

Language

English

"I'm Nervous as Hell": Tracey Emin Mounts First-Ever Exhibition in Her Hometown of Margate



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Tracey Emin in Margate

by Coline Milliard, ARTINFO UK

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She's represented Britain at the [Venice Biennale](#) and shown at some of London's most prestigious venues, including the **Hayward Gallery** and the **Royal Academy**, where she's now professor of drawing. But today [Tracey Emin](#) faces a particularly tough challenge: unveiling a solo exhibition at **Turner Contemporary** in her hometown of Margate. The artist, who left the seaside resort 25 years ago to study at the **Royal College of Art**, has confessed she is "nervous as hell" at the prospect of showing her work at home for the first time, sandwiched between pieces by **Rodin** and **J.M.W Turner**. Ahead of the exhibition, Emin ducked out of the installation to answer a few questions from **ARTINFO UK** about her homecoming, her writing, and what it means to be a woman artist today.

You've said that you always start working with the title. Was that the case for this exhibition? How did this title, "She Lay Down Deep Beneath the Sea," come about?

The title came about because I was making a series of prints for Counter Editions and I was drawing images of myself in an olive grove and after 10 or so drawings I realised I was drawing myself on the sea bed.

How does it feel coming home?

Quite scary. A mixture of visions from the past combined with my creative future. Putting all my eggs in one basket.

Writing is a key part of your practice. How would you define the relationship between the written and the visual in your work?

I wanted to be a writer after I left art school because I felt I had more chance of succeeding because all I needed was a pen and paper. I think automatically, non-stop. Sometimes my thoughts are visual, sometimes they are words.

You said to Mark Lawson on BBC4, "To make a seminal piece of art is very difficult. Especially if you are a woman." Do you think there's still a prejudice against women artists?

Absolutely. One hundred percent. Women's work isn't valued on the same level financially and intellectually but it is slowly changing — but that isn't just to do with art. It's a generalization and around the world. As I have said before, men peak when they're 50, women keep going. It's exactly the same with sex.

You've talked about art as something that allowed you to "heal" from your past. Today, do you feel healed?

No, I don't.

Do you regret anything?

I regret that I ever smoked.

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