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Andy Holden shines a light on the extraordinary artistic legacy of Hermione Burton

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Holden's fascination with Burton's work only grew after reading her autobiography, which details her life story and her lifelong battle with rheumatic heart disease. Holden even went as far as tracking down some of her subjects to record their memories of Burton. In the exhibition's longest film, "Kingdom of the Sick," Holden brings Burton to life through a motion-captured animated version of the artist played by musician Sarah Cracknell. The film offers a glimpse into Burton's life before Holden presents his own interpretation of her work, exploring how sickness and grief can affect our perception of time.

Burton was born in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire in 1926, but later moved to the U.S. with her second husband, where she became one of the first patients to undergo open-heart surgery. During her recovery, she turned to art and slowly gained recognition as an artist. Despite struggling with her health, Burton continued to paint and eventually exhibited her work at the Gallery in Wellingborough in 1987.



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As Burton frequently painted herself and those close to her, Holden interpreted her updated artworks as a diary without a strictly linear structure. He has searched for narrative clues elsewhere, such as perspectival shifts in the composition that Holden believes are intentional expressions of a change in Burton's worldview.

Holden's interpretation of Burton's work challenges viewers to consider both the possibilities and limitations of interpreting an artist's legacy. Through his own study of Burton's art, Holden prompts the viewer to think about the ways in which sickness and grief can shape our perception of time and how the artist's personal life experiences can influence their work.

The exhibition "Full of Days" is a must-see for anyone interested in outsider art or the way in which personal experiences can shape an artist's work. Burton's paintings offer a glimpse into a fantastical world that will captivate audiences and leave them thinking about the power of art to transcend time and place. Thanks to Holden's tireless efforts, Burton's work is finally receiving the recognition it deserves, and audiences are getting a chance to discover the oeuvre of a little-known artist who was ahead of her time.



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