

Jane and Louise Wilson

Sat 21 January - Sun 25 March 2012

Dundee Contemporary Arts

DCA

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152 Nethergate
Dundee DD1 4DY
01382 909900
www.dca.org.uk
Reg Charity No. SC026631

Exhibition open:
Tue - Sat 11:00 - 18:00
Sun 12:00 - 18:00
Open late Thu until 20:00
Admission free

Jane and Louise Wilson

This exhibition by internationally acclaimed artists Jane and Louise Wilson features the UK premiere of their new film installation, *Face Scripting – What Did the Building See?* (2011); inspired by the assassination of senior Hamas official Mahmoud Al-Mabhouh by suspected Mossad agents in a Dubai hotel in January 2010. The show also includes the recent work *Atomgrad (Nature Abhors a Vacuum)* (2010), a suite of large-scale photographs created in response to the 25th anniversary of the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster. One of the greatest ecological catastrophes ever seen, Chernobyl has been the subject of increased reflection and debate in the light of the more recent meltdown at the Fukushima nuclear plant in Japan.

Known predominantly for their film installations, Jane and Louise Wilson's exhibition consists of work related to their long-standing fascination with institutional architecture and the exploration of collective anxieties. The selection of works presented at DCA underlines the artists' preoccupation with the process of looking and their distinctive forensic examination of place.

Jane and Louise Wilson were born in Newcastle and studied respectively at Newcastle Polytechnic and Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design, Dundee before undertaking an MA at Goldsmiths College of Art, London. They began working together in 1989 and since then have exhibited at major galleries internationally. They were nominated for the Turner Prize in 1999.

This exhibition is presented in collaboration with Forma, John Hansard Gallery, and the Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester, with support from ArtAV.

Jane and Louise Wilson are represented by 303 Gallery, New York and Galería Helga de Alvear, Madrid.

List of Works

Atomgrad (Nature Abhors a Vacuum), 2010

7 x C-Type prints on Aluminium and Diasec

This suite of large-scale photographic prints depicts the abandoned and now almost entirely uninhabited town of Pripyat, situated within the 30km-wide Exclusion Zone around the site of the 1986 Chernobyl disaster. The works take their title from the term used by Ukrainian locals to refer to the former 'Atomic City' founded in 1970 to house workers from the nearby nuclear power plant, and deserted just sixteen years later. At the time of the accident, Pripyat was considered one of the finest places to live in the USSR and had a population of 45,000.

These richly textured images of the deserted interiors of formerly communal spaces, including a kindergarten, theatre and swimming pool, explicitly reveal the hurried nature of their abandonment. Plants can be seen flourishing on the periphery of some of the buildings; evidence that nature encroaches on and merges with the man-made environment, despite its persistent toxicity.

Each image includes a yardstick placed within the frame by the artists; a motif that recurs throughout the show. These functional yet now obsolete objects allude to the passing of time, and the act of measurement - not only of scale but also of radioactivity. The act of interference implied by the positioning of a yardstick in each scene is a reminder of the artists' role as documenters of these spaces.

Jane and Louise Wilson's work in Chernobyl is commissioned and produced by Forma Arts and Media, in association with John Hansard Gallery, Dundee Contemporary Arts and The Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester. It is supported by Arts Council England. Research has been supported by British Council Ukraine, The Center for Urban History of Central East Europe and the Visual Culture Research Centre at the University of Kiev.

Altogether, 2010

Madeira wood

Constructed from multiple yardsticks, *Altogether* is both imposing and fragile in appearance. The yardsticks are detached from their original function, questioning the limits of measurement. The work references one of the Soviet artist Aleksandr Rodchenko's *Spatial Constructions* which he produced between 1918-1921. Rodchenko's utopian ambition, that avant-garde artists would become the 'constructors' of modern Soviet society, combined with the placement of this work amid photographs from Pripyat, suggests a highly ambivalent subtext to this piece.

Commissioned by Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon. Courtesy of the artists.

Face Scripting – What did the Building See?, 2011

Film Installation, HD Cam transferred to Media Player, 11m39s, looped

This new film installation focuses on events that took place in the United Arab Emirates in January 2010 when Hamas operative Mahmoud Al-Mabhouh was assassinated in a hotel room in Dubai. The murder was thought to have been undertaken by Israeli Mossad operatives using stolen identities, and the event quickly became the subject of world-wide media attention. Comprehensive CCTV footage of the victim and the perpetrators in the hours leading up to the murder was posted on YouTube and watched by millions of people. This material was compiled and edited by the Dubai state police, using face recognition technology to identify the subjects. The only space not captured on CCTV was Room 230, the site of the murder itself.

Jane and Louise Wilson filmed on location at the Al Bustan Rotanna Hotel in Dubai using specialist lenses and extreme close-ups to detail the architecture and interiors of the hotel. The work is a forensically detailed study that begins and ends with shots of the interior of Room 230. The artists appear in the film with patterns reminiscent of primitive masks painted onto their faces: this is dazzle camouflage designed to scramble the technology used in face recognition.

The film is narrated by renowned Jordanian actor Nadim Sawalha, who we hear reciting and counting in Arabic, suggesting the presence of the victim. The film is presented alongside the CCTV footage, collapsing the filmed narrative into real events as they unfold.

Face Scripting - What did the Building See? A film installation by Jane and Louise Wilson. Text by Eyal Weizman and Shumon Basar. Produced by Pinky Ghundale and Shumon Basar. Directed by Jane and Louise Wilson. Commissioned by Sharjah Art Foundation, co-produced by the Farook Foundation with Mohammed Hafiz and Dalia Asaad, Luis Augusto Teixeira de Freitas and the Forensic Architecture project. Courtesy of Jane and Louise Wilson and 303 Gallery, New York and Galería Helga de Alvear, Madrid. Presented at DCA in association with Forma, with support from ArtAV. Installation design by Jane and Louise Wilson and Nick Joyce.

Face Scripting – What did the Building See?, 2011

C-Type print on Aluminium and Diasec

Shot using infra-red light, this photographic self-portrait again shows the artists with their faces painted with dazzle camouflage markings. Originally used by the military, this technique disrupts and confuses visual readings of the subject and helps to disguise the wearer. In this self-portrait the artists become part of their own surveillance and forensic examinations.

Courtesy of the artists.

false positives and false negatives, 2012

16 x Screen Prints on Mirrored Perspex

Created especially for the exhibition in Dundee, these works were produced by the artists in DCA Print Studio. This series of prints consists of alternating portraits of each artist in camouflage facepaint, layered onto stills taken from the CCTV footage used in *Face Scripting – What Did the Building See?*

Sixteen faces overlaid with documentation of the murder victim and his assassins loom spectre-like over the other works in the exhibition. These uncanny yet beautiful prints possess a lenticular quality. The viewer's movements trigger the appearance of ghostly figures, materialising then merging, shifting perceptions of what is visible within the faces and revealing the CCTV evidence beneath.

Commissioned by Dundee Contemporary Arts and Forma Arts and Media. With support from Creative Scotland and Arts Council England. The artists would like to thank DCA Print Studio.

Measures Obscelescere, 2, 3 and 4, 2010

Madeira wood, Enamel and Bronze

Measures Obscelescere 2, 3 and 4, are mounted in the gallery, repeating the use of yardsticks within *Altogether* and the *Atomgrad* images. The placement of these works draws attention to the architecture of the gallery, creating a sense of movement between documented and 'real' space.

Commissioned by Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon. Courtesy of the artists.

8.30, 1993

Analogue video transferred to Digital, 10m2s, looped

Initially shown in 1993 alongside photographic works apparently depicting the scene of a crime, this early-career video provides a counterpoint to the more recent works on display at DCA. Filmed in the artists' former flat near King's Cross in London, an anonymous shell-suited figure moves around the space, carefully positioning and repositioning objects. The looped video, with its CCTV-like visual quality, reinforces the duo's ongoing fascination with surveillance and forensics.

As in their later works, this piece strikes a delicate balance between reality and fiction. Evoking their now established interest in returning to the scene of a crime, the staged and the documentary are woven together, forcing us to question the authenticity of what we see.

Courtesy of the artists.

Talks, Events and Education

Book your place on 01382 909900. For more information please visit www.dca.org.uk

Artist Talk

Wed 18 January, 11:00, D'Arcy Thompson Lecture Theatre, University of Dundee

Free to students and public.

Jane and Louise Wilson will be discussing their work and current exhibition at DCA. Presented in association with DJCAD.

Tony White: Short Story Readings

Sat 21 January, 14:00–15:00

DCA Meeting Room

Free but please book in advance.

Tony White is the author of critically acclaimed novels including *Foxy-T* (Faber and Faber). To accompany Jane and Louise Wilson's exhibition he has been commissioned to write a new short story, *Dicky Star and the garden rule*, which focuses on the Chernobyl disaster from a UK perspective. Tony will be reading from this and other works, and the story will be made available as a limited print edition.

Contemporary Art Encounters

Sun 19 February, 14:00–16:00

Free. Drop in.

Sunday afternoon art schooling with the DCA Gallery Assistants. Our Gallery Assistants have an informed take on our exhibitions, crystallised through conversations with the artist and curator. Come along and explore how the current exhibition relates to broader themes in contemporary art.

(((echo)))

Thu 8 March, 18:30–20:00

Free but please book in advance.

An informal event to provoke discussion and alternative insights into Jane and Louise Wilson's exhibition through a series of multi-media presentations by local artists. Come along and contribute.

Art Cart

Sat 28 & Sun 29 January; Sat 25 &

Sun 26 February; Sat 17 & Sun 18

March, 13:00–15:00

Drop in for free, fun activities in the gallery and explore the work of Jane and Louise Wilson.

Camouflage portrait workshop

Sun 12 February, 14:00–16:00

8–12 years, £3

Make some very 21st century portraits and self portraits inspired by the exhibition. You will construct layered images using mirrors as a base with expert help from our workshop artists. All materials provided.

Activity Room

Open daily unless being used for a workshop Get Creative with our free DIY activities inspired by the Jane and Louise Wilson exhibition. A place where people of all ages can play, learn and create.

Publication

Tony White's *Dicky Star and the garden rule* is available for sale in DCA Shop, priced £5.

Related Film Screenings

The following films have been selected by Jane and Louise Wilson.

The China Syndrome

Tue 24 January, 18:00

Dir: James Bridges

USA 1979 / 2h2m / PG

The China Syndrome encapsulates the promise and threat of nuclear energy. Reporter Kimberly Wells (Jane Fonda) and her cameraman (Michael Douglas) witness an accident at a nuclear plant, and secretly film the incident; Jack Lemmon is the shift supervisor who attempts to raise the alarm. *The China Syndrome* plays on our enduring fears of a nuclear disaster; not through war, but due to compromised safety at a domestic nuclear power station.

Dr. Strangelove

Fri 3 February, 18:00

Dir: Stanley Kubrick

USA 1964 / 1h35m / PG

A hysterical examination of Cold War paranoia, *Dr. Strangelove* satirises the idea that Mutually Assured Destruction would deter the prospect of nuclear war. Peter Sellers takes on three roles: Captain Lionel Mandrake, President of the United States Merkin Muffley and Dr. Strangelove. This is a political satire with a serious message: when a situation is this terrifying and ridiculous, all you can do is laugh.

Kiss Me Deadly

Tue 21 February, 18:00

Dir: Robert Aldrich

USA 1955 / 1h46m / PG

LA private-eye Mike Hammer picks up a mysterious blonde, only to be beaten up by thugs who kidnap her. When she turns up dead, Mike investigates, but things take a sinister turn when he finds a suitcase containing a strange glowing substance. *Kiss Me Deadly* plays on Cold War fears of nuclear apocalypse: it's perfect for those who like their *noirs* dark, their gumshoes hard-boiled and their blondes wearing nothing but a trench coat.

Just Ask

Our friendly and informed Gallery Assistants are always happy to help with any exhibition-related queries and questions.

Next Exhibition

Scott Myles: This Production

Sat 7 April–Sun 10 June 2012

Keep up to date with the very latest news and information from DCA by visiting our website, www.dca.org.uk, or by subscribing to us on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/DCADundee>.

