



Geographers and Scientists

Examine the geography and science of Rapa Nui (Easter Island)

20. Scientists of empires – the artist's work

Requirements: photograph of a plant to draw; drawing/ painting materials

Working style: individually

Curriculum: Science; Art; History

Time: 20 minutes

During the late C18th and C19th (about 250-125 years ago), several European empires sent naval ships on voyages of discovery in the name of science and trade across the world. These expeditions were interested in collecting plants, animal specimens, geology, and human artefacts to take back home for study in their museums. Many of these ships included artists as crew, who sketched what they saw on these travels, and turned their drawings into artwork on their return home..



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This watercolour depicts a plant collected in the Pacific by a member of the crew on Captain James Cook's first world voyage in search of Australia (1768-1771). The plant itself (known as a Kākābeak) was collected at Tolaga Bay in Aotearoa, New Zealand, and drawn by the ship's artist, Sydney Parkinson. It was later turned into the picture you see here by Daniel Mackenzie (in the 1770s-1780s).

Take a photograph of a plant in your garden or local park, and bring the photo into school. Create your own drawing/ painting of it in the classroom.