

Dyslexia Friendly Wall Text – Sarah Cunningham:

Midnight Sun

Sarah Cunningham

Midnight Sun

09.10.26 – 10.01.27

Midnight Sun is British painter Sarah Cunningham's (1993 – 2024) first institutional solo exhibition, one that marks a deeply meaningful homecoming, with the return of the artist's work to the city where she was born and raised.

Sarah was a prolific and celebrated artist and regarded as one of the UK's most distinctive painters of her generation. Her expansive, gestural and expressionistic paintings take inspiration from multiple forest worlds, including the trees and natural habitats of Nottingham's Wollaton

Dyslexia Friendly Wall Text – Sarah Cunningham:
Midnight Sun

Park and the jungles of Panama, where she lived and worked during a pivotal residency with the Kuna community in 2018. This fascination with the forest developed into a deep, long-standing connection to imaginary wildernesses and speculative landscapes, with her inspirations spanning science fiction, worldbuilding, ecology and interspecies relations. Sarah worked with an understanding of nature and culture as being interconnected, rather than separate, with paint and canvas acting as living agents entangled with her human experience.

Sarah's paintings move through multiple worlds; they are representative, not

Dyslexia Friendly Wall Text – Sarah Cunningham:
Midnight Sun

representational, of a landscape or environment. She would lay her canvases directly onto the studio floor and step within their edges, often in the darkness of night, working layers upon layers of thick oil paint through sweeping gestures with brush, hand and body. Her nocturnal practice became synonymous with her otherworldly and abstracted paintings; as though within those dark hours she was entering new realms with her mind and body, conjuring a **Midnight Sun**.

The exhibition brings together earlier paintings and never-before-seen bodies of work from Sarah's studio to explore the interplay of pace, rhythm, night and day – understanding Sarah's image-making as a

Dyslexia Friendly Wall Text – Sarah Cunningham:
Midnight Sun

process of becoming. Specific works guide our journey through the exhibition, beginning inside *The World It Softly Lulls*; a dark, nocturnal, mythical forestscape; moving through *Via Lucis [Way of Light]* as a nod to the transition from night into day; and ending in the clearing of *Starshine and Clay*, a bold, vibrant and eruptive new beginning – a dawn chorus charged with Sarah's own dynamic force and energy, a celebration of life and of the power of minds, bodies and spirits, wherever they might be.

This exhibition was made possible thanks to the support of Headline Supporter: Lisson, and The Sarah Cunningham Exhibition Circle: The Nixon Collection,

Dyslexia Friendly Wall Text – Sarah Cunningham:
Midnight Sun

Tilman Kriesel, Timo Miettinen,

ABCollection, Art of Palm and those who
wish to remain anonymous.

Exhibition graphics by Waste Studio.

We would like to extend our deepest
thanks to Sarah's family, Eddie, Sue and
Anthony and to Kay Dawson for their
huge generosity and support in the
realisation of this exhibition.

Special thanks to Max Bossier, Elissa
Goldstone, Victoria Mitchell, Andrew Price
and Ruya Worthy at Lisson and to all
the lenders who have supported us in
bringing together this selection of Sarah
Cunningham's works; to the contributors

Dyslexia Friendly Wall Text – Sarah Cunningham:
Midnight Sun

to the accompanying publication and live programme, whose ideas and research will offer new viewpoints into Cunningham's practice: Hettie Judah, John Newling, Niall Ó Faircheallaigh, Martin Clarkson, Dr. Adam Searle, Jason Redwood, Millie Quick, Dr. Lara Pucci, Irina Razumovskaya and Matthew Chesney; and to Daniel Chehade for realising the publication design.

And finally, a very special thanks to the entire team at Nottingham Contemporary.

Nottingham Contemporary is a registered charity and dependent on the generosity of our visitors, partners and supporters.

Dyslexia Friendly Wall Text – Sarah Cunningham:
Midnight Sun

If you would like to use any alternative forms of interpretation, we have a range of accessible versions on our Access Wall beside Reception or alongside the wall text in the exhibition.

Environmental: Nottingham Contemporary is committed to advancing sustainability within the organisation and aims to explore and embed sustainable working practices and habits within our workplace and across the sector. This includes standardising environmental considerations at all stages of decision making.

In *Midnight Sun* the exhibition graphics have been produced by local suppliers Hayman Creative. Since spring 2026 we

Dyslexia Friendly Wall Text – Sarah Cunningham:
Midnight Sun

have switched our wall texts from cut vinyl to Xanitaprint, a recyclable material. Our exhibitions are always built and installed by local fine art technicians. Our exhibition notes are printed on FSC Mix paper (Forest Stewardship Council[®] certified products manufactured with a variety of sources including FSC-certified virgin fibre, controlled wood and/ or recycled materials).

Curated by: Katie Simpson and Niall Ó Faircheallaigh, assisted by Klara Szafranska and Xin Chen

3D Design and Exhibition Build Lead:

David Thomas

Bench Fabrication: Jack Narewski and

David Thomas

Dyslexia Friendly Wall Text – Sarah Cunningham:

Midnight Sun

Exhibition Build and Installation: Helen

Bartholomew, Jon Chambers, Jack

Narewski, Craig David Parr, Emily

Stollery, and Hannah Templeman

Condition Checking: Jenna Jones, Lara

Mattinson, and Simon Withers

Development: Emma Graves and Antonia

Seroff

Marketing: Catherine Masters and Holly

Nowak

Learning programme: Sandra Austerfield,

Amelia Daiz, Chan Hyacinth Fagan, Pasha

Kincaid, Susannah Lambert, Milee Lee,

Ursula Rae, Peter Rumney, Rachel

Scanlon, Amanda Spruyt, Andrew Martyn

Sugars, Holly Tea, Charlotte Tupper,

Stephanie Wardle and Sian Watson

Taylor

Dyslexia Friendly Wall Text – Sarah Cunningham:
Midnight Sun

Exhibition Invigilators: Winter Beaumont,

Tom Chamberlain, Nadim Chaudry, Lynn

Chippendale, Olwen Davies, Quinn

Greytryx, Lachlan Hui, Jenna Jones, Milee

Lee, Karen Lunt, Lara Mattinson, Craig

David Parr, Millie Quick, Nikki Stevenson,

Olu Taiwo and Simon Withers

Visitor Experience: Emma Beischer, Paul

Buddle, Nadim Chaudry, Olwen Davies,

Sam Harrison, Jenna Jones, Lucy Martin,

Holly Matthews, Craig David Parr and

Jordan Sterry

People and Culture: Lauren Riley

Finance and Operations: Andy Batson, Jon

Chambers, Mandy Newbold and David

Thomas

Dyslexia Friendly Wall Text – Sarah Cunningham:
Midnight Sun

RELATED EVENTS

WALKTHROUGHS

Wed 21 Oct, 1pm

Curators' Walkthrough

Join Nottingham Contemporary's curators for a tour of our autumn exhibitions.

Wed 4 Nov, 1pm

With Martin Clarkson, fine art painter and friend.

Wed 18 Nov, 1pm

With Dr. Adam Searle, Assistant Professor in Human Geography, University of Nottingham.

Sat 28 Nov, 1pm

BSL Exhibition Tour

Dyslexia Friendly Wall Text – Sarah Cunningham:
Midnight Sun

With Jason Redwood, BSL tour guide for
the Turner Contemporary & British Museum,
BSL teacher & presenter.

12.30 Talks

12.30pm every Tue, Thu, Sat, and Sun,

starting Tue 20 Oct

Join one of our friendly Gallery Assistants
for a short exploration of one of our current
exhibitions.

WORKSHOPS

Sat 31 Oct, 2pm

Workshop on speculative design histories by
Pina and Biblioteka

Dyslexia Friendly Wall Text – Sarah Cunningham:
Midnight Sun

An interdisciplinary workshop exploring the design histories of exhibitions and libraries as worldview machines.

Sun 25 Oct & Sun 29 Nov, 2pm

Grow your own planet

Learn, play and keep a worldbuilding game with artist and gallery assistant **Millie**

Quick. Inspired by science fiction, we will craft maps surrounded by **Sarah**

Cunningham's vivid naturescapes in **Gallery 3**.

Suitable for artists, writers, **GameMasters** and anyone curious (Age 14+).

PERFORMANCES

Fri 13, Sat 14 & Sun 15 Nov, 12pm – 2pm &

3pm – 5pm

Dyslexia Friendly Wall Text – Sarah Cunningham:
Midnight Sun

Bar Tango by Beni Bosetto

Join us for this new production exploring the corporeality of love through stage objects and a surreal choreography in which tango dancers inhabit costumes inspired by animals, plants, and minerals.

CONTEMPORARY X ART HISTORIES

A collaborative strand of programming between the University of Nottingham and Nottingham Contemporary.

Wed 25 Nov, 3pm

Ways of Seeing, Learning and Making: With art historian, Dr. Lara Pucci (University of Nottingham), in conversation with ceramic

Dyslexia Friendly Wall Text – Sarah Cunningham:
Midnight Sun
sculptor, Irina Razumovskaya (Royal College
of Art).

Wed 9 Dec, 3pm

Ways of Seeing, Learning and Making: With
Backlit Gallery Co-Director, Matthew
Chesney.

For more information about the exhibition,
related events and learning programmes, visit
nottinghamcontemporary.org or scan here:

