



Heywood & Condie

NATURAL

20 Dec 2018– 16 January 2019

PV 19th December 2018

Consult the genius of the place in all;
That tells the waters or to rise, or fall;
Or helps th' ambitious hill the heav'ns to scale,
Or scoops in circling theatres the vale;
Calls in the country, catches opening glades,
Joins willing woods, and varies shades from shades,
Now breaks, or now directs, th' intending lines;
Paints as you plant, and, as you work, designs.

Alexander Pope, *Epistle IV, to Richard Boyle, Earl of Burlington*

Vigo proudly presents **Natural** the first solo show by Heywood & Condie at Vigo.

Over the last fifteen years of collaboration, Tony Heywood & Alison Condie, have developed a unique artistic practice: an experimental and expansive form of landscape art. It ranges widely across forms and media; from large-scale, outdoor, 'horticultural installations' to sculpture, drawing and video. The artists are driven by a desire to articulate their connection with nature and to participate in the discourse of nature's representation in contemporary culture. They achieve this by making work about particular places and landscapes with which they have a profound connection whilst simultaneously being alive to the increasingly abstract and instrumental manner in which nature is represented in the spectacular worlds of entertainment and marketing.

Natural comprises a major video work and a related series of wall-based works that combine elements of painting and sculpture.

The video work and the relief sculptures form an expanded portrait of a specific place – the artists' garden in Formby, a coastal area in Merseyside of outstanding natural beauty.

Summer Paint Pour Formby Garden Triptych is a three channel work shown on HD LED screens. Across each screen flow bands of bright, liquid, colour – records of paint being poured together over a vertical surface. The work is an abstracted portrait of the artists' garden; each colour representing a specific flower, a portrait through which time flows, a gesture to nature's rhythm of perpetual change. That mercurial spirit is reflected in the work's relationship to form. The work begins with the artists studying the colours contained within their subject landscape, becomes a performance that is also a painting of sorts (the pouring of the paint) that become a video that is presented like a painting.

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The Zen Garden works are a related series of wall-hung, relief sculptures that take the same subject into the realm of the art object. Resembling sections of Japanese rock gardens seen from above, the works comprise brightly painted, casts of rocks, planted onto grounds collaged together from sections of yoga mats. Here each painted rock represents a flower from the garden in Formby - the ephemeral, metaphorically petrified - and each one painted with paint used in the paint pour video work. Thus each flower goes through, in Heywood & Condie's art, a process of almost alchemical transformation in its various representations.

Across their practice there is a playful tension between graphic, Pop Art-like surfaces, which anchor the works in our denatured, media-saturated, contemporary moment, and the deep connection between the artists and the landscapes they inhabit.

As the artists have observed, "we are increasingly used to seeing nature in spectacular forms, zoomed into, spliced and cut-up, exaggerated, turned into a horror film or into an advert". Against these impersonal forces - the logic of spectacular culture and the rapid degradation of nature - the artists offer the cultivating of a spiritual awareness of the interconnectivity of all things and of the life and energy of the land. This latter idea is perhaps understood by the Roman religious idea of the *genius loci* - the protective spirit of a place. It is an imperative the artists follow in their own way, often practicing shamanic journeying (falling into a self-induced trance state) in the landscapes about which they make work, connecting with the place in myriad ways. Accordingly, they regard many of their works as vehicles to renew or recover that original connection, using both the paint pour and the Zen Garden works as yantras - the visual equivalent of mantras - to aid meditation and reconnection with the landscapes they represent.

About Heywood & Condie

Heywood & Condie describe their work as 'horticultural installation art'. Their area of interest principally concerns new ways of engaging with and representing landscape and nature. The combination of Heywood's background in horticulture and anthropology and Condie's in botany and zoology has resulted in the formulation of a unique series of art works, which are often hard to classify. Their practice crosses many genres including land art, sculpture, horticulture, painting, video and performance and individual works can often synthesize elements from all of these disciplines in their final realization. So, often a work will be the result of multidisciplinary investigations into an area of interest.

For example, a sample of nature could be captured on film, translated into a drawing within a happening, which is turned into a maquette and then a monumental sculpture, which then may become the prop for a film, performance piece or installation.

Their works vary in scale from large-scale public commissions covering many acres to smaller gallery-based work including micro landscapes in petri dishes. A notable feature of much of the work is the inclusion of living plant material.