

Press Release – 8 February 2012

THE HEPWORTH WAKEFIELD PRESENTS

HEATHER & IVAN MORISON, BEN RIVERS AND DAVID THORPE

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Opening on 11 February and running until 10 June 2012, this will be the first in a regular series of spring exhibitions that explore common concerns and themes in the work of some of the most innovative contemporary artists.

Heather and Ivan Morison, Ben Rivers and David Thorpe use film, sculpture, installation and performance to pose questions regarding our relationship to nature and what happens when man-made and natural worlds collide. These exhibitions explore utopian beliefs and practices and an impending sense of apocalypse.

Simon Wallis, Director of The Hepworth Wakefield said: "We are delighted to be working with these four artists, whose work has a fascinating resonance and dialogue with our collection. I look forward to seeing the rich variety of ideas and mediums within the gallery spaces and how they will, once again, transform our offer to our audience."

Heather and Ivan Morison will present a new body of work using objects, performance and puppetry to draw on the life and work of 20th century British novelist Anna Kavan. This new work will be framed within *Anna*, an allegorical piece of object theatre that depicts a tale of love in ominous and foreboding times. *Anna's* three narrators are represented by a large netted sphere that floats sun-like in the gallery space and two contrasting large-scale wall works, produced using soot and black bone pigment, and chalk and white bone pigment.

Other objects will be placed amongst the three narrators including a piece of lime representing a bone, cast concrete representing a wooden plank and melted church candles as beautiful flowers. This new exhibition will complement the Morisons' outdoor commission for the gallery, *The Black Cloud*, 2011.

Ben Rivers will be showing his recent award-winning film *Slow Action*. Fresh from the Viennale Film Festival, this post-apocalyptic science-fiction film comprises a series of four 16mm sections filmed on location at three island sites across the globe: Lanzarote, Gunkanjima and Tuvalu, as well as Somerset in England. Presenting a series of constructed realities, the film exists somewhere between documentary, ethnographic study and fiction, with soundtrack narratives by American novelist and critic Mark von Schlegell.

Continuing his exploration of curious and extraordinary environments, *Slow Action* applies the idea of island biogeography - the study of how species and eco-systems evolve differently when isolated and surrounded by unsuitable habitats - to a conception of the Earth in a few hundred years where the sea level rises to absurd heights, creating hyperbolic utopias that appear as possible future mini-societies.

Slow Action was filmed in four locations: Lanzarote - a strange and beautiful island known for its beach resorts, yet one of the driest places on the planet, full of dead volcanoes and modernist architecture; Gunkanjima - an island off the coast of Nagasaki, Japan, a deserted city built on a rock, once home to thousands of families mining its rich coal reserves; Tuvalu - one of the smallest countries in the world, with tiny strips of land barely above sea level in the middle of the Pacific; and Somerset - an as yet to be discovered island and its inhabitants.

This series of constructed realities explores the environments of self-contained lands and the search for information to enable the reconstruction of soontobelost worlds. *Slow Action*, inspired by novels such as Samuel Butler's *Erewhon*, Francis Bacon's *The New Atlantis*, Herbert Read's *The Green Child* and Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*, embodies the spirit of exploration, experiment and active research that has come to characterise Rivers' practice.

From the same body of work Rivers will also exhibit a series of photographic portraits entitled *Somerset Clade*.

David Thorpe's installation comprises new watercolours and meticulously crafted sculptural works, presented for the first time in Europe. Thorpe's sculptures explore his interest in rehabilitating ancient craftsmanship and labour-intensive artisanal techniques. Drawing on the Arts and Crafts Movement and the work of William Morris and John Ruskin, Thorpe explores new forms of utopianism, where past and present intersect.

The exhibition includes two watercolours, *A Necessary Life*, 2011 and *Revived Pattern*, 2010. The latter depicts a repeated motif of natural forms. The beautiful and stylised paintings of intertwined leaves and berries are visually analogous to a hedge or natural shield. The reference to barriers is also apparent in two 'screen' sculptures, both titled *Endeavours*, 2010, that stand over a metre high and are inlaid with ceramic tiles. These imposing forms create a secondary space within the gallery, one that contains and encloses the other sculptures so that the idea of a natural enclosure repeats itself in the exhibition.

The sculptures *Private Lives*, *Quiet Lives* and *The Collaborator* (all 2010) resemble a box or container each patterned with vines, leaves and flowers and resting on carved wooden legs. Light emanates from the enclosures of *Private Lives* and *Quiet Lives*, conveying a mysterious, protected void. In the case of *The Collaborator*, the sculpture makes a low noise when approached, a kind of warning signal perhaps. In all cases the objects are imbued with a sense of animation or spirit. The idea that an object carries with it the energies and conditions of its making is drawn, in part, from the work of John Ruskin. In working with skilled craftsmen Thorpe researches and uses pre-industrial methods of paint production, carving, wood-turning, ceramics and leather-cutting. Each of these works stand as a manifestation of the endeavour and care with which they are made and, as in the time of the Arts and Crafts Movement, act as a riposte to today's contemporary cheap industrialised production techniques.

The Hepworth Wakefield is one of largest contemporary art spaces outside London. Since opening its doors to the public on 21 May, the gallery has already welcomed over 385,000 visitors, doubling its initial first year target. The Hepworth Wakefield offers an engaging programme of learning projects, regular talks, lectures, performances and screenings. Facilities include a café bar, a shop, a unique conference venue, learning studios, gallery garden and riverside play area.

For more on The Hepworth Wakefield, including the new spring events and activities programme visit www.hepworthwakefield.org or call 01924 247360.

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Interviews and earlier previews of the exhibition are by request to Naomi Roberts. Please RSVP to naomiroberts@hepworthwakefield.org or call +44 (0)1924 247392.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES:

A selection of images are available online from our Media Centre: www.hepworthwakefield.org/press
For further information relating to The Hepworth Wakefield please contact:

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Hollie Latham 01924 247391 / hollielatham@hepworthwakefield.org

EDITOR'S NOTES:

THE HEPWORTH WAKEFIELD

The gallery is at the heart of Wakefield's regeneration. Designed by the internationally acclaimed practice, David Chipperfield Architects, it is funded by Wakefield Council and Arts Council England with additional funding from a number of charitable trusts and private individuals. The spring exhibition is supported by the Audrey & Stanley Burton Charitable Trust.

The Hepworth Wakefield, Gallery Walk, West Yorkshire, WF1 5AW
Free admission
Open Tuesday – Sunday, 10am – 5pm and 10am – 9pm Third Thursday of every month
Closed Mondays (except for Bank Holidays and school holidays).
www.hepworthwakefield.org
01924 247360

THE ART FUND PRIZE 2012

The Hepworth Wakefield is delighted to announce it has been included in the long-list for the Art Fund Prize 2012. The ten galleries and museums will be shortlisted to just four finalists, to be announced on 14 May 2012.

The Art Fund Prize is the largest single arts prize in the UK which recognises and rewards the best project of the previous calendar year at a museum or gallery, large or small, anywhere in the United Kingdom. 2012 sees the tenth year of awarding the Museum Prize. The winner of the Art Fund Prize for museums and galleries will be announced on 19 June 2012 at the Prize ceremony at the British Museum.

The winning museum or gallery receives a cheque for £100,000 and the Prize Bowl in enamelled silver by the craftsman Vladimir Böhm, which it can display for one year. The 2011 winner of the Art Fund Prize was the British Museum for *A History of the World*.

The purpose of the Art Fund Prize is to increase public appreciation and enjoyment of all that museums and galleries have to offer by awarding an annual prize to a museum or gallery whose recent project demonstrates originality, imagination and excellence. It is open to all Registered/Accredited museums and galleries in the UK.

The Art Fund Prize for museums and galleries is funded by the Art Fund, the national charity which helps museums and galleries to buy, show and share art for the enjoyment of all. You can find out more about the Art Fund at www.artfund.org.

For press enquiries relating to the Art Fund Prize contact: Philip Abraham, pabraham@artfund.org / 020 7225 8804.

CONTEMPORARY EXHIBITIONS PROGRAMME 2012

The Hepworth Wakefield builds on this artistic legacy with a regularly changing and ambitious exhibition programme of historic, modern and contemporary art.

- 11 February – 10 June: HEATHER & IVAN MORISON, BEN RIVERS AND DAVID THORPE
- 23 June – 14 October: ARTIST ROOMS On Tour with The Art Fund: RICHARD LONG
(includes new site-specific commission for The Hepworth Wakefield)
- 23 June – 14 October: LUKE FOWLER: a new film commission
(supported by the Contemporary Art Society through 'commission to collect', the Annual Award for Museums – a partnership project with Wolverhampton Art Gallery and Film and Video Umbrella)

COLLECTIONS DISPLAYS

5 May - November 2013: Post-War British Sculpture and Painting
(major new collection display across two galleries)

OUTDOOR COMMISSION

Until September 2012: HEATHER & IVAN MORISON: *The Black Cloud*
(supported by Art in Yorkshire)

HEATHER & IVAN MORISON

Currently live and work in Brighton and North Wales.

1973 Heather Peak was born in Desborough, UK.
1974 Ivan Morison was born in Istanbul, Turkey.

Recent Exhibitions and Projects:

2011 *The Black Cloud*, The Hepworth Wakefield, West Yorkshire, England; *Black Pig Lodge*, 2011, The Southbank Centre; *Plaza*, 2010/11, Vancouver Art Gallery

- 2010 *An Unreachable Country. A Long Way to Go*, Aspex Gallery, Portsmouth; *Frost King*, Open Satellite, Seattle, USA; *Mr. Clever*, ongoing project commissioned by Contemporary Art Spaces Tasmania, Queenstown, Tasmania, AU
- 2009 *Falling Into Place*, published by Bookworks, London and Situations, University of West of England, Bristol; *The Black Cloud*, Situations, University of West of England, Bristol; *The Black Line*, Void, Derry, Northern Ireland; *The Shape of Things to Come*, Situations, University of West of England, Bristol; *I hate her. I hate her*, Black Dog Times, produced in collaboration with Full Beam Visual Theatre, Bristol

The Black Cloud was originally commissioned by Situations at the University of the West of England for Victoria Park, Bristol in 2009. Supported by Art in Yorkshire.

BEN RIVERS

1972 Born in Somerset
1990-93 Falmouth School of Art

Recent Exhibitions and Projects:

- 2010 *On Overgrown Paths*, Impressions Gallery, Bradford; *Origin of the Species*, Kate McGarry, London
- 2009 *A World Rattled of Habit*, A Foundation, Liverpool; *Origin of the Species*, Picture This, Bristol

Selected Awards:

Fipresci Award, Best Film Orizzonti and International Critics Week, 68th Venice Film Festival
Baloise Art Prize, Art/42/Basel 2011 Awards

DAVID THORPE

1972 Born in London, lives and works in Berlin, Germany
1991-94 Humberside University, BA(Hons) Fine Art
1996-98 Goldsmiths College, MA Fine Art

Recent Exhibitions and Projects:

- 2011 *The Shape Of Things To Come: New Sculpture*, The Saatchi Gallery, London
- 2010 Casey Kaplan, New York, NY; Meyer Riegger, Karlsruhe, Germany
- 2009 *The Dark Monarch: Magic and Modernity in British Art*, Tate St. Ives; *A Weak Light Flickering*, Meyer Riegger, Berlin, Germany; *David Thorpe Veils and Shelters*, Kunstverein Hannover, Hannover, Germany.

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