

# LYONS WIER GALLERY

542 West 24th Street • New York • NY • 10011

## TARA LEWIS

“Hell Yes!”

January 30 – February 22, 2020

### Opening Reception

Thursday, January 30th (6-8pm)

Lyons Wier Gallery  
542 West 24th St., New York, NY 10011

Gallery Hours: Tues-Sat, 11am-6pm

Lyons Wier Gallery is pleased to present “**Hell Yes!**” a fresh, new series of portrait paintings by **Tara Lewis**. “**Hell Yes!**” portrays real-life subjects adorned with incongruous props, artist-made t-shirts and satin pageant sashes boasting pop culture text idioms. Her portrait process happens organically as models go through her wardrobe, accessories and props to discover a ‘persona’. These ‘play-dates’ serve as a pivotal ingredient for her practice as they are the underpinning of the subsequent photoshoot that serves as the source material for her paintings. Referencing this initial imagery, Lewis explores celebrated cultural forces such as the Lone Ranger, high school cheering squads, home-court basketball, yearbook superlatives, track shorts, tube socks and tennis headbands which feature in the work.



*Hell Yes!*, 2019, oil on canvas, 60 x 46 in / 152 x 117 cm

Lewis’ collaborative approach documents a consciousness of place, playfulness and self-awareness framed by irreverence and raw candor that she is known for. Her compositions portray coming-of-age empowerment, authenticity, spontaneity and informality expressing an entirely new story; one that is intentionally left open-ended, allowing for a timeless resonance. Lewis’ cleverness of interweaving modernity and past pop-cultural phenomena renders imagery that comments on society’s evolving perceptions of youth, girl culture, beauty, identity, teen trends, empowerment, social issues and pop culture. The paintings play with scale, redefine gender stereotypes and revisit past decades with a dose of satirical zing that results in trophy toting portraiture and willful non-conformist debutantes gone rebel-rogue.

*Tara Lewis earned her BA in Painting and Printmaking at the University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH and her MA in Visual Studios and Art Education at Tufts University and The Museum School in Boston, MA. Lewis has spent over a decade as a Professor and Chair of the Department of Art at Phillips Exeter Academy, Exeter, NH. Her artwork has been included in exhibitions and events at the Aspen Art Museum, Aspen, CO, The Watermill Center, Watermill, NY, Chelsea Art Museum, New York, NY, New York Fashion Week and is held in private collections in Palm Beach, New York, London, Los Angeles and Hong Kong. Lewis has been featured in publications such as Whitewall Magazine, New York Magazine, Elle, Vice, Artnet, Art + Auction, and Cultured Magazine among others, and was recently published in RxArt’s Between the Lines, Volume 7: Contemporary Artist Coloring Book.*

*Lewis designs and prints her own text idioms onto wearable objects such as satin pageant sashes, t-shirts, trophies and ping pong paddles, which she considers unique limited-edition print objects. These objects convey messages, re-examine stereotypes & explore timeless youth culture and serve as a trampoline for her paintings. The interaction of word & image is central to her work. Lewis is a direct descendant of Art Nouveau artist Alphonse Mucha, one of her primary influences, who also infused typefaces and cultural portraiture into his celebrated and pivotal compositions. The artist lives and works in New York City.*

For further information, contact:

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