



JANE AND LOUISE WILSON

Born in Newcastle, United Kingdom, in 1967.
Live and work in London.

The sisters Jane and Louise Wilson are known for their multi-screen video installations (often accompanied by photographs), inspired by the sites they select to explore. *The Silence Is Twice as Fast Backwards* is their second audio work.



After completing their MAs at Goldsmiths College in London (1990–1992), the sisters began their artistic career making films featuring themselves in states of experimental semi-consciousness – being hypnotized (*Hypnotic*, 1993) or under the effects of hallucinogenic drugs. In 1993 their work was shown at London’s Serpentine Gallery in the *Barclays Young Artist Awards* exhibition, where they earned first prize for their piece *8:30*. In 1995 they were chosen to take part in the exhibitions *Young British Artists*, in London, and *The British Art Show*, in Edinburgh, and in the years that followed they participated in virtually all the international exhibitions devoted to the so-called Young British Artists.



In 1995 Jane and Louise Wilson began working in spaces of particular symbolic significance, focusing on the impact of such sites on the public imagination. They explored historically charged architectural spaces, seeking to capture what they call the “psychology of the place” – a mixture of memory and emotion. Nineteen ninety-nine was a pivotal year: they were nominated for the Tate Gallery’s Turner Prize, selected to take part in the Carnegie International, in Pittsburgh, and invited to present a “solo” show at London’s Serpentine Gallery. For this, the Wilson sisters presented three large video installations (with photographs) shot in some of the most inaccessible places in Europe: for *Stasi City* (1997) it was the abandoned headquarters of the East German secret police in Berlin, for *Gamma* (1999) it was the former US military base at Greenham Common, in England, used to house cruise missiles during the Cold War – both places that continue to inspire fear, despite

being deserted – and for *Parliament (A Third House)*, specially commissioned by the Serpentine Gallery for the exhibition, it was the Houses of Parliament in London.



Their exploration of the symbolism of these high-profile places has brought the Wilson sisters international recognition. For *Dreamtime* (2001) they visited key sites of the Russian space program – the vast Star City, just outside Moscow, and a former rocket launch site in Kazakhstan – while *Sealand* (2006) features the broken remains of the World War Two bunkers conceived by Hitler that litter the Atlantic coastline. In recent years the artists have shifted their interest to other types of space, less haunted by the idea of power and its paranoid excesses and more inspired by filmic references. *The Silence Is Twice as Fast Backwards* (2008) has links to Cocteau’s movie *Orphée*, while *Unfolding the Aryan Papers* (2009) is based on archival documents related to a project for a film by Stanley Kubrick that was never made.



Notable among Jane and Louise Wilson’s recent exhibitions are *Sounding the Subject*, at the MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge, 2007; *Out of Time*, at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2006; and *A Free and Anonymous Monument*, organized by the BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead, UK, in 2003 and also shown at the Kunsthhaus in Bregenz, Austria, and at the Pori Art Museum, Finland, in 2004.



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Photo *The Silence Is Twice as Fast Backwards II*, 2008, C-print diptych, 1/4, 182.9 x 182.9 cm (each)
Collection of the artists, courtesy 303 Gallery, New York
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