

**Sue Tompkins**

***Love Ahead***

**The Modern Institute, Aird's Lane**

**13<sup>th</sup> March 2025 – 16<sup>th</sup> May 2026**

**Preview: Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2025, 5.30 – 7.30pm**

At the root of Sue Tompkins' practice is her interest in language – in the formation of words and the use of speech and voice in the service of personal expression. *Love Ahead* continues the artist's exploration of this territory, comprising a new suite of paintings which surround typewritten works, paintings and performance texts displayed across a set of centrally placed vitrines. Collectively, the vitrines track Tompkins' poetic rearranging and distortion of conversational fragments and everyday phrases. One features the performance text for 'Country Grammar', 2003, one of her earliest pieces performed in a gallery context. It collates the stream of notes, observations and writings which formed the basis of her live performances.

The wall-based canvases mark a shift away from the legible words and phrases key to recent works. In them tertiary colours, amorphous shapes and streaks of gold play a more central role. Words dissolve into gestures made in thick impasto with sections of PVA glue and other media, adding additional body to their surfaces. The works were painted directly with the artist's hand, with Tompkins drawing out repetitive slants, diagonals and circular motions – dots and circles pervade, often coming to resemble flowers or celestial bodies. The paint is dispensed first and then mixed directly on the canvas to create dynamic tonal and chromatic changes. In this way, the physical application of the paint creates an opportunity for editing, and the final compositions are paired back and singular. Each bears the marks of successive layers and revisions. Tompkins' associative and intuitive gestures hint towards an ever-elusive meaning or hidden personal intention and the gestural nature of the paintings can be understood as an extension of Tompkins' performances, elaborating on the affective possibilities of words.

A new work, *Love Ahead*, which gives the show its title was performed on the opening day.

Sue Tompkins (b. 1971, Leighton Buzzard) lives and works in Glasgow. Selected solo exhibitions include: 'Playbill Act XII', Torpedo Theater, Amsterdam (2025); 'On Top of the White Foam', Halle für Kunst, Lüneburg (2022); Lydgalleriet, Bergen (2018); 'Don't be far from me (with Matthew Damhave)', Tenderbooks, London (2017); 'Come to Ozark', Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow (2014); 'dug nature', Inverleith House, Edinburgh (2014); 'Expressions', The Modern Institute, Aird's Lane, Glasgow (2013); 'Its chiming in Normaltown', Midway Contemporary Art, Minneapolis (2012); The Modern Institute, Osborne Street, Glasgow (2011); 'Transfer', Spike Island, Bristol (2007).

Tompkins was the lead singer of cult alternative indie band Life Without Buildings (1999–2002). She has presented performances and been included in numerous group exhibitions including those at: 'The Love of Print', Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, Glasgow (2022); 'The Zany', Lateral Roma, Rome (2021); 'Trade Syllables', Andreas Melas at Martinos Pandrossou, Athens (2019); Peace Weekend, Schern Kunstahalle Frankfurt (2017); Counterflows Festival, Glasgow (2017); Raven Row, London (2017); 'The Painting Show' (British Council touring exhibition), Kunsthall Oslo, Mumok, Vienna, BBC Scotland, Glasgow, White Columns, New York; Midway Contemporary Art, Minneapolis; Wysing Arts Centre, Cambridge; the 29th São Paulo Biennale, São Paulo; the British Art Show 7 at the Hayward Gallery, London and touring; MACBA, Barcelona; ICA and the Tate Modern, London; and Artists Space, New York. Tompkins was shortlisted for the Beck's Futures Prize in 2006 and received the Paul Hamlyn Award in 2011.

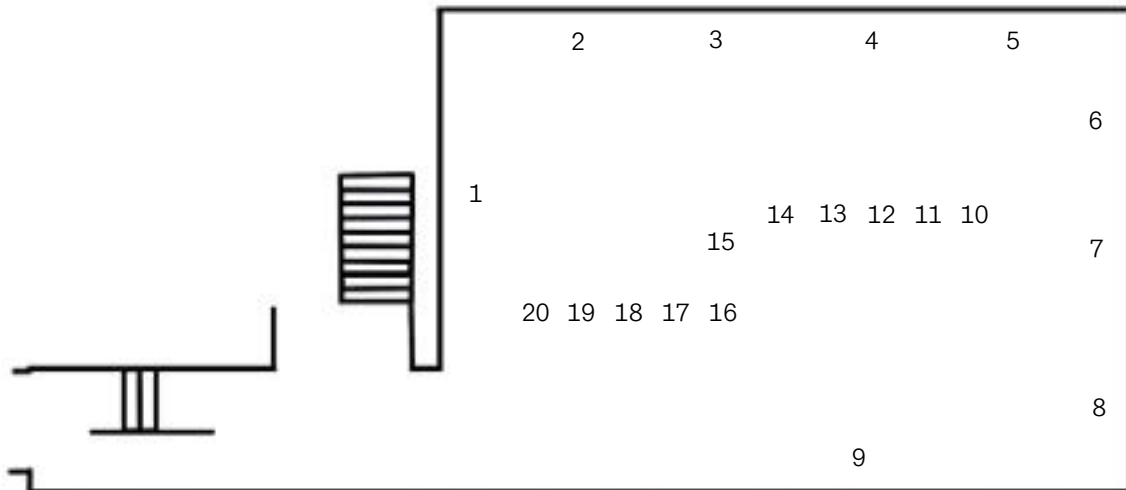
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|----|--|----|---|----|--|
| 1  | <i>its a Dawnbreaker</i> , 2026<br>Acrylic and PVA on canvas<br>71.8 x 51.8 x 3.6 cm                         | 2  | <i>chevrons of brick so gleaming so bright so charred</i> , 2026<br>Acrylic and PVA on canvas<br>47.5 x 37.5 x 3.3 cm | 3  | <i>Quita</i> , 2026<br>Acrylic, PVA and salt on canvas<br>32.8 x 42.7 x 3.2 cm   |
| 4  | <i>very red very blue very leather very true</i> , 2026<br>Acrylic and PVA on canvas<br>77.7 x 62.7 x 3.8 cm | 5  | <i>Nomore</i> , 2026<br>Acrylic and PVA on canvas<br>37.9 x 47.4 x 3.2 cm   | 6  | <i>Halt!</i> , 2026<br>Acrylic and PVA on canvas<br>42.4 x 32.2 x 3 cm   |
| 7  | <i>Never Fled</i> , 2026<br>Acrylic, PVA and salt on canvas<br>77.7 x 62.7 x 3.8 cm                          | 8  | <i>A Natural pause Tille</i> , 2026<br>Acrylic, PVA, salt, sugar and soya sauce on canvas<br>42.4 x 32.2 x 3 cm       | 9  | <i>I Miss</i> , 2026<br>Acrylic, PVA, sugar, salt, plain flour, coca powder, Vitamin C tablets and paper on canvas<br>62.7 x 77.8 x 3.8 cm |
| 10 | <i>LOVE</i> , 2026<br>Acrylic on canvas<br>27.2 x 22.2 x 3.2 cm  | 11 | <i>C/O your formulative past</i> , 2024<br>Typewritten text on coloured paper<br>29.7 x 21 cm                         | 12 | <i>Rose Bowl</i> , 2024<br>Typewritten text on coloured paper<br>29.7 x 21 cm  |
| 13 | <i>Glittery bicycles</i> , 2024<br>Typewritten text on coloured paper<br>29.7 x 21 cm                        | 14 | <i>Flowers</i> , 2026<br>Acrylic on canvas<br>27.2 x 22.2 x 3.2 cm  | 15 | <i>Untitled</i> , 2003<br>Typewritten text on paper<br>25 x 20 cm  |
| 16 | <i>Country Grammar</i> (performance text), 2003<br>Text on paper<br>29.7 x 21 cm                             | 17 | <i>THEN</i> , 2026<br>Acrylic and PVA on canvas<br>42.4 x 32 x 3 cm   | 18 | <i>Untitled</i> , 2003<br>Typewritten text on paper<br>20.4 x 16.5 cm  |
| 19 | <i>LAST</i> , 2026<br>Acrylic on canvas<br>27.3 x 22.2 x 3.2 cm  | 20 | <i>7 BE SUE</i> , 2026<br>Acrylic on canvas<br>27.2 x 22.2 x 3.2 cm   |    |  |