

An abstract painting featuring a large, textured, reddish-brown oval shape in the center, surrounded by various other shapes and colors including blue, green, yellow, and purple. The texture is rough and layered, suggesting a collage or mixed media approach.

“I thought: I cannot bear this world a moment longer. Then, child, make another.”

Madeline Miller, *Circe* (2018)

Jennifer Higgin's book 'The Other Side; A journey into Women, Art and the Spirit World' (2023), written during the pandemic, published in its wake, opens with this quote from Miller's 'Circe'. Which upon reading, made my heart pang. This intense emotional ache took me aback. Why did I react like this?

Returning to this quote as I have, over and over this year, the potency of these words feels just as intense as the first time I encountered them. I've come to realise, that the desire to create another world, or more specifically to find a different way under contemporary conditions, resonates. The world around me is not the one I paint, my work is generated through this longing to picture another one. Where we re-remember and reconnect to humans who have lived before, who can help us with the things that are important such as ancestral knowledge, nature and our planet.

Sarah Kate Wilson



Opposite:
Sarah Kate Wilson – *Untitled*, 2026.
Earthenware, antique glass and glaze
25x25cm

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Sarah Kate Wilson – *Seer*, 2025
Oil stick, acrylic, canvas collage,
holographic card, acrylic binder, gel medium,
primed canvas. 125 x 100 cm

A Shared Conversation

with artist Emily Hunt

In February 2026, I shared a conversation with artist Emily Hunt, that crystallised around our shared interest of the ‘other side’, or the ‘other state’ as Emily refers to it. In what follows I tease out threads from our conversation and weave it together here, alongside images of my own work and the work of others.

My expanded painting practice, involves painting, ceramics, performance, tapestry, drawing, printmaking and costume. The ceramic works on show at Clements & Co. are made using vintage glass as glaze, creating unpredictable colours and effects once the works enter the kiln. These processes, forms and images held within the clay amplify the subject matter of my work that draws inspiration from stories of magical experiences, divinatory practices, the unseen forces at play in the natural world, and the ‘imaginary realm’. Emily, through drawing, painting, etching, ceramics and performance (with her marionettes) investigates the visual technology of magic in its symbolic form and how it shares a lineage with ornamental forms.



Extremely beautiful and deeply seductive



Emily and I begin with a discussion of beauty. As she sees it when artists try to describe the 'other side', the worlds that we make through our work she offers, are 'deeply mysterious and seductive'. She asks why? For Emily, the subject matter of the 'other side' lends itself to beauty, because beauty is deeply mysterious and beauty always points to mystery. Mystery of course is alluring because of its secretive nature, sparking attraction and curiosity. So it follows, when we try to visualise the spiritual universe or the realm beyond the physical cosmos, the works we create are just as magnetic.

Agency

Our conversation moves on to a discussion of agency. Emily states, and I totally agree, that there is capability in all of us if we are willing to tap into it, where we are able to pull things over to this side, to have a quick look at them. However, to do this requires a certain level of concentration and the ability to select and work with materials and mediums that have an agency of their own.

For example, clay, clay has a mind of its own, it has a personality. Whatever materials you work with, in the beginning they are extremely exciting, because as Emily says, they reveal something about yourself and your own hands. Similarly to materials, our hands have a life of their own, a personality. So true, there are days when I return to the studio, and have no memory of making the work. These are the best days, effortless concentration, in dialogue with something beyond myself. In collaboration with this something, and the materials. It is totally magical.



Opposite
Madge Gill – Untitled cotton embroidery,
1940s

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Sarah Kate Wilson – Psittaciformes, 2024.
Acrylic, wax, and mixed media on panel.
61 x 45.5cm

This method of making brings to mind Madge Gill's large freehand embroideries, made in a trance like state with her guiding spirit Myrninerest (my innerest, "my most intimate"). Her mediumistic communication resulted in iridescent textile works, reminiscent of fractured stained glass. I encountered one of these textile works, at Frieze Masters 2025. The Gallery of Everything, London displayed this work laying almost flat, undulating, I was captivated by its liveness. The works vital energy was palpable, visually noisy, the textile pulsated. The glass vitrine encasing the work could barely contain it. I love work like this. It's why I love Emily's work. It has a lifeforce.

Through The Gallery of Everything, the work Gill made in collaboration with Myrninerest is now held in the Tate and the National Portrait Gallery collections. These acquisitions are in fact the first works made by a spirit to enter their collections.



Opposite
Sarah Kate Wilson – Amplification, 2025.
Oil stick, acrylic, flashe acrylic vinyl,
collaged canvas, modelling paste, acrylic
binder, gel medium, on stretched and primed
canvas. 165 x 120cm

Many of my paintings are made using decalcomania, a process I have been fascinated with and used since childhood. With decalcomania, I place paint onto a surface and cover it with another surface and then peel them apart, revealing a veiny print. I use different surfaces to do this, glass, holographic substrates and paper, each gives me a slightly different textural result. Visually, they produce images that shift between mimicking micro and macro formations: coral, a network of nerves or the surface of the moon. When the surfaces make contact for those few moments, I cannot see what is happening. Which is not dissimilar to what takes place inside a cocoon, we cannot see inside, we must wait for the butterfly to emerge. The work is made 'in the dark', secret, away from prying eyes.



“I felt that my hands were touching the hands of my ancestors’.”

Sarah Kate Wilson

Frottage is another automatism technique I use. My paintings are highly textured, created by collaging together (cut out canvas shapes, cargo nets, parachutes, string and other mixed media) onto the paintings surface. Working with paint and oil bar I then rub over these surfaces revealing the sediment of forms and materials that has created these gnarly surfaces. I remember as a child walking in the Yorkshire Dales, where I grew up, we would stop to eat our packed lunch on huge rocks covered with Neolithic cup-and-ring marks. We would make rubbings in wax of these marks ‘I felt that my hands were touching the hands of my ancestors’. These activities were formative in the way I think about time, which has led to an interest in temporal collapse, believing that the past is not behind us, but rather, it is beside us.



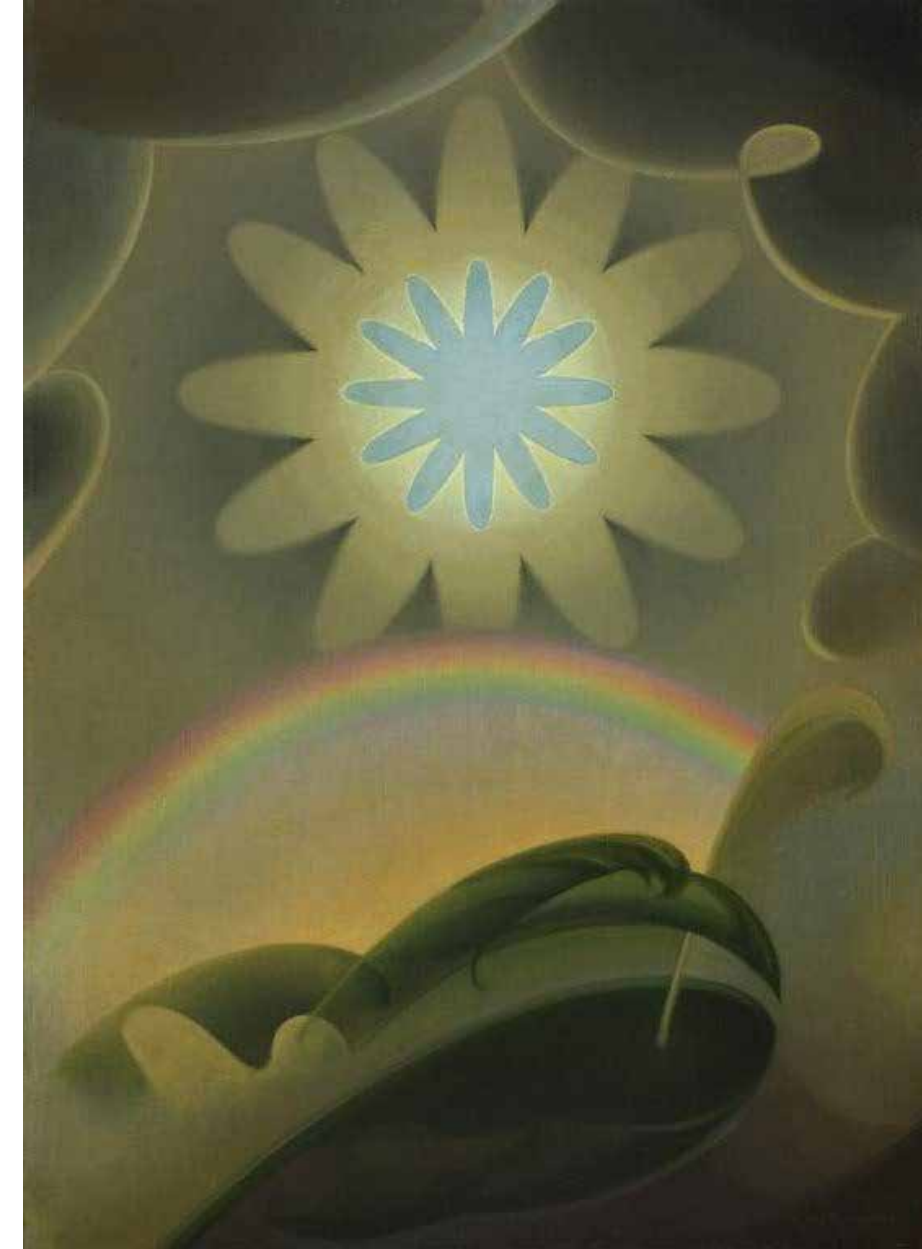
Portals

I often refer to my work and exhibitions as portals, because the work is connecting to what lies beyond the physical realm. Recently, I have begun to draw into my work stories and imagery that connects to the ‘imaginal realm’, a term that philosopher, anthropologist and Islamic scholar Henri Corbin used in his book title ‘Mundus Imaginalis, or the ‘Imaginary and the Imaginal’, (1964). The ‘imaginal realm’ can be understood as a bridge between the physical and spiritual world, or an ontological space where the tangible universe meets the metaphysical world. It is here where spiritual realities take form and physical realities fade, where visions are real, yet immaterial.

As Corbin writes the ‘imaginal is far from unreal or non-existent’ and explains that an understanding of imaginal reality offers an alternative to Western ways of thinking. Importantly, what is experienced in the imaginal real are not figments of the imagination or fantasies. Rather, this reality is, reality.

My work addresses this place where the physical cosmos meets the spiritual universe, where alternative forms of knowledge that involve magic, mysticism, chance, a more-than-human world view and what Carl Jung referred to as the ‘collective unconscious’ (an inherited psychic fount shared by all of humanity across time, place and histories).

Opposite
Agnes Pelton – *Sand Storm*, 1932.
Oil on canvas, 76.8 x 55.9 cm



The same can be said of Agnes Pelton’s paintings. Pelton (1881 - 1961) was an American artist and part of the Transcendental Painting Group, her works are often referred to as visionary art. Her dreamlike landscapes influenced by spiritualism, oscillate between picturing the material world and her inner visions. Her paintings depict orbs, mountains, fire and atmospheric phenomenon like rainbows, realised through successive glazes over months or even years. She painted her visions, a reality that is reality.

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*Sarah Kate Wilson – Thin Places, 2025.
Oil stick, acrylic, flashe acrylic vinyl ,
charcoal, fabric collage acrylic binder, gel
medium, on stretched and primed canvas.
122 x 160 cm approx.*

Thin Places

The notion of the imaginal realm is conjured through my work ‘Thin Places’, 2025. The works title, refers to sacred places, rooted in Irish and Scottish tradition, where the veil between the physical world and the spiritual realm, thins. Thus allowing for communication and closeness between the divine and the earthly. The work depicts a butterfly, who has undergone metamorphosis, ‘dying’ and coming back to life in the body of another creature. This transition most likely means she has passed to the ‘other side’ and back again. Experiencing both realms, in quick succession. Now returned to the natural world she gazes upwards, watching the veil close.

The way I paint and handle materials also amplifies the subject matter of otherworldly events; visitations, apparitions and premonitions. As I said earlier I employ a unique variation on frottage, where rubbings are not lifted, rather they remain on the surface they have rubbed over. I use oil bar to do this, buttery sticks of highly pigmented colour bump over gnarly surfaces. I build up layer upon layer of oil bar, as many as twenty layers of colour are built up in a very shallow pictorial space, resulting in paintings that vibrate, like the subject matter they depict.





Opposite
Sarah Kate Wilson – *Untitled*, 2026.
Terracotta, glaze and vintage glass.

Magic can undermine your authority

In regards to magic, Emily explains that if you come out with it, if you speak about magic, your authority will be undermined. In the sense that, you are not believed, or people will think you are (to put it bluntly) mad. Even in art school Emily remembers being told by her tutors to avoid talking about magic when talking about her own work. We are told magic is dangerous and on the other hand, conversely, that it is not real, it is just silliness! Even Emily herself has pulled back from magic and refrained from discussing it. So you see, magic is a complex thing to discuss in your practice as an artist.

Our conversation ends with a shared thought that, whether magic is involved or not, as artist women our authority is frequently undermined anyway. So, it is important to let go of the concerns of others and stay true to the work and keep putting it out into the world.

Biography

*Sarah Kate Wilson's multiform practice includes performance, costume, tapestry and ceramics but centres on painting. Based in London, she received her MFA from the Slade School of Art, London in 2010. She has exhibited in the 5th Biennale Internazionale Donna, (Trieste, Italy) at Palais de Tokyo (Paris), Royal Academy of Arts (London), BALTIC 39, (Newcastle), The Bauhaus Museum, (Dessau), The Museum of London, Newlyn Gallery, (Cornwall), The Cervantes Institute, (New Dehli), The Tetley, (Leeds) and The Armory Centre, (California). Wilson regularly publishes her writing, which crystallises around the relationship between painting and performance. Her text *Painting's Liveness* was published in Edition 9.2 of the *Journal of Contemporary Painting*, accompanying this she held an in-conversation titled *SHAPESHIFTER* with Catherine Wood (Interim Director Tate Modern). She has been artist in residency at The Edward James Foundation at West Dean College, Chichester; Xenia Creative Retreat, Hampshire and Bauhaus, Dessau, Germany, and awarded a DYCP by Arts Council England and AN Bursary.*

