

Press Release

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Christmas Tree 1998 by Richard Wilson

Supported by the Patrons of New Art

15 December 1998–6 January 1998

The Tate Gallery has commissioned Richard Wilson to create the Christmas Tree for 1998. Rather than work with a conventional tree, he has decided to create a sculpture using industrial and found materials to express both the order and the chaos of Christmas.

The structure of the tree will be formed from basic workshop style shelving units. Wilson will decorate these units with functional storage boxes in bright primary colours, reminiscent of Christmas parcels, and bare electric bulbs housed in wire cages. An artificial tree will be suspended within the framework of the shelving. Made from metal, the tree is skeletal like the shelving units and was originally covered with glitter in an effort to make it appear festive. The result is sparsely kitsch, intended to evoke both the glamour of Christmas and the empty materialism so often beneath it.

Richard Wilson was born in 1953 in London. He studied at the London College of Printmaking (1970-1), Hornsey College of Art (1971-4) and then at Reading University (1974-6). He is known for his dramatic architectural interventions, in particular for his spectacular oil tank installation *20:50* (1987) and *She Came through the Bathroom Window* (1989) both at Matts Gallery (*20:50* now at the Saatchi Gallery), and *Jamming Gears* at the Serpentine Gallery (1996). Wilson has had solo exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art, Oxford and the Arnolfini Gallery, Bristol, and has participated in the Venice Biennale, the Sao Paulo Biennial and the Biennial of Sydney. He lives and works in London.

This is the eleventh year that the Tate Gallery has commissioned a tree from an artist. The artists involved in previous years were: Michael Landy (1997), Julian Opie (1996), Cornelia Parker (1995), Cathy de Monchaux (1994), Shirazeh Houshiary (1993), Craigie Aitchison (1992), Boyd Webb (1991), Lisa Milroy (1990), Tim Head (1989) and Bill Woodrow (1988).

Richard Wilson's installation and the 1998 Christmas card are supported by the Patrons of New Art. Established in 1982, the Patrons of New Art provide financial support towards acquisitions for the Tate Gallery's collection of contemporary art.

**For further information please contact Kate Burvill or Ben Luke at the
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