

Press Release: 22.09.2020

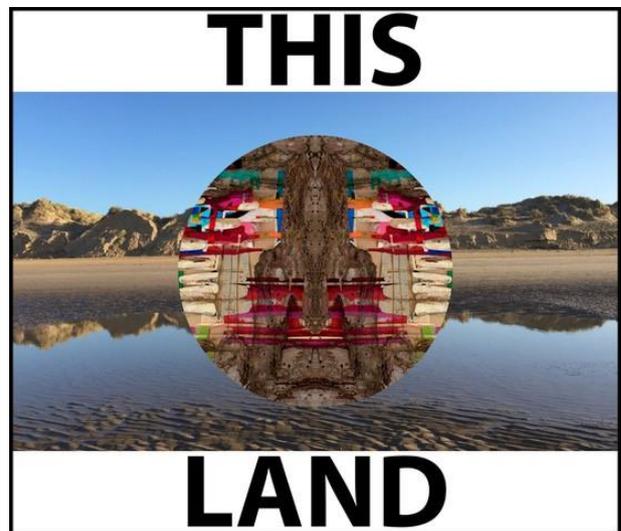
Heywood & Condie: This Land

10 October 2020 – 27 March 2021

This Land is an ambitious multi layered portrayal of Tony Heywood's and Alison Condie's experience and time spent within Sefton's constantly evolving coastline. The exhibition splices personal memory with local fables and engages with the physical reality and geological forms unique to the Sefton coast. This Land presents an abstract, otherworldly rendition of a uniquely special environment.

This Land is a multi-media exhibition interweaving film, sculpture, painting, music and botanical field study in order to create a personal portrait of the Sefton coastline. Heywood & Condie spend much of their time in Formby in order to explore and dwell within what they describe as *"one of the most haunting and mystical landscapes in the British Isles"*.

Heywood & Condie's practice is multi-disciplinary. They describe their approach to creating **This Land** as involving deep physical and psychological immersion into the local environment. The artists often use the term 'garden' when talking about the landscape, specifically in their approach to creating this exhibition.



The final artwork assimilates both natural and cultural artefacts within a series of wall and floor-based compositions, all inspired from Heywood & Condie's experience of walking in this landscape. Large monochrome blocks of vibrant coloured textile expand across the gallery walls as colour field backdrops to support the overlaid intertwined mix of oil and pastel paintings, sculpture, foraged natural and cultural ephemera all of which are specific to this coast.

Spirit Beach Totems will greet visitors upon entry to the exhibition. The life sized, hand woven figurative screens are described by the artists as *"quasi mystical beings, landscape conductors or master gardeners whose purpose could be described as guardians or custodians of this newly mapped territory"*.

The literal inter-weaving of organic and artificial material to create giant, abstract, bricolage wall-based works suggests an attempt to realise, within the art work, what the artists describe as *"an alternative psycho-geographic mapping or deeply personal, intimate and private cosmology of this coastline"*.

The assimilation of the natural and the artificial is perhaps expressed most dramatically in Condie's *'Shell Suits'*. Clothing from local charity shops has been painstakingly embellished, indeed encrusted with shells collected from the beach, in a homage perhaps to the pearly kings and queens of London's East end where Condie used to spend time.

The *'Shell Suits'* have themselves been worn originally as ritual attire during a recital of Heywood's accompanying film – a musical poetic and psychedelic extravaganza called *'This Land'*. The film is a surreal homage to the forests and dunes of Sefton and includes reference to Heywood's childhood spent in

Freshfield where he grew up. Now 50 years later, the landscape is poetically reimagined as a place haunted by eccentric animal figures that embody Heywood's memories and imaginings.

This somewhat surreal approach extends further into other gallery works involving a series of automatic drawing processes. Under a form of shamanic trance, Heywood completed a series of quickly executed drawings of specific features and local folk events encountered during one visit to the beach. The drawings were then digitised, with the pencil lines etched out into a series of 'marble drawings' that were subsequently inlaid with black Mesolithic mud taken from the beach, creating a dark infill.

This Land has clearly provided a magical and mystical dynamic to Heywood & Condie's practice.

This exhibition is dedicated to Tony's parents, Mona & Arnold Heywood.

Heywood & Condie: This Land

theatkinson.co.uk/exhibition/heywood-condie

Free Entry, Monday-Saturday, 11am-4pm

heywoodandcondie.com @heywoodandcondie

Heywood & Condie are represented by Vigo Gallery, London. vigogallery.com/gallery

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Notes to editors

Contact

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The Atkinson's reopening times & services

Monday – Saturday, 11am – 4pm (Closed on Sundays and Bank Holidays)

Library, Box Office, Museum, Gallery, Shop, Café

theatkinson.co.uk/visit-us/plan-your-visit/opening-times/

As with other public services, we are limiting the number of visitors allowed into The Atkinson, please expect to queue to enter the building. You are also required to provide NHS Test & Trace details on arrival. These details are kept securely for 21 days and held only for the purpose of contacting people who may have been exposed to a confirmed case of Covid-19 when they have been identified as visiting The Atkinson. As Sefton Council are the Public Health Authority, we will fully support the programme by allowing in only those willing to give their details.

It is mandatory to wear protective face coverings throughout The Atkinson, unless you are eating in the cafe. When you enter The Atkinson, sanitise your hands and follow the directional signage on the floor. Please limit your visit to a maximum of one hour per day and adhere to social distancing measures throughout the building.

Toilet facilities are available for visitors to The Atkinson. Seating areas have been temporarily removed. Please ask a member of staff if you need assistance.

There is a one-way system in place around the museum and galleries and the interactive displays have been temporarily removed. Free Entry. Booking is not required. *Maximum capacity of 10 visitors at a time in the Museum and 30 visitors at a time in the Gallery.*

We appreciate your support in following guidance from staff, ensuring a safe environment is always maintained.