

Sarah Kate Wilson

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Sarah Kate Wilson (b. 1982) is a British London-based artist. Her painting practice includes ceramics, tapestry and ritual-like performances that involve costumed dancers and singers who perform with her paintings.

Wilson is engaged in making visible the seemingly 'invisible' forces and experiences that inspire her work, from stories of otherworldly events and temporal collapse to animal mimicry and the 'imaginal realm' where the physical and spiritual worlds meet. Recurring motifs populate her works, including, spirals, handprints, ripples, nets, fossils and butterflies as well as the Neolithic cup-and-ring marks carved into stone on the moors of West Yorkshire where she grew up.

Her scintillating paintings made with inks, wax, crayon, acrylic and oil on panel, canvas and holographic substrates range in size from canvases that fill your peripheral vision to intimate, head-sized works. She employs various European Surrealist automatism techniques and has developed a unique variation on frottage. Rather than finding textures to take rubbings from, she creates her own tactile surfaces, collaging hundreds of cut canvas shapes directly onto her paintings. Once painted she frottages over these sedimentary layers with wax and richly pigmented oil bar. Rather than lifting impressions her rubbings remain on the painting's surface. As many as ten layers of colour are built up in this way whilst she coaxes images to come into focus.

Her exquisite handling of colour and unique application of paint on densely textured surfaces result in deeply seductive paintings that fizz with vital energy as if alive, mirroring the natural and supernatural realms her work is inspired by.

Wilson received her MFA in Painting from the Slade School of Art, London in 2010 and Practice-based PhD (AHRC funded) awarded by University of Leeds in 2017. She has exhibited internationally including Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France; Royal Academy of Arts, London, UK; BALTIC 39, Newcastle, UK; The Bauhaus Museum, Dessau, Germany; The Museum of London, UK; The Tetley, Leeds, UK; The Cervantes Institute, New Delhi, India; Newlyn Gallery, Cornwall, UK; The Armory Centre, California, US; and the 5th Biennale Internazionale Donna, Trieste, Italy (2026). In 2024 she held an in-conversation about her work and research with Catherine Wood (Interim Director Tate Modern) coinciding with the publication of Wilson's text 'Paintings Liveness', in the *Journal of Contemporary Painting*, Vol.9 No. 2, Intellect Books. Wilson gave the Keynote address at the Symposium 'Painting in the Expanded Field', MTU Crawford College of Art and Design (2024). She has undertaken artist residencies at Xenia Creative Retreat, Hampshire, UK, Bauhaus Dessau, Germany and West Dean College, Chichester, UK within the Surrealist archives.

Selected Exhibitions and Performances

- 2026 **5th Biennale Internazionale Donna**, curated by Riccardo Rizzetto, *Bohemia Lies by the Sea, Practising Discontinuity, Imagining Otherwise*. Trieste, Italy.
The Times We Breathe, Spacio 02, Portopiccino, Trieste, Italy.
The Past is Beside Us, Clements & Co, London **(solo)**
- 2025 *In all times, in all places, somehow...*, Gallery 36, Newcastle **(solo)**
Old Shadows, Northumberland.
- 2024 *The Hog's Back: Donal Moloney, Ross Taylor and Sarah Kate Wilson*, Presented by Blackbird Rook, London.
Miniaturizing, M2 Gallery, London. **(solo)**
On Tenderness & Time, Daniel Katz Gallery, curated by Jenn Ellis. Presented by Xenia Creative Retreat.
Erotic Ecologies, APT Gallery, London.
- 2023 *TERRA*, Burgundy France, curated by Curated by Jenn Ellis and Emie Diamond, produced by Milena Berman.
Universe, (performance), Clissold Park, London.
Is the image even human?, Cervantes Institute, New Dehli
- 2021 *Not Painting*, Copperfield Gallery, London
After-Image, Blyth Gallery, London.
Yellow Archangel – Perceiving Anomalies, General Practice, Lincoln.
- 2020 'An Event' (performance), *Show-Off*, Presented by LeandaKateLouise, hosted by Cooke Latham, London.
'It's an Emergency', (performance) *OurHaus, 100 Years of Bauhaus*, Camberwell College of Arts, UAL.
Yellow Archangel, Oceans Apart, Salford.
- 2019 *Substantifs; New Painting and Materiality in the Screen Environment*, ArtHouse1, London.
'It's an Emergency', (performance) *Festival Stage Total*, Bauhaus Museum, Dessau, Germany.
The Nomenclature of Colours, The Slade Research Centre, UCL
The Painting Parade, Glasgow. Collaboration between Glasgow School of Art and artists Rose Davey and Sarah Kate Wilson
- 2018 *New Relics*, Thames-Side Studios Gallery, London.
Gifts, SKELF Site, Online. **(solo)**
Malevolent Eldritch Shrieking, Attercliffe™, Sheffield.
Surfaced: Surface and Materiality in the Screen Environment, Thames-Side Studios Gallery, London.
'Rainbows RA', (performance) Royal Academy of the Arts London. Work performed by choral ensemble MUSARC on the occasion of the opening of the new campus.
- 2017 *Wrapped*, Project Space, University of Leeds, Leeds. **(solo)**
'Rainbows Paris', (performance) *Do D!sturb Festival*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris. Work performed by choral ensemble MUSARC.
- 2016 *Iris*, BALTIC 39 | FIGURE THREE, Newcastle. **(solo)**
Pool, Griffin Gallery, London.
'Visors', (performance) Museum of London, on the occasion of the *Night Museum*. Work performed by choral ensemble MUSARC.

- 'Zumba', (performance), *DriveTime Underground*, on Resonance FM, curated by Neil Luck, London.
- 2015 *Part 9: Expanding on an expansive subject*. Armory Center For the Arts, Pasadena, California, USA. (solo)
Change and Interchange, Lancaster Arts, Lancaster University.
Painting in Time, The Tetley Gallery, Leeds, UK.
- 2014 *Sophia Starling / Kate Terry / Sarah Kate Wilson*, Newlyn Art Gallery, Cornwall, UK.
 'Zumba', (performance), *Show-Off*, Presented by LeandaKateLouise, London.

Alongside her studio practice Wilson curates

Curatorial Projects:

- 2024 *Erotic Ecologies*, APT Gallery, London, UK. Co-curated with Cath Ferguson, **Artists included:** Eirini Boukla, Cath Ferguson, Rebecca Partridge and Sarah Kate Wilson.
- 2020 *Show-Off*, London, UK. Co-curated with Rose Davey (hosted by Cooke Latham Gallery) **Artists included:** Paul Barlow, Olivia Bax, Gabriele Beveridge, Anthony Caro, Rose Davey, Harminder Judge, Rob Phillips, Tessa Whitehead, Sarah Kate Wilson, Gary Woodley.
- 2016 *Painting in Time: Part Two*, The Sullivan Galleries, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, USA. Curated by Sarah Kate Wilson organised by Claire Ashley. **Artists included:** Polly Apfelbaum, Paola Cabal, Debo Eilers, Kate Hawkins, Robert Chase Heishman and Megan Schvaneveldt, Jeff Huckleberry, Natasha Kidd, Rob Leech, Billy McGuinness, Jaclyn Mednicov, Lisa Milroy, Yoko Ono, Vincent Tiley and SAIC students Dylan Fish, Susie Choi, Sanjana Mehra, Sophia Padgett Perez, Jeremy Sublewski and Maryam Taghavi.
- 2015 *Painting in Time*, Co-curated with The Tetley, Leeds, UK. **Artists included:** Polly Apfelbaum, Kristina Buch, Robert Chase Heishman & Megan Schvaneveldt, Lisa Milroy, Yoko Ono, Hayley Tompkins, Jessica Warboys, Sarah Kate Wilson.
Edible Painting, The Tetley, Leeds, UK.
- 2014 *Show-Off*, London, UK, curated with LeandaKateLouise. **Artists included:** Martin Creed, Bruce McLean, Rose Davey, Mali Morris, Phoebe Unwin, Gary Woodley, Rose Wylie.

Residencies:

- 2024 Xenia Creative Retreat, Hampshire
- 2020-2022 West Dean College, Chichester, 'Surrealist Collection'.
- 2019 Visiting Artist Research Residency, Bauhaus Building, Dessau, Germany.
- 2010 Slade Research Residency, Slade School of Fine Art, UCL.

Selected conferences, talks, panels:

- 2026 (participant) *Painter Writer Roundtable*, Manchester Metropolitan University, convened by Andrew Bracey and Jenny Eden. Funded by the British Academy. 11.09.2026
- 2026 *Painted Garments; Conversations between Painting, Fashion and Textiles*. A Creative Symposium Co-convened by Dr Sarah Kate Wilson and Dr Tom Cardwell, The Hub, Camberwell College of Art, UAL. 22.05.2026.

- (panel) **The Matter of Painting** with Sarah Kate Wilson, Andrew Pierre Hart and Rebecca Wallace, Freeland Foundation, 28.10.2026.
- 2024 **SHAPESHIFTER: Painting & Performance**, paper given by Wilson, followed by in-conversation with Catherine Wood (Interim Director, Tate Modern) to coincide with the launch of Vol.9 No. 2, *Journal of Contemporary Painting*, Intellect Books.
- 2024 (Keynote Speaker) **'Painting and Performance', *Painting in the Expanded Field. A Symposium***, MTU Crawford College of Art and Design, 21.03.2024.
- 2020 (paper) **'Collaborative Painting'**, panel, ***Painting Pedagogy in DIY Times***, CCA Annual Conference, Chicago.
- 2019 (paper) **'Reimagining Xanti Schawinsky's Spectodrama: Play, Life, Illusion (1936)'**, *Bauhaus: Utopia in Crisis Symposium*, Camberwell College of Arts, UAL.
- 2019 (paper) ***Bauhaus and Performance, OurHaus, 100 Years of Bauhaus***, conference for Art, Design, Performance Educators Camberwell College of Arts, UAL.
- 2019 (co-convened panel) **'Keeping Painting in its Place: The refusal of the expanded field'**, AAH in Brighton
- 2018 (paper) **'Painting: a collaborative medium'**, *Teaching Painting Conference: Painting the New*, Royal Academy of the Arts, London.
- 2018 (paper) **'The Artists' Writings & Publication Research Centre Symposium'**, University of Leeds, The Tetley, Leeds with partners School of Fine Art at University of Leeds, Tate Library, British Library, V&A Library Collections.
- 2016 (paper) **'Alternative Methods of Exchange', *That Art Exhibits, on the idea of artistic curating and the tactics of display***, EARN Conference, LUCA University, Brussels. Keynote Chus Martínez.
- 2015 (Conference) **'Painting In Time'** organised by Sarah Kate Wilson, The Tetley, Leeds.
- 2015 **'Paint Club'**, The Tetley, Leeds. Co-ordinated by myself and Dr. Catherine Ferguson (University of Leeds), Artists in conversation, in conjunction with *Painting in Time*. PaintClub Leeds and PaintClub UAL collaboration. Panelists included Jeff Dennis and Lubaina Himid.
- 2015 ***Arts Council Collection, Curator's Days in Yorkshire***. (public talk alongside Jennifer Higgle, Ryan Mosley and Lisa Le Feuvre).
- 2012 (paper) ***Painting's Sites and Processes***, Symposium. Chelsea College of Art, UAL.
- 2012 (text) ***LeandaKateLouise, A Strategy***, Art Licks Issue 6.
- 2012 (text) ***Painting as Object***, Garageland Issue 13 *PAINT*.

Selected Publications:

- 2027 (Chapter Author) **'How Painting Performs; Painting as Gift, as Obligation, as Wishing Well, as Counter-Capitalist Object'**, in the *Routledge Companion to Contemporary Painting*, Ed's Donal Moloney and Craig Staff.
- 2027 (Journal) Guest Editing with Tom Cardwell a special issue of the *Journal of Contemporary Painting*, Intellect Books, titled 'Painted Garments'.
- 2024 (Paper) **'Painting's liveness'**, *Journal of Contemporary Painting*, Volume 9 No. 2, Intellect.
- 2020 (Review) **'Insight: Week 8, Aimée Parrott'**, a review, *Journal of Contemporary Painting*, Volume 6 No. 1 & 2, Intellect.
- AMBIT** (Comissioned Art Editor) with Rose Davey and Olivia Bax, Issue 241, Autumn 2020.

2019 (Catalogue Text) '**Painting: alive and live**', *Fully Awake* 5.6, Freelands Foundation.
2013 ***Ahead of Painting***, Bruce McLean and Klaas Hoek. Published by Bibiltheque McLean.

Awards:

2025 AN Bursary
2022 Developing your Creative Practice, Arts Council England
2021 Freelands Foundation Funding
2016 ***AHRC Funding Research Travel Fund***
2016 ***International Mobility Research Award***, Leeds University
(shortlisted) ***Jerwood Painting Fellowship***
2020 (shortlisted) ***British School of Rome, Abbey Fellowship***

Press:

2020 **AMBIT Issue 241**, Autumn 2020.
2017 ***Painting in Time***, reviewed in the Journal of Contemporary Painting by Nadine Feinson.
2015 ***Review: Painting in Time, The Tetley, Leeds***. Corridor8 (online 18.05.2015)
Review: Painting in Time at The Tetley. The State of The Arts (online 05.05.2015)
Painting in Time. Susie Stubbs, Creative Tourist (online 17.04.2015)
A Q&A with Sarah Kate Wilson, artist and curator. Jack Hutchinson, a-n magazine (online 08.04.2015)
Breaking painterly boundaries, Nicola Cappleman, Yorkshire Art Journal (online 08.05.2015)
Painting in Time, This is Tomorrow, Matthew Hearn, (online 28.05.2015)