

theCoLAB  
TEMPLE



## **theCoLAB Temple presents *The Artist's Garden***

***Through the Cosmic Allotment* by Heywood & Condie**

**13 October 2022 – June 2023**

*The Artist's Garden*, situated on the vast half acre public access roof terrace on top of Temple Underground station, celebrates its first anniversary with the unveiling of an expansive new work by horticultural installation artists Heywood & Condie.

Artist-gardeners for over 60 years, *Through the Cosmic Allotment* expresses the immense unseen power of the world of plants. A vibrant living installation that draws us beyond our everyday sensual interface with plants, it celebrates our ability to find spiritual and psychic affinity with the non-human world.

*The Artist's Garden* is the first time the vast undiscovered terrace on top of Temple Underground Station between the Thames and the Strand has come to life since it was built in 1870 by Sir Joseph Bazalgette. The 1,400 sqm space is a secret place unknown to all but the few Londoners who can see it from their elevated places of work, or who descend from nearby building sites for lunch. Invisible from the street, it is reached by well-worn steps with foreboding gates at the top of which a massive space opens up, offering spectacular views towards the South Bank opposite. The inaugural project was the critically acclaimed *Back in the Air: A Meditation on Higher Ground* by Lakwena.

For *Through the Cosmic Allotment*, on arrival at the summit of the steps, the viewer is confronted by an acid green lawn and four greenhouses with trees, endless sky and the Thames as this 'garden's' backdrop. An elevated and intriguing location for an allotment, which the artists consider to be a portal through which the gardener can reconnect with nature. The greenhouse, 'the horticultural world's equivalent of a temple', is central to any allotment. It is a place to carry out the many rituals of gardening involving nurture and care – watering, pruning, pricking out. This devotional engagement makes the greenhouse a place where human and plant co-exist; a place where heaven and earth meet. The ritual of gardening requires a constant shift of

attention from the macro – the elemental forces of weather, temperature and light – to the micro – consideration of sub-soil organisms and the balance of microscopic nutrients.

The abstracted sculptural gardens of the four greenhouses make us consider our relationship with nature. However, glass stands between the viewer and the internal gardens. The glass is both transparent and made semi-opaque by drawings, glyphs, symbols and marks: a ‘jangle of information’ which makes it hard to focus the eye on what is inside or outside. These floating drawings are both a barrier and a portal. As barrier, they signify our increasing alienation from nature, as a portal, they signify the invisible forces of nature communicating ‘beyond the noise’.

The first greenhouse contains a complex assemblage of giant bejeweled sculptures, versions of single cell microorganisms found in ponds and rivers, that are scaled up to a level of hyper-visibility to create a parody on the insignificant, overlooked and unrecognised.

The second greenhouse adopts a Zen Garden formation containing fluorescent neon pink, green and orange simplifications of *scholars’ rocks*. These naturally occurring rock formations were brought into the studios and gardens of ancient Chinese philosophers to allow them to meditate.

The third greenhouse contains an interpretation of the ancient celestially orientated double stone circles of the Druids. Progressively simpler forms are drawn on the exterior of the greenhouses until we arrive at the most minimal of marks: the dot and the wave which hover on the glass of the fourth greenhouse. These less frenetic and less dense forms float above an inner world that is composed entirely of thousands of sculpted clay forms which refer to the invisible sub-atomic particles within a quantum field - where science and spirituality converge in their quest for the smallest most singular truth to be found in nature.

Heywood and Condie say, *“The garden has always been an artistic medium through which we understand our place within cyclical time and our relationship to the wider cosmos through the tending of the earth itself. The garden is a place to learn about non-human relationships and contemplate our place within a bigger cosmological whole. We suggest that our separation from nature is only an illusion. Nature and landscape, if attended to in a more spiritual manner, can empty the mind, and lead to a more virtuous and humbled way of being in the world alongside all other life forms.”*

Claire Mander of theCoLAB says, *“The Artist’s Garden has opened up a little-known public access space above Temple tube station. Raised skywards and flanked by the Thames, it is an ideal place to contemplate Heywood & Condie’s Through the Cosmic Allotment, a dynamic and hopeful journey encouraging us to positively reconnect to the natural world and reach beyond our environmental woes. Through an amalgamation of gardens, sculpture, drawing and colour, the work affirms the importance of actively contemplating, listening, and appreciating our relationship to the world of plants, gardens and nature. theCoLAB and Westminster City Council continue to work in partnership to make this London’s most unique outdoor art haven and platform for women artists.”*

Cllr Tim Roca, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Young People, Learning & Leisure, said *“We’re thrilled to be partnering with the COLAB again to bring a new installation, Through the Cosmic Allotment, to The Artist’s Garden on top of Temple Underground Station. This exciting new installation will transform a previously underused public space, creating a beautiful and educational cultural project and allowing visitors to reconnect with the natural world. The council’s ambition is to make world-class culture accessible for residents and visitors to Westminster, and this project will help develop The Artist’s Garden into a celebrated open-air gallery in the heart of our city.”*

Continuing its collaboration with the Royal College of Art/Yorkshire Sculpture Park, *The Artist's Garden* will host a residency with Abigail Norris, the winner of the Graduate Award 2022 for her body of work entitled *In the Nightshade Garden*. From December 2022 until March 2023, she will be in the Artist's Hut making the intertwining of animal and vegetable drawing from the ancient myth of *The Vegetable Lamb of Tartary*. The myth entailed a lamb being born out of a plant and is thought to be linked to the cotton plant and its trade.

*The Artist's Garden* is realised in partnership with Westminster City Council and this commission is supported private philanthropists. With thanks to WSP, Northbank BID, Vigo Gallery and with kind permission of LUL/Transport for London.

*Through the Cosmic Allotment* is free and open daily from 8am with seasonal closing times at dusk.

#### **NOTES FOR EDITORS**

##### **About Heywood & Condie**

Heywood & Condie, partners in life and work, are horticultural installation artists. Their work explores new ways of engaging with and representing landscape and nature. They live and work in London. They are represented by Vigo Gallery. <https://www.heywoodandcondie.com/> <https://www.vigogallery.com/>

##### **About theCoLAB**

theCoLAB collaborates with inventiveness creating opportunities for artists to use unusual sites as experimental laboratories to realise their most ambitious, far-flung and life-affirming work. Operating beyond the confines of the white cube since 2011, theCoLAB conceives and realises its large scale, long term, complex artistic interventions. Working with partners from English Heritage, Rivers and Canals Trust to businesses to national collections, theCoLAB's work changes the way we perceive, experience and understand the interrelation of space, place, concept and sculpture. For more information visit [www.thecolab.art](http://www.thecolab.art) / Instagram @thecolab.art

#### **HIGH RESOLUTION IMAGES CAN BE DOWNLOADED HERE FROM WEDNESDAY 12 OCTOBER**

##### **FOR MORE INFORMATION, INTERVIEWS AND IMAGES**

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