

# Letha Wilson

## *Fields of Vision*

August 31 - September 30, 2023  
2 Bourdon Street, London (UK)

GRIMM is pleased to present an exhibition of new sculptures by Letha Wilson, on view at our London gallery from 31 August to 30 September 2023. This is the artist's debut solo exhibition in the UK, and her fourth solo exhibition with GRIMM since 2015. The exhibition follows Wilson's recent institutional solo exhibition *Ground Spell* at The Richard and Dolly Maass Gallery, SUNY Purchase, New York, NY (US).

Wilson's practice explores the boundaries, intersections and potential of photography and sculpture, synthesizing the seemingly contradictory elements of each medium through material experimentation. By printing directly onto surfaces such as copper, steel, and brass, Wilson introduces a third dimension to the photographic image, often bending, welding and collaging by 'slotting' multiple elements together in a variety of geometric forms. Her practice amalgamates industrial materials with dramatic landscape photography, creating a new dialogue between the built and natural environment.

Integral to Wilson's practice is her first-person documentation of nature, captured through trips across the American West in particular, with national parks such as Yellowstone and Glacier frequently providing the source imagery within her sculptures. By deliberately cropping, distorting and blending her imagery, Wilson breathes new life into the historical iconography of sublime photography of the American West. Her multidimensional sculptures reassert the experience of witnessing nature on a human scale, limited to fragments of time and space, with an appreciation of these sites being complex, at the threshold of threat and leisure, simultaneously shaped by powerful natural forces and modern human intervention.

The title of the exhibition is a nod to a 1984 essay by critic and historian Shelley Rice for the exhibition *Land Marks* at Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY (US). In her essay, Rice establishes a relationship between 19th century landscape photography in the United States, settlement and preservation of these areas, and subsequent Earthwork artists of the 20th century.



Letha Wilson | *Badlands Split*, 2023 | perspective

She identifies the challenge that going forward “... *artists are faced with the urgent necessity of trying to restore a balance, a series of mutually agreeable relationships, between human beings and the world in which they live.*”

On view in *Fields of Vision* are two new series of sculptures. Hanging throughout the gallery is a group of wall-based sculptures in which steel UV-prints are folded back upon themselves and welded into steel frames. Disrupting the conventions of the framed photographic image, Wilson explores the sculptural possibility of photography, adding texture and layering to complicate the boundary between the front or back of the image, whilst allowing the viewer to see through the sculpture entirely to reveal glimpses of the wall behind, interacting with the architecture of the gallery itself. Learning to weld in lockdown, Wilson has expanded her approach and methodologies for the handling and display of her photographic work, variously subjecting the structural components to physical manipulation by bending, and distressing the photographic surface by burning, after which the central component is carefully fused within its steel frame.

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Letha Wilson in her studio, 2023 | Photo: Willie Wilson

In the centre of the space are a series of Wilson's new slotted sculptures, incorporating steel, copper and brass elements. Starting with two-dimensional surfaces, Wilson works up a series of motifs through models and maquettes, allowing geometric forms to emerge intuitively. A relationship between the photographic image and surface is often established, with a line or gesture observed on a rock formation or through thick foliage rendering the outline of the sculpted form. By combining two discrete elements through a central groove into which each plane is slotted, an interrelationship is established between each component, coalescing to form a new whole which Wilson describes as a kind of choreographed gesture, dance or embrace. By situating these works in the centre of the room, the viewer is encouraged to experience them in the round, exploring their spatial boundaries and unique forms, observing as one might in nature, the perimeter of each composition, their weight, gravity and occupation of space.

### About the artist

Letha Wilson (b. 1976 in Honolulu, HI, US) was raised in Greeley, CO (US). She currently lives and works in Brooklyn, NY (US) and Hudson, NY (US). She earned her BFA from Syracuse University, NY (US) in 1998, and an MFA from Hunter College, NY (US) in 2003. Residencies include The MacDowell Colony, Peterborough, NH (US), University of Nevada, Las Vegas, NV (US), Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in Madison, ME (US), The Yaddo Foundation, NY (US), Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts in Omaha, NE (US), and Headlands Center for the Arts in Sausalito, CA (US).

Wilson's work has been featured in recent solo exhibitions at The Richard and Dolly Maass Gallery, SUNY Purchase, NY (US); GRIMM, Amsterdam (NL) and New York, NY (US); Higher Pictures Generation, Brooklyn, NY (US); Anderson Ranch, Aspen, CO (US); the Center for Contemporary Art and Culture, Portland, OR (US); the DeCordova Sculpture Park and Museum, Lincoln, MA (US), and Galerie Christophe Gaillard, Paris (FR).

Wilson has recently participated in group exhibitions at Southern Utah Museum of Art, Cedar City, UT (US), the New York Public Library, New York, NY (US); The Henie Onstad Triennial for Photography and New Media, Henie Onstad Kunstsenter, Høvikodden (NO); MASS MoCA, North Adams, MA (US); MACRO Museo d' Arte Contemporanea, Rome (IT); Essl Museum, Klosterneuburg (AT); Bemis Center for Contemporary Art in Omaha, NE (US); Bronx Museum of the Arts, Bronx, NY (US); Socrates Sculpture Park in Long Island City, NY (US); and the Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield, CT (US).

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