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## After Discovering a Trove of Odd, Extraordinary Paintings in a Thrift Store, Artist Andy Holden Is Bringing the Little-Known Artist to Light

The artist has offered his own interpretation of the found material with an animated film.

Jo Lawson-Tancred (<https://news.artnet.com/about/jo-lawson-tancred-14118>), April 26, 2023

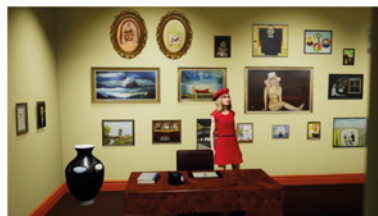


A still from Andy Holden, *Kingdom of the Sick*. Image courtesy of Andy Holden.

Occasionally someone is lucky enough to come across forgotten or undervalued treasure in a charity shop, but it's not often that they accidentally find an artist's entire oeuvre. This is what happened to British artist Andy Holden, who discovered not only a collection of paintings by artist Hermione Burton, who died in 2007, but also her framed photographs and self-published autobiography while rifling through a shop in his hometown of Bedford a few years ago.

Now, Holden is presenting more than 20 of the artist's paintings alongside his own interpretative films in the exhibition "Full of Days" at the Gallery of Everything in London.

With her slightly naive style, Burton would be classified as an outsider or self-taught artist today, but Holden was immediately drawn to her works' fantastical, otherworldly nature. After reading her autobiography, which narrates the events of her life as well as delving into her lifelong struggle with rheumatic heart disease, Holden even tracked down some of her subjects to record their memories of Burton.



A still from Andy Holden, *Kingdom of the Sick*. Image courtesy of Andy Holden.

In the exhibition's longest film, *Kingdom of the Sick*, which runs for 40 minutes, a motion capture animated version of Burton played by musician Sarah Cracknell is brought to life in the artist's trademark red beret. The documentary/biopic gives audiences an overview of her life before offering Holden's own interpretation of this found material that seeks to explore the ways in which sickness and grief can affect our experiences of time.

Burton was born in 1926 in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, but later moved with her second husband to live the U.S., where she became the one of the first-ever patients to undergo open-heart surgery. It was during her recovery that she turned to art.

Made homesick one day by hearing Tom Jones's *Green Green Grass of Home* on the radio, she returned to England where she met her third husband, Frank Burton. As her health continued to decline and she was forced to undergo more surgery, Burton kept up her artistic practice and slowly started to gain local recognition, even exhibiting at the Gallery in Wellingborough in 1987.

As Burton frequently painted herself and those that were close to her, Holden has read her undated artworks as though they are a diary, but one without a strict linear structure. He has searched for narrative clues elsewhere. For example, perspectival shifts in the composition that might easily be written off as technical ineptitude have instead been read by Holden as being intentional expressions of a change in Burton's worldview.

Through his own study of Burton's art, Holden prompts the viewer to consider both the tempting possibilities and the limitations of interpreting the work that any artist leaves behind.

Preview some of Hermione Burton's paintings below.



Hermione Burton, *Still Life*. Image courtesy of Andy Holden.

"Full of Days" is on view at the Gallery of Everything, 4 Chiltern St, London, through April 30.