

# IKON

## Exhibition Guide

**Jacques Nimki *Florilegium***

**23 May –30 June 2007**

**Ikon Eastside**

*Florilegium* is the culmination of a two-year project in which the Mauritian born artist Jacques Nimki has painstakingly researched and catalogued the weeds and wildflowers that can be found in Eastside, an ex-industrial district at the edge of Birmingham's city centre, currently undergoing dramatic reinvention. Here, the outsiders of the plant world can be found, determinedly pushing through cracks in the concrete or wrapping themselves around street signs and lampposts. Undervalued and overlooked they nevertheless thrive in this most urban of environments. Nimki uncovers local specimens such as Sailors' Tobacco, Nosebleed, Creeping Charlie, Green Opium and Musk Button and holds them up for reconsideration, bringing to light their medicinal, magical and aesthetic qualities, thus challenging traditional notions of value and beauty.

Florilegiums are illustrated books of flowers dating from the early 17th Century, the moment at which new foreign species were being discovered as the result of European colonisation. Such books were commissioned by affluent landowners to record their rarest, most exotic plants and provided an outward symbol of status and wealth. For Ikon, Nimki has produced a vast meadow of wild plants and weeds from Digbeth streets. His act is suggestive of the work of the curator, who cares for highly prized works of art, protecting and cataloguing them for future generations. Both vulnerable and threatening, the wildlife supported by the meadow will grow, die and change in an unpredictable manner throughout the course of the exhibition, touching on ideas of potential and transformation.