

Artist Rose Wylie, 77, Gets First Show in Moscow

By [Chloe Cranston](#)

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Rose Wylie found her art vocation at the age of four with the help of a green paint box and a coloring-in book. Now, 73 years later, her work is being exhibited for the first time in Moscow at the Regina Gallery.

The exhibit "Rosemount" gives the viewer a chance to journey through the England of Wylie's lifetime touching on themes as varied as the World War II, the problem of obesity in Britain and celebrity culture.

Wylie has had a long road to recognition. After marrying her husband, also an artist, she gave up art to raise their children, and it wasn't until she was in her 40s that she studied at the Royal School of Art in London.

She only began to get attention in 2008 with her exhibit "Wear What You Like" at the Transition Gallery in London when her large, colorful canvases impressed many.

"It was quite clear from then that she was a tremendously confident artist. She was painting very up-to-date images, and yet she wasn't a graduate fresh out of art school," wrote Romilly Eveleigh from Regina Gallery's London branch in an e-mail interview.

"I think it was her range and her ability to represent and appeal to so many different aspects of culture that made her unique. The fact that she was relatively unknown was quite an anomaly."

One reviewer has compared Wylie's bold and basic style to the cartoon "South Park," and the two do share a simplicity — a love of vibrant colors and contemporary themes.

"I connect with art of many kinds, most often in its unsophisticated form," Rose said in a Skype interview from England. She reeled off a list of wildly different styles of art as influences, including Durer's "simple" woodcuts, not the elaborate ones, medieval manuscripts, ancient Egyptian art, African lorry art and British cartoonist Steve Bell.

The exhibition in Moscow showcases Wylie's work from the last 13 years, with "Rosemount" — a vivid recollection of a childhood memory from World War II — as its center point. It shows a rough aerial map of her home in Kent, its windows blacked out alongside childish handwriting and the outline of a doodlebug bomb overhead.

Wylie said she liked "to use subjects that are common to everyone" in her paintings, and the themes are recognizable, especially to the British viewer.

There is a large, striking canvas portraying an Arsenal vs. Spurs football match, where the battle is not between the teams but between their symbols — a cannon and a fighting cock.

Footballer Wayne Rooney, Spice Girl-turned-fashion designer Victoria Beckham and the Fat Controller from children's book "Thomas the Tank Engine" also make an appearance. The latter is a symbol for ex-British Prime Minister Tony Blair and is a commentary on the binge-eating, lazy culture of the British nation featuring both chocolate and cake.

The final section is inspired by two films by acclaimed Peruvian filmmaker Claudia Llosa and attempts, Wylie said, to "combine the visual aspects from the art form of cinema with that of painting."

"Rosemount" runs till Mar. 10. Regina Gallery. 1 4th Syromyatnichesky Pereulok. Metro Kurskaya. Tel. 228-1330. www.reginagallery.com

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