

HUMBER STREET GALLERY

EXHIBITION GUIDE

TRUST MELODY

ASHLEY HOLMES

26 JANUARY – 03 APRIL 2022
SPACE 2

INTRODUCTION

Trust Melody is an ambitious new installation made up of audio, textiles, sculpture and moving image works. It continues the artist's ongoing work and research on the collection and presentation of music and sound.

The title of the exhibition comes from re-adaptations of the lyrics found within the songs that have played a key role in the artist's research, exploring themes of trust, belonging, kinship and collective memory. *Trust Melody* sits alongside recent projects developed by Holmes and explores how practices such as sampling and cover versions found in genres such as dub and reggae can connect with parts of our history and better understand our own position in relation to the experience of others.

The title of exhibition is also shared by one of the works featured in a gallery. An expansive sound landscape bathes the exhibition and is played through five speakers positioned across the space. The sounds are a combination of field recordings captured by Holmes whilst exploring the natural landscape, some taken from small alcoves, some taken from along the coastline and some even recorded underwater using a hydrophone, which is a microphone specifically designed to capture underwater sounds. The speakers located towards the edge of the gallery emit a more abstract audio loop where the artist has taken shorter recorded sounds and through a process of editing and stretching, has removed them from their more recognisable original form. The two central speakers, high upon a pillar in the gallery, broadcast a more melodic sound, which incorporates sections from tracks by others that are sampled and remixed alongside newly improvised vocals. The process of borrowing, re using and re circulating is important to Holmes, and comes from a rich tradition in music and sound. The sound landscape sets the tone as to how the exhibition is to be encountered and pulls you around the gallery space, washing over you and the other artworks. Lines from tracks such as *"Still Waiting"* by Bob Marley & The Wailers from 1965 as well as writing by the artist touch on devotion, belonging and memory are spoken over rhythmic beats.

Another noticeable change to the gallery space is the lighting, in that fields of red and blue have been created across the room. The combination of sound and light are intended to transport you as a visitor to a new place, away from the traditions of an art gallery and into a more experiential environment, with the blue being a subtle reference to the sea, in both the gallery's immediate location to water as well as some of the audio landscape that surrounds you.

Other artworks in the exhibition, such as the sculpture *"Going Back (Soft Rock, Steady Melody)"* located on a series of shipping palettes and the hanging assemblages *"A Suh It Guh"*, continue the artists interests in water and the creation of stories around travel and migration associated with the sea. These sculptures, made up of defunct audio and speaker equipment appear to have been dragged from the ocean bed, pulling rope and other discarded materials with it. The artworks suggest a history, almost as if they are from another world, existing like object from a shipwreck.

Across the exhibition there are numerous references to music, through the use of speaker cabinets, vinyl records and broken CDs. For Holmes, music is a way of carrying and sharing stories through history and across cultures. Looking through a musical archive is like accessing a portal between time, transporting you from one era to another instantly and connecting to relatives and communities long since passed. *"Black Label Journal 1 & 2"*, includes a collection of vinyl records inherited by the artist from his grandparents. Inherited objects such as this and personal collections become a way of passing down stories and memories from one generation to another and often bring with them a combination of both celebratory and mournful emotions. The work also references parts of the artist's own heritage, with the frill surrounding the canvas stretcher taken from vintage furniture that surround in living rooms of his childhood. The canvases themselves are re-used previous works by the artist, further referencing the remake and repurpose mentality embedded across the exhibition.

Accompanying this work, to the right, you find a related piece titled *"Black Label Journal (interlude)"*, which sees two speaker cabinets acting as shelving to hold up a set of tea lights and a moleskin notebook. Within the notebook can be read a full list of the vinyl collection handed to the artist by his grandparents, and visitors to the exhibition are invited to look through and share that history. Compasses hang from the speaker cabinets, again as a reference to navigation and specifically maritime forms of way-finding. Like some of the speaker and musical equipment found in other artworks, the compasses represent an almost entirely defunct technology, pointing to a way of engaging with parts of our history. The tea lights and lavender incense act as a shrine to his grandparents, paying homage to people whose presence appears throughout the exhibition.

Towards the back of the gallery, appearing from amongst the fauna of the hanging sculptures sits "*Hopeton*", a framed piece of handwritten text with a delicately positioned dried lily plant laid over the top. The text are the lyrics from the song "*Take It Easy*" from 1967 by Hopeton Lewis, which appears within the sound landscape. The lily plant is a cutting taken from the artist's grandfather's back garden prior to his passing, acting as a melancholic object soaked in memory and preserved within the frame.

Two new films are also included within the exhibition, one projected on a wall and the other directly onto the floor. The films themselves are constructed in a similar way to the sound installation, in that they are a collage of film footage collected by Holmes during walks he has taken over the last few years, exploring the natural landscape. The footage emphasises links to travel, movement and land which appear in other artworks in the exhibitions, whilst also touching upon ideas of access and ownership. Holmes is interested in the history of land access and the connection to the natural world, specifically through the lens of the Black experience. Laid over the top of this footage are scans of his recently inherited record collection, meticulously layered over, acting as a visual archive of works of sound. The films themselves also include footage of water, lapping up onto the shoreline, linking elements of the exhibition back to themes of the sea, movement and migration.

Trust Melody aims to explore cultural memory and the potential of music to act as an alternative form of storytelling by making connections between sound, place, technology and race.

To accompany the exhibition, Ashley Holmes has collected a lot of his research material into an easily accessible archive. You can access this archive by visiting the link below.

are.na/ashley-holmes/trust-melody

THANK YOUS

Ashley Holmes and Absolutely Cultured would like to thank the following people for their continued support:

David Priestman
Sean Azzopardi
Alex Stubbs
Bone Machine Brew Co

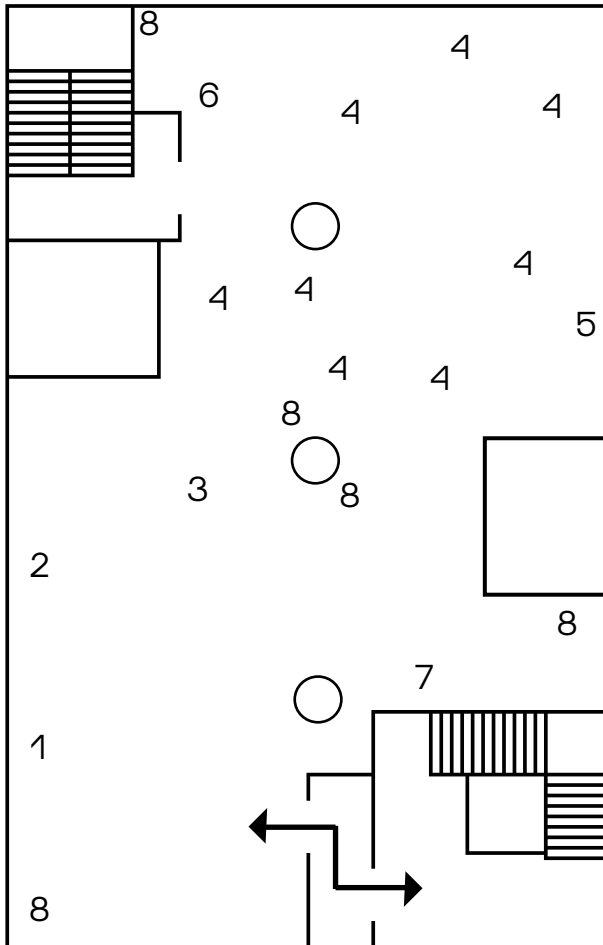
ABOUT THE ARTIST

Ashley Holmes (b. Luton, 1990) is a multidisciplinary artist based in Sheffield working between sound, video, radio broadcasts and performance.

He hosts Tough Matter, a monthly broadcast on NTS Radio and also facilitates Open Deck – a series of gatherings giving space to collectively listen and hold discursive space around relationships to music, sound and oral histories.

Recent selected work & projects include; REWORKS / PDA, as part of Radio Arts Catalyst Residency programme (2021); A Free Moment, solo exhibition curated by Christina Gigliotti at Futura Centre for Contemporary Art, Prague, (2020); away, completely: denigrate, group exhibition curated by Languid Hands at Narrative Projects, London (2020); Double 6, audiovisual installation and performance w R.I.P. Germain commissioned by Poor Image Projects at former Court Room of Leeds Town Hall, Leeds (2019); Survey, group exhibition by Jerwood Arts, London. Toured to G39, Cardiff; The Bluecoat, Liverpool; BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead; Jerwood Visual Arts, London (2018 – 2019); .and their tooth, finest gold: group exhibition curated by Deborah Joyce Holman at Les Urbaines, Lausanne (2018).

WORK DETAILS, SECOND FLOOR



7. *Soulseek, Sunk n Place pt II*, digital film, 2022

8. *Trust Melody*, audio 40 mins, continuous loop, 2022

TRUST MELODY: SPACE 2

1. *Black Label Journal 1 & 2*, black dye, vinyl records, pine wood, rope, netting, 2022

2. *Black Label Journal (interlude)*, speakers cabinets, tea lights, moleskin notebook, 2022

3. *Going Back (Soft Rock, Steady Melody)*, speaker drivers, steel, plaster, netting, rope, coir, moss, 2022

4. *A Suh It Guh*, speaker drivers, replica Apple iPhone headphones, rope, netting, coir, plaster, bungee cord, 2022

5. *Hopeton*, framed print w/ lily plant, 2022

6. *Soulseek, Sunk n Place pt I*, digital film, 2022

RELATED ACTIVITY

Access our in person and online public programme to learn more about the artists and the exhibition. You can book access all of the related activity by following the links on the exhibition page.

THURSDAY LATES: EMILY GRAY & JAMAL STERRETT
THURSDAY 17 FEBRUARY, 7PM – 9PM
SPACE 1, SPACE 2 & GALLERY CAFÉ
BOOKING REQUIRED

A double bill will see new performance work by dancers Emily Gray and Jamal Sterrett. Both Emily and Jamal will develop unique performances in response to themes of identity, technology, reality, and history, as will be explored in new solo exhibitions on throughout Spring 2022 at Humber Street Gallery by Ashley Holmes and Kara Chin.

ABOUT US

Humber Street Gallery is an Absolutely Cultured project. Originally established in 2017 as part of the City of Culture programme, it has developed into a vibrant, high-quality contemporary visual art space for Hull. It is now a significant contributor to the contemporary visual arts offer in the north.

Our ambition for Humber Street Gallery is to further develop the venue into a multi-artform and multi-functional creative centre, showcasing a wide range of art and activities providing something for everyone from visual art, dance, music to spoken word. Increasingly the space will be used to showcase more work by local as well as national and international practitioners.

OPENING TIMES

GALLERY

WED – SUN: 10:00 – 17:00

GALLERY CAFÉ

Wed – Thu: 10:00 – 17:00

Fri – Sun: 10:00 – LATE

CONTACT US

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