

Rose Wylie *painting a noun...*

January 9–February 22, 2020
5–6/F, H Queen's
80 Queen's Road Central, Hong Kong

Opening reception: Thursday, January 9, 6–8 PM



Rose Wylie, *Girl in Tights*, 2019. © Rose Wylie
Courtesy the artist and David Zwirner

David Zwirner is pleased to announce an exhibition of new work by British artist Rose Wylie—her first solo presentation in Hong Kong. *painting a noun...* will include several groups of related paintings and drawings that collectively underscore the importance of memory—as both a fixed and a shifting concept—within the artist's practice.

Drawing from such wide-ranging cultural arenas as film, fashion photography, literature, mythology, history, news images, and sports, Wylie paints colorful and exuberant compositions that are uniquely recognizable. Frequently using images as a prompt, the artist works primarily from memory, resulting in paintings and drawings that are replete with associative afterimages that remain only loosely tethered to their original referents, but tightly connected to the memories as they have developed over time. In this respect, drawing is an important aspect of Wylie's practice—once she has selected an image or a topic, she typically makes numerous drawings on that theme as a kind of mnemonic exercise from which her paintings eventually emerge.

As curator Clarrie Wallis notes, “[Wylie’s] large pictures are painted in a kind of visual shorthand that is direct and legible. The ability to elicit a range of responses is made possible precisely because of her reduction of form to an essential vibrancy that incorporates, via the very physicality of her medium, not just what the artist sees but an accompanying multitude of thoughts, feelings, and memories. Wylie’s work is a sophisticated transmutation, or sifting of perceptual experience, carrying as it does a wealth of affective and allusive resonances, into the painted form.”¹

Throughout her career, Wylie has subscribed to Gertrude Stein’s view of art, as laid out in her well-known 1936 lecture, “What are Master-pieces and Why Are There So Few of Them?” For Stein, a masterpiece does not endeavor to depict the essence or true nature of its subject, but rather is self-contained, portraying simply “the thing in itself” as the human mind perceives it. The title of this exhibition emphasizes this approach of creating rich, descriptive representations of people, places, or things (as opposed to constructing a narrative or privileging information not available within the bounds of the picture plane). Wylie begins with recognizable, everyday images, and submits them to a process of transformation that renders them wholly her own and, as a result, her paintings open onto larger themes including gender, beauty, celebrity, and art history.

¹Clarrie Wallis, *Rose Wylie* (London: Lund Humphries, 2018), p. 8.

One group of paintings and drawings depicts a tennis player. Wylie is particularly interested in the sport for its cultural resonance and influence. At first appearing nearly abstract, *Serena* (2019) depicts the silhouette of a female player's torso. At top left, an exposed nipple with milk recalls such paintings as Tintoretto's *The Origin of the Milky Way* (c. 1575–1580) and Frida Kahlo's *My Nurse and I* (1937) and suggests the inherent conflict between championship play and motherhood. Likewise, the figure recurs in full in the paintings *Small Serena*, *Get a Grip* and *Serena (Clay Court)* (both 2019), which juxtapose a tennis player with her eyes raised mid-serve with external forces working against her.

In the six-part painting *Drab Ant Work - RW in evening dress* (2019)—one of the artist's largest works to date—Wylie revisits her own sartorial past. Sparsely rendered, the silhouette of the artist in an evening gown seemingly dances across the panels and appears, ant-like, from different angles. A rectangular frame is traced along the edges of each panel, mimicking the beams in the artist's studio and establishing the vantage point of the vignettes that play out within. Throughout her body of work, Wylie has frequently revisited memorable clothing from her past as a means of recalling the feelings and emotions they incited—in this sense the descriptor "drab" of the painting's title can be considered an ironic retrospective view of the glamorous dress of the artist's memory.

Another series of work considers diverging notions of beauty and the ways in which they are inflected by popular culture. In *Glamour Girl Stereotype*, *Shades and Lashes* and *Glamour Girl Stereotype, Lashes* (both 2019), the artist repeatedly depicts, in an exaggerated form, elements that she believes contribute to traditional conceptions of beauty, while simultaneously pointing to the way in which these simple additions can alter individuals' appearance and even demeanor. Wylie's original drawings for these works were done on the pages of a 2020 diary, and in the paintings she has transposed the gridded structure of those pages onto the canvas, giving them an improvisational feel. Similarly, in the diptych *Naff Bride* (2019), Wylie juxtaposes two cookie-cutter brides, each isolated and alone on a balcony. Based on an advertisement the artist encountered, Wylie's "naff" (British slang for uncool or unfashionable) brides underscore the ways in which media contributes to and disseminates cultural standards.

A new publication on the artist's work, featuring a text by Michael Glover, will be available from David Zwirner Books on the occasion of the exhibition, and will be available in both English only and bilingual English/traditional Chinese editions.

To coincide with the exhibition, David Zwirner Online will present *Rose Wylie: endlessly inappropriate*, a new series of hand-finished editioned prints by Wylie, set to launch on January 9, 2020. Wylie continues her distinctive, intuitive approach to image-making in this series, finding new ways to intervene on each print in oils, watercolors, and colored pencils. These new editions are based on an original drawing from the artist's *Clothes I Wore*, a collection of drawings and collages depicting memorable garments and everyday objects.

British artist Rose Wylie (b. 1934) studied at Folkestone and Dover School of Art, Kent, and the Royal College of Art, London, from which she graduated in 1981. The artist's first solo exhibition took place in 1985 at the Trinity Arts Centre, in Kent. In recent years, she has had solo presentations at venues including the Rosenwald-Wolf Gallery, The University of the Arts, Philadelphia (2012); Jerwood Gallery, Hastings, England (2012); Tate Britain, London (2013); Haugar Vestfold Kunstmuseum, Tønsberg, Norway (2013); Städtische Galerie Wolfsburg, Germany (2014); Douglas Hyde Gallery, Dublin (2015); Space K, Seoul (2016); Chapter, Cardiff (2016); Turner Contemporary, Margate (2016); Serpentine Sackler Gallery, London (2017); Plymouth Arts Centre and The Gallery at Plymouth College of Art, England (an exhibition that traveled to Newlyn Art Gallery & The Exchange in Cornwall, England); and Centro de Arte Contemporáneo de Málaga (2018).

Rose Wylie: Let it Settle will be on view at The Gallery at Windsor, Vero Beach, Florida from January 28 through April 30, 2020. Also in 2020, Wylie will have her first solo museum presentation in the United States, at the Aspen Art Museum in Colorado, on view March 19–June 21.

Wylie is the recipient of the John Moores Painting Prize, presented by the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool (2014); and the Royal Academy of Arts' Charles Wollaston Award (2015). The same year she was also elected as a Senior Royal Academician.

Wylie's work can be found in prominent collections throughout the United States, Europe, and Asia, including the Arario Museum, Seoul; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, DC; Space K, Seoul; Städtische Galerie Wolfsburg, Germany; Tate, London; and Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.

This is Wylie's third solo presentation with the gallery, following exhibitions in London in 2016 and 2018. The artist has been represented by David Zwirner since 2017. She lives and works in Kent, England.

For all press enquiries, contact

Dylan Shuai +852 5984 6846 dylan@davidzwirner.com

Allison Thorpe +852 2528 0792 allison@suttoncomms.com