



*Absent Presence:
A Wedding Dress
and the Drawings
of Sarah Casey*

Scan of exhibition catalogue for
*Absent Presence: A Wedding Dress
and the Drawings of Sarah Casey*.
Cover image by Sarah Casey, *Absent
Presence (Wedding)*, 2019-2019.
Drawing wax on paper (100×40 cm).
Photo by Mark Bentele. Exhibition
catalogue cover designed by
Victoria Hopgood.

ABSENT PRESENCE: A WEDDING DRESS AND THE DRAWINGS OF SARAH CASEY

By Dr. Ingrid Mida

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The drawings of UK-based artist [Sarah Casey](#) explore the limits of visibility. In her 2019 exhibition of works at the [Modern Literature Centre](#) Gallery, she presents life-sized renditions of clothing from the Toronto Metropolitan University Fashion Research Collection using wax coated newsprint as her medium. Although Casey's drawings have been photographed with a black felt backing, **when seen in person, the wax coated paper is translucent and her marks, made with a dressmaker's pin, are barely visible. In this way, her work echoes the absent-presence of the person who wore these articles of clothing.**



Wilkie Wedding Dress
Front. Photo Victoria
Hopgood.

Created as part of a [larger body of work in collaboration with curator Ingrid Mida](#), the exhibit at the MLC Gallery focuses on one garment in particular: the wedding dress worn by the late Evelyn Wilkie (1902-1969) of Antigonish, Nova Scotia in her wedding to Douglas Howard on November 15, 1927. **This sleeveless, calf-length drop-waisted dress was once described as pretty, but is now yellowed and has disintegrated so much that it can no longer be handled and in museological terms can be described as a dead object. And yet, it served as creative inspiration for this project.**



Installation photo by
Victoria Hopgood.

In the gallery space itself, Casey's delicate drawings hang adjacent to the display of the wedding dress. **This juxtaposition emphasizes the mimetic quality of her work but more importantly highlights that her choice of materials echoes the yellowed state of the textile** (which is particularly noticeable on the drawing of the dress front which was created first and has already aged with time).

This exhibition also presents additional drawings by Casey of related garments belonging to Wilkie, including her bridal lingerie and a baby dress. As well, the exhibit includes related material such as photographs of Evelyn Wilkie and her husband, an Eaton's catalogue from 1927, fashion magazines from the period, and a replica of the wedding dress by third-year fashion design student Olivia Da Cruz (which will be the subject of an upcoming post).

The exhibit is open until July 5, 2019. The MLC Gallery is located at 111 Gerrard Street East in Toronto and is open from Tuesday-Friday noon to 4 pm or otherwise by prior appointment. A closing party will be held on Thursday, July 4 from 5:30-8 pm. RVSP required; email admin@mlc.ryerson.ca.