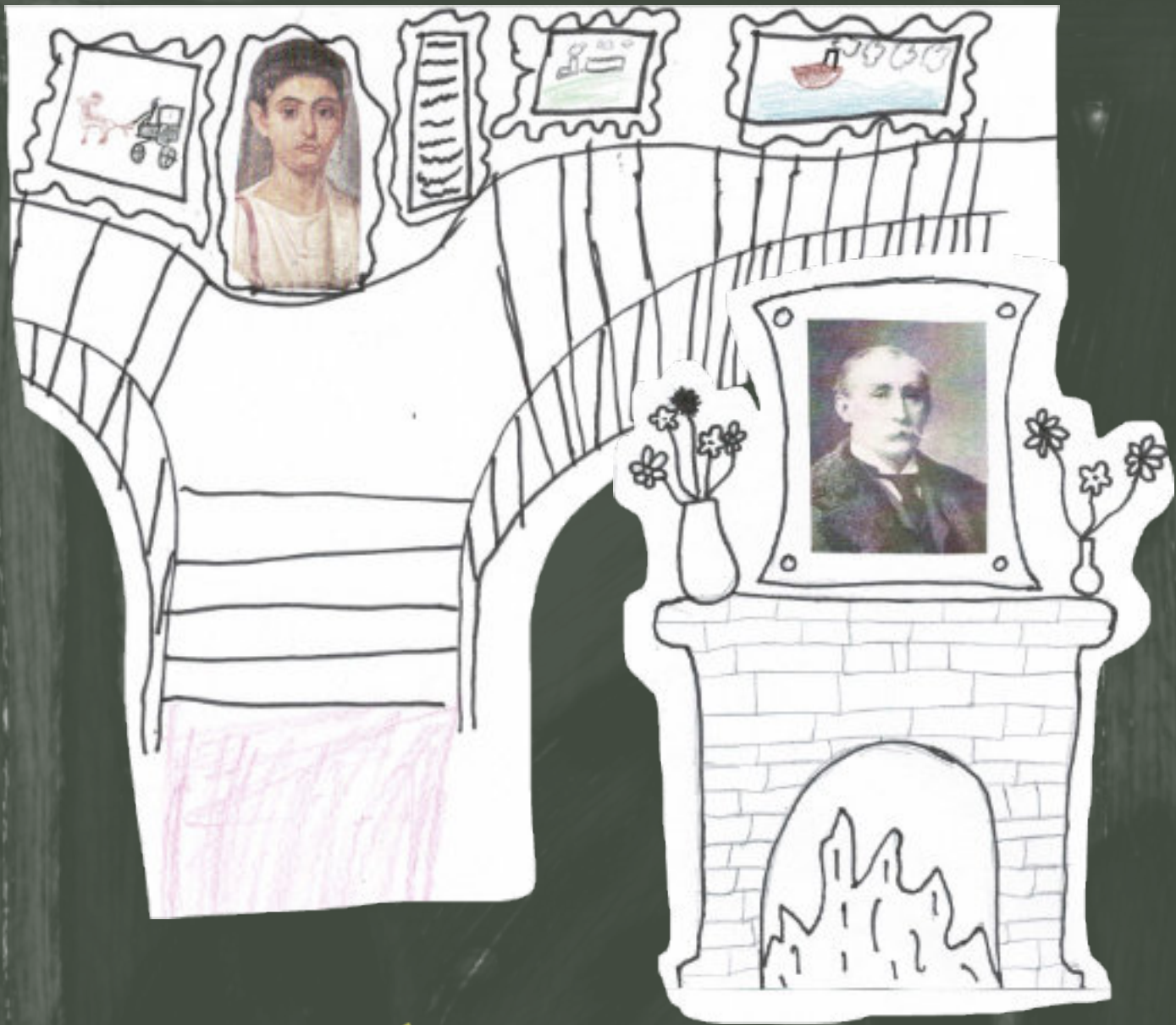
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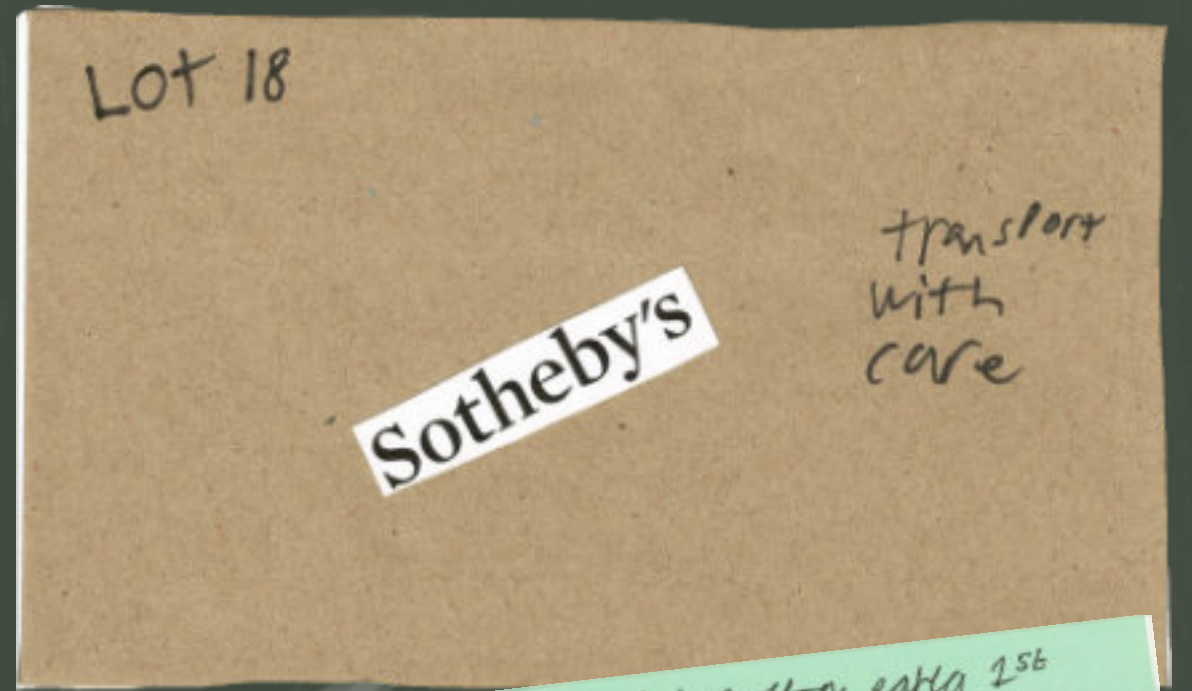
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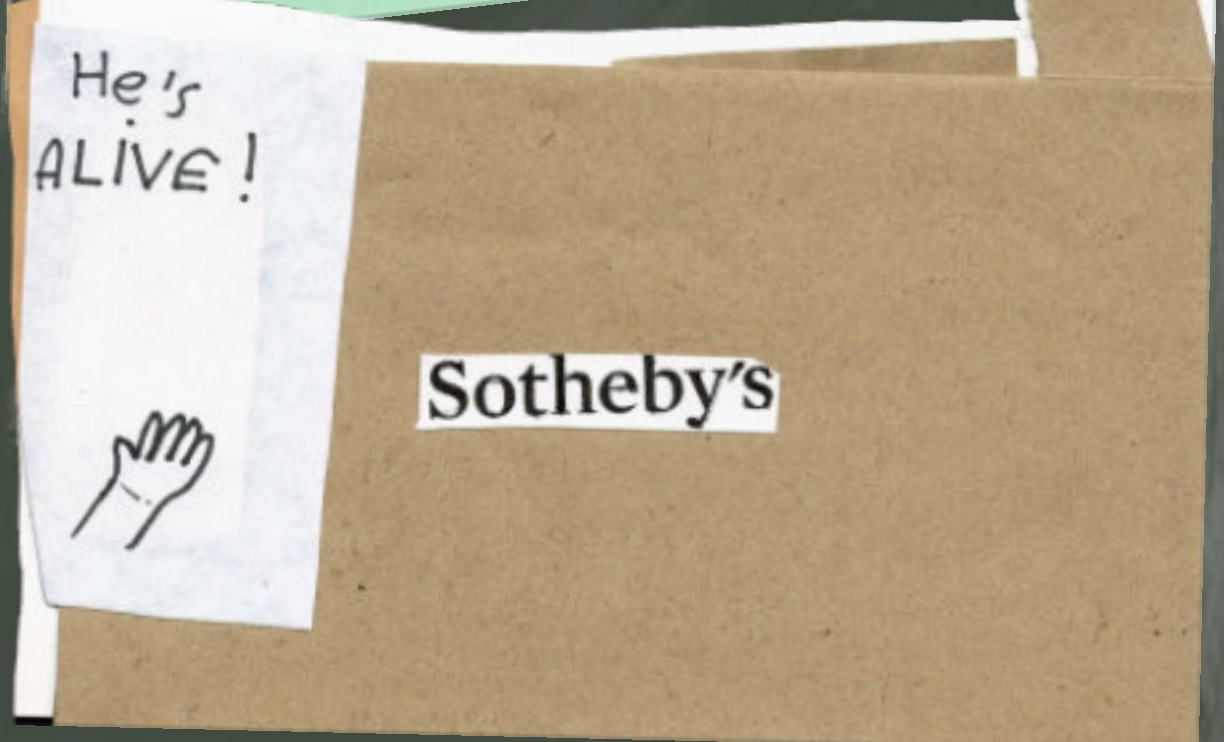
The painting was gifted to the collector Henry Kennard, who had given Flinders Petrie the money to explore tombs in Egypt.

The painting stayed in his home for 40 years.

Henry Kennard died in 1912, and his art collection sold at auction.



This Fayum mummy portrait dates from early 1st century AD Provenance Egypt. unique opportunity acquire rare artefact. originated high class family. discovered by Flinders Petrie. Good condition timewood encaustic technique. unknown subject face. remarkable body of Panel painting. Lot number: 312



The painting was sold and bought at auctions in England for the next 50 years.

By 1960, the portrait belonged to art dealer John Hewett.



In 1966 art dealer sold the portrait to his friends, art collectors Robert and Lisa Sainsbury.

This potrait made me want to buy it for two reasons, It reminds me of my brother. Just the face shape of this young man reminds me of him. The other reason is that I can't remember properly but I think that I dreamed about it and I just stared into it's Dark brown eyes.



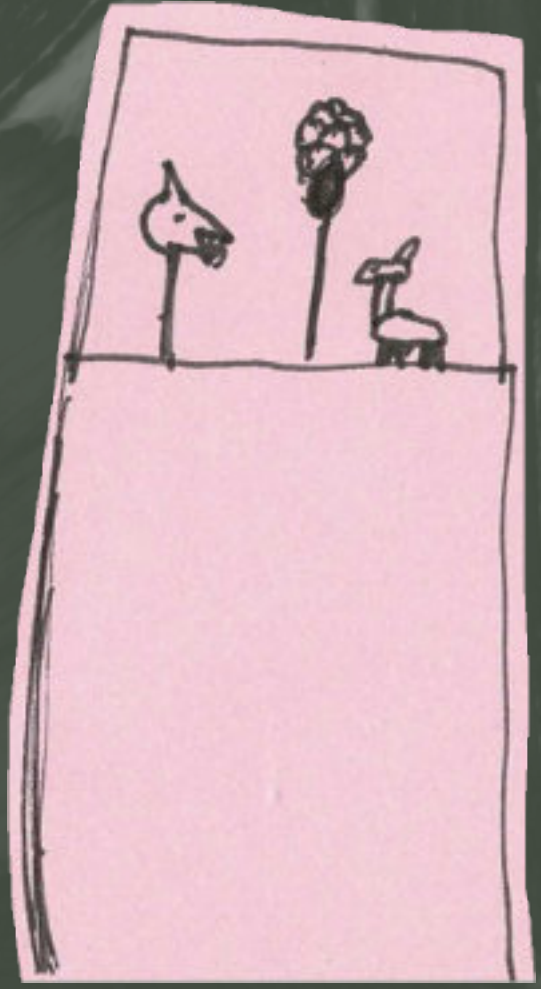
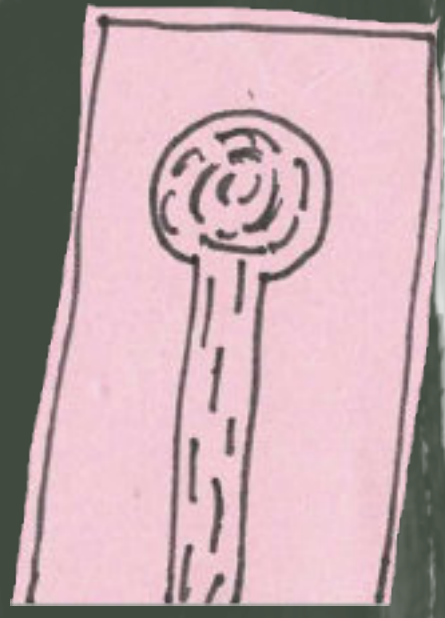
My gut tells me to buy it and not let anyone else have it.



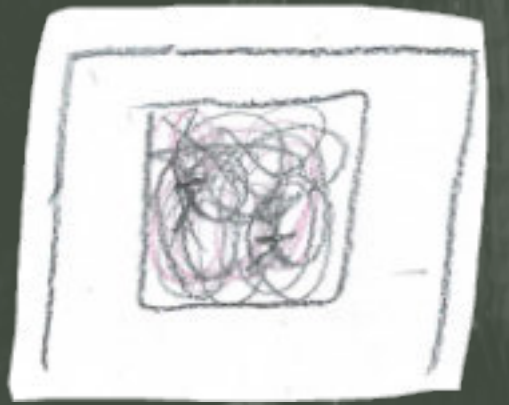
The painting was put on display in their home in London for 7 years.



In 1973, the Sainsbury Centre art museum was built in Norwich, and the portrait was taken there with all the other art and objects in their collection.



50 more years pass,
and counting...



No more travelling to new places you can now be at peace in the living area of the SainStary's centre, I'm sorry you cannot return to Egypt.

Dear Totoe I can't believe what you had to go through. I hope your okay now and just thought I'd let you know that I think your story is fascinating.

Alexandor, I'd love to be your friend I wish I could have met you. I hope your death was peacefull and not painfull. You look increadable so it's a good thing you got your portrait. I do really wish I could have met you.

I hope you will have a wonderful life

You need a holiday
here's the ticket



I love your outfit in the photo. You done very well by staying in that same pose the WHOLE time! Your hair is cool, maybe a bit scrussy though.

I hope you like your new home. I have a few questions I would like to ask you.
Do you wish to be at home?
how did you die?
how did you take your portrait?
Do you like being in a rich family?



Words and illustrations created by Year 7 students at City Academy Norwich as part of a project with the Sainsbury Centre and UEA Outreach in 2022.

Students worked with Becca Sturgess, Justine Ashford and Rose Feather in response to the exhibition Visions of Ancient Egypt.