

# The New York Times

## Sarah McEneaney: 'Studio Living' and Hannah Wilke: 'Selected Work 1963-1990'

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Sarah McEneaney's paintings resemble art-savvy folk art. But they are also abstractions in which intense planes of color define boxy shapes and plunging perspectives that are then festooned with the details of Ms. McEneaney's life as an artist. An energetic push-pull between form and narrative ensues. First we see red and pink, then we see tile, bricks and walls, and then a woman engaged primarily in two activities: painting and not painting.



Sarah McEneaney, *Every Day*, 2013, egg tempera on gessoed wood, 36 x 48 inches

Ms. McEneaney has been working this way since art school. Her paintings are an extended self-portrait and also a long-form performance piece, a kind of documentary in egg tempera and acrylic. Over the years she has depicted constants like the home, studio and garden she has progressively carved from an old wire-mesh factory in the Callowhill section of Philadelphia, art residencies and travel as well as a bout of breast cancer and a sexual assault.

In her latest work we are privy to a recent residency in New Orleans, her growing collection of other artists' work and her visit to the recent James Turrell exhibition at the Guggenheim Museum. We see her napping on a brightly upholstered love seat and also grasp her fondness for her pets, past and present. As Ms. McEneaney, who is 59, grows older, her unflinching persistence as an artist and a woman becomes increasingly gripping. She is carving out her own place in contemporary painting.

Ms. McEneaney's show has an effective foil in a small, peripatetic survey of the life-into-art conversions of Hannah Wilke (1940-1993), the performance artist and maker of vulva-shaped sculptures in chewing gum.