

Terence Wilde – Film Transcript 2020

Terence Wilde (b. 1963) is a visual artist based in London. He is a Winchester School of Art textile graduate, working in that field for fifteen years. Since then, he has been running workshops in the textile, ceramic and art departments at Bethlem Royal Hospital.

Wilde draws on his own mental health journey, from the perspective of an adult survivor, in all his black and white works. Working mainly in pen or ceramic, Wilde describes his work as 'responses to different periods in his life, showing struggles, fears and dreams'.

Terence Wilde talking:

Showing my work is valuable because I didn't have a voice for years. You can lose your voice ... you can lose your identity when you're abused or you're bullied ... lots of people don't talk about it. So, I was a child in the 60's, so I didn't talk about it and I covered it up, which eventually makes you ill. So, I like to show that aspect of my life in my work because it's important that other people actually know that stuff like that has happened.

I teach at the Bethlem hospital. Part of my job is the pottery. I also teach textiles and art, and as opposites to ceramics they are areas that I've been trained in. So, ceramics gives me something more instinctive to work with ... and clay is like a natural resource, so if it goes wrong, you just clump it back together and you start again. A bit like getting over things in life. So, it is a metaphor for how you travel through your life in a way.

My work is very serious, but there is actually an element of hope and amusement going on in the background, which is why some of the text goes in. So, lots of drawings are mark makings, maybe in the corner of a page, that then developed into something else. I never know what they're really going to look like ... they just happen and then expand. Often these drawings are a way of me keeping myself safe and balanced.

I was in hospital in the middle of my first year of my degree course, because I just, I basically didn't like myself and I didn't like myself because I was gay, so I went into hospital to have ECT treatment to make me normal ... and they wouldn't let me have it – thank God. And it's a picture about ache and heartache, so it's got sort of a merman which was my identity with no arms, so I can't really swim and I'm not very good on ground, so that's probably how I felt about myself. So, it says 'give me ECT so I can be normal, so I can make myself go away'. Luckily, I didn't get the ECT treatment, but I did get the embroidery out of it.

I've been my own therapist if you like through my work. My black and white work is my private work and my colour work is often the work that I use to make a living from. So, from a perspective of an adult survivor, that provides the narrative to the majority of my black and white work. So, although it might appear negative or a bit despondent in nature, it's actually full of hope because I've managed to use some of the bad stuff that's happened to me and I haven't given in. And actually, my creativity is partly formed by a lot of the demons that I still have. I'd rather stay up late doing a drawing than drink half a bottle of vodka, or ring Samaritans or go to A&E because I feel bad about myself. It's like a proper healing tool and I actually have embraced it in that way in my life and

probably 90% of my life is my art practice. There must be lots of us out there that have our own stuff going on – own bits of darkness that we have to share, and if you put your soul into your work then that's what makes you an artist.