

Sarah Kate Wilson; 'Braiding the wind', by Donal Moloney 2023

One of the first things one often asks when looking at a painting is where are we? Are we inside, outside, looking up, looking down, looking inwards, looking at, looking through, looking with? Very soon after encountering Wilson's 'Mimicry Paintings' I can't help but feel as though I am being gently moored and tethered to one fixed space. There's no discernible location to point out. No horizon line, no obvious remnants of reality, nor do these paintings seem completely non-representational. It is as if I am suspended in space, floating, drifting along with the shapes and forms that seem to move in and out of the paintings. These surfaces address me with braidings of flatness and depth through intense layering. What I can't get away from, is the feeling that I am being hypnotised into looking in a certain way. I'm reminded of Isabelle Graw's (2018) writing on Painting as a 'quasi' person; as if Wilson has imbued her paintings with attributes of a thinking being who can respond to my act of looking.



Crypsis, 2022, Acrylic, wax, fragments of holographic card, water-soluble pastel (on panel).
50.5 x 40 x 3.5 (55 x 45 x 3.5 Framed approx.)

As fragments of some form of painterly worlds, I begin to accept a continuance of this picture space outside the edges as forms appear cut off. This is a remarkable feat for any painting; to plant a seed of a bigger space that we can begin to imaginatively occupy standing in front of the painting. I see this not so much as a form of escapism from the real world but more like being unaware of being nudged into the gaseous/slow sliding of forms before returning to reality renewed.

I've just happened to look outside my window at how a gentle wind is moving branches in an ash tree over forty feet up. The wind is quiet, like Wilson's paintings. The tree is still and anchored but swayed by an invisible force in such a slow, unreal and imperceptible fashion. I can't help but think how Wilson's paintings have become some form of lens, with which to re-enchant something immaterial like the wind that can usually only be seen through its affect on the material world. The paintings have done this to me by chance, but I feel as though they have directly addressed me and how I perceive my surroundings in this present moment. This completely defines logic. However, it feels like serendipity; how these 'Mimicry Paintings' have ported into my imaginative and perceptual capacities to make me see differently. Chance magic.



Iridophores, 2020, Acrylic, Screenprinting inks, wax, water-soluble pastel (on panel).
50.5 x 40 x 3.5 (55 x 45 x 3.5 Framed approx.)



Alucinari, 2021, (detail) Acrylic, Screenprinting inks, wax, water-soluble pastel (on panel).
50.5 x 40 x 3.5 (Framed 55 x 45 x 3.5 approx.)

How and why do these paintings conjure the wind for me? And why is that important to think about today? It's something to do with the impermanence of the colours and shapes. Take, for example, the paintings 'Iridophores' and 'Alucinari'. One cannot isolate one strata of colour from its adjacent. Layers appear to be built up and worked back into with a mixture of pigments, inks and waxes. It is clear that a lot of searching has gone into bringing these the surfaces to this point. They appear found rather than orchestrated. I believe that Wilson did not enter a final destination into her studio 'Sat Nav'; she's just left the driveway and cajoled her materials into a form of liquid-like compass and map. I feel that if I look away that these painterly 'fields' will change. Maybe that's because I can't quite take in all the visual information at once, like anything we at look closely in nature. All this suggests the paintings locating us in some other idea of time not often associated with painting. Not the chronological time we experience in everyday life or the fragmented and exaggerated temporality of dreaming..

Both the 'Mimicry Paintings' and the 'Formation Drawings' on shaped supports elicit a more glacial notion of time. Works like 'Rock Time' only serve to confirm my suspicions that Wilson is in some form of dialogue with the way these works appear to stretch our sense of linear time in front of them. We're lured into their hypnotic spaces to consider a sort of re-centring of our relationship to the world around us. What's odd is that I can now feel them in my head without needing to look at them anymore. They've moved behind my eyes. They project out into my surroundings onto something as intangible as the wind. They encourage me, in their quiet way, to knowingly drift as they do and register what I see differently when I do.

Bibliography:

Graw, I. (2018). *The Love of Painting; Genealogy of a Success Medium*. Berlin, Germany: Sternberg Press.



Rock Time, 2022, Screenprinting inks, acrylic paint, wax crayon, india ink, water-soluble crayon on paper. 40 x 23 cm approx (shaped work)

For more information on Donal Moloney click [here](#)