

Sarah Lacey

**The Garden | Sarah Wiseman Gallery Annual Summer Exhibition
16th June – 28th July 2018**

Can you tell us a little about the new work you've made, and how it's responded to the garden theme?

These are paintings made in snatched moments during my young daughter's naps and after her bed-time. I've tried to see the garden through her eyes, and also think about my own childhood spent in gardens. I thought about the worlds that children invent in the garden; something quite ordinary such as a pile of old broken pots in a corner can seem like a magical discovery to a small child.

Are you a keen gardener? If so, can you tell us a little bit about your garden, where it is, does it influence your work all year round?

The house we live in used to belong to my husband's grandparents. His Grandfather was a keen gardener, and there's lots about the garden where he still seems to be present – I've found old newspapers dating back to the fifties tucked in the shed, as well as ancient tools and even seed packets and garden gnomes.

I love spending time in the garden, but I'm in no way any sort of expert. I feel like we've taken up the reins left by our family, and I quite like that. It's very much a family garden, and I can imagine my husband playing there as a little boy, and his dad too. Now our daughter plays there, and we've bought her some tomatoes to grow in the greenhouse, just as her great grandad did.

My desk looks straight out onto the garden, which is just wonderful. I can sit and absorb the sights and sounds while I draw.

What's been a really memorable garden for you – perhaps from childhood or travelling?

We used to spend a lot of time in a house near on the coast of the Western Highlands. There was no mains electricity or central heating, and we'd spend nearly all the time outside, even in winter. There wasn't a garden as such, but a couple of paddocks, the remains of a vegetable plot and a more 'formal' garden which was tiny, surrounded on all sides by high fencing and dense thorny bushes to keep out the sheep and deer. The house used to be a mill, with the original stone was still in the garden, serving as a table where my mum used to sit and drink her tea on sunny days.

I'm so happy to have those memories, we were so lucky to have that time where we had complete freedom to roam. We spent hours happily on the beach looking for rock-pool fish or clambering trees, finding adventures or just pottering around. My parents just used to open the door and let us go. I think that sense of play and curiosity about the natural world has definitely fed into my work.