

Research: Anthony Branch (Design Department)

For the past year, I have been involved in a project relating to the Music and Popular and Sub-Cultural movements of Southend on Sea and related areas of Essex 'The Scene by the Sea'. This area has a rich heritage including artists/ bands such as Procol Haram, Vivian Stanshall, The Kursal Flyers, Dr Feelgood, Depeche Mode, Talk Talk and more recently, The Horrors, These New Puritans and Nothing but Thieves.

The project was initiated by Kosmo Vinyl, ex-manager of the Clash and now New York based artist, Jules Blame, ex-designer for Stiff Records and Will Burch, ex-musician and author of three books, 'No Sleep Till Canvey Island', 'The Definitive Biography of Ian Dury' and 'Cruel to be Kind', a biography of Nick Lowe.

This triad, formulated a map of the area, including key venues and places of significant cultural reference. This was in turn passed on to the collective 'Thames Group of Artists' (of which I am a member), who were then asked to research and develop creative responses to their own points of focus from this source material.

I focused on the musician Wilko Johnson, member of Dr Feelgood, Ian Dury and the Blockheads and the subject of two films by Julien Temple: 'Oil City Confidential' and: 'The Ecstasy of Wilko Johnson'. Secondly I explored the venue 'The Kingsway' Ballroom in the small town of Hadleigh (opened in 1936 and closed and subsequently demolished in 1970), the site of a one-night concert by 'The Who' in 1967.

An exhibition of this work opened on 24th May 2025, accompanied by a parallel publication. The exhibition ran at the The Beecroft Art Gallery in Southend on Sea and until late October 2025.

Tony Branch: Thames Group of Artists (Bibliography/ Resources List)

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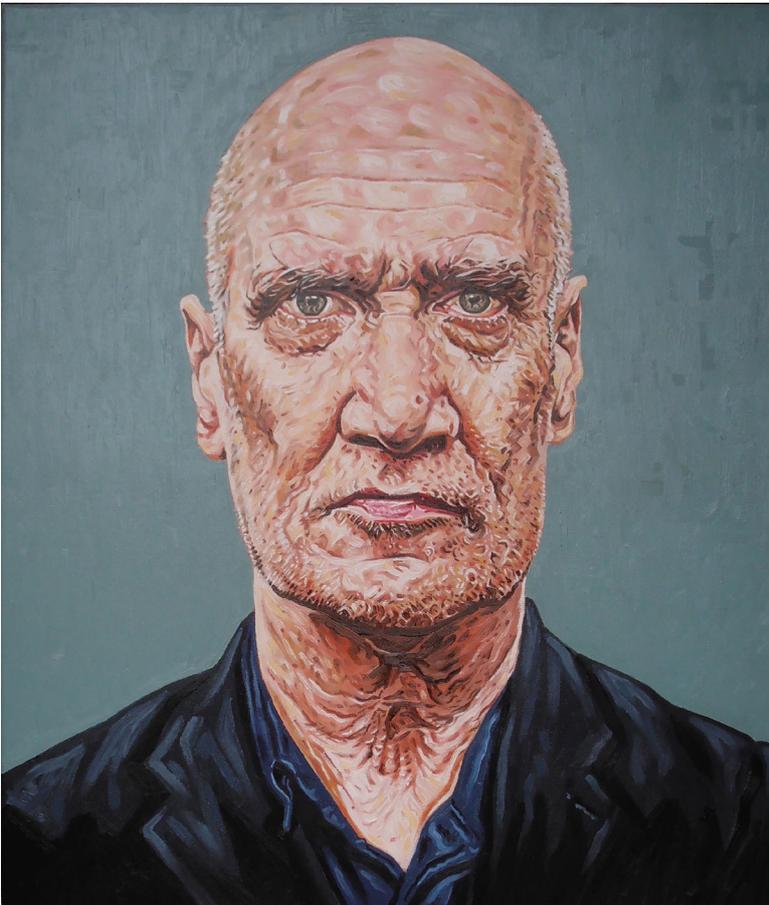
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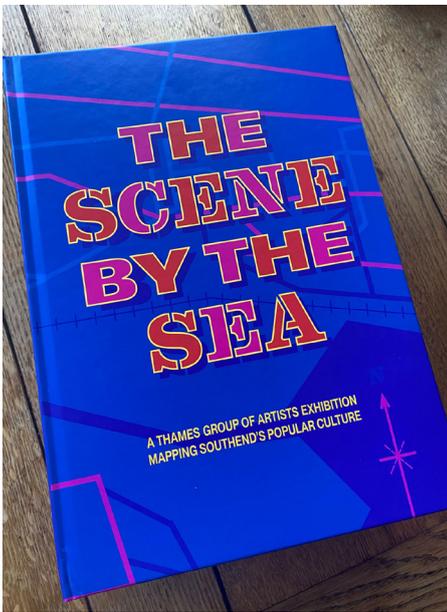
Images



The Night 'The Who' played 'The Kingsway Ballroom' in Hadleigh (Oil).



Wilko Johnson (Oil).



Publication



Exhibition: Private View (Beecroft Art Gallery)



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