

Petzel

NICOLA TYSON

NEED

March 12 – April 25, 2026

520 W 25th Street

Petzel is pleased to present *NEED*, an exhibition of new works on paper by Nicola Tyson, opening Thursday, March 12, and on view through April 25, 2026, at 520 West 25th Street, marking Tyson's first drawing exhibition since her 2017 retrospective, *Beyond the Trace*, at The Drawing Room in London. Tyson's new body of large-scale drawings represent a significant return to charcoal after several decades working predominantly in graphite, underscoring drawing as a central and sustained component of her practice, parallel to her work in painting.

Having not worked with charcoal since the late 1990s, Tyson now revisits the medium on an expanded scale, combining charcoal with black and white pastel and conté applied to sanded paper. The gritted surface, designed specifically for charcoal and pastels, can hold more powder than traditional paper, resulting in a fluid, more painterly feel, that registers the variety of rich textures and tones, from the smoky transparent black of charcoal to the cool, velvet opacity of pastel. Texture and touch are foregrounded, with marks that appear both deliberate and provisional.

Drawing for Tyson is an intuitive and immediate act, often executed without premeditation. It has long functioned as the foundation of her practice, a space where gut feeling precedes language and images unfold without fixed intention. Across this new body of work, Tyson moves with a playfulness and humor that belies a deeper exploration of relationships—between people, animals, the self, the medium, and the viewer, and how much we need each other. In *Paired* (2026), two black circular heads hover above their conjoined body rendered as a visceral expanse of layered blacks, floating within a chalky white ground and accompanied by a small, cat-like creature. In *Motherload* (2026), a figure rendered deliberately and aggressively in black pastel gazes intently at the viewer while cradling a fearful youngster beneath its disc-like breast, compressing tenderness and threat into a single charged image. Together, these works articulate a psychological terrain in which intimacy, vulnerability, dependency, and need circulate freely, subverting fixed roles and hierarchies.

Throughout *NEED*, portraiture functions not as confession but as inquiry. Mining the genre of self-portraiture, Tyson deploys a brutal, investigative, and intentionally gender-destabilizing humor. Frequently depicting animals and objects as psychological extensions of herself, and eschewing motherhood with its societal assumption of ultimate female fulfillment, these recurring motifs underscore the exhibition's central concern: the complexity of human interdependence and the psychic negotiations that accompany it.

Tyson began her artistic practice in the 1980s as an avowed feminist, seeking to foreground underrepresented forms of female subjectivity as she developed her own distinctive figurative language, creating images that are unfettered yet precise, expansive and particular, and resistant to idealization. The reassessment of women artists marginalized throughout the 20th century forms an important contextual backdrop for Tyson's practice. Encountering the work of Maria Lassnig in her late 30s proved revelatory for Tyson, who recognized a kindred approach in Lassnig's use of the self as a site for investigating the possibilities and parameters of female agency and creative authority, whilst engaging concurrently with the contemporary arguments around the medium of painting itself and its continued cultural vitality and relevance.

Tyson's drawings have been widely included in institutional exhibitions and publications. In addition to her 2017 Drawing Room survey in London, Tyson's drawings have been presented at Petzel on multiple occasions, including a landmark solo exhibition of works on paper in 2016 that was accompanied by a catalogue. Early charcoal drawings by the artist are held in the collection of The Museum of Modern Art, New York, and were featured in *A Decade of Collecting: Recent Acquisitions in Contemporary Drawing* (1997).

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Coinciding with this exhibition, artist Nicola Tyson will be joined in conversation with writer Cassie Packard on **Saturday, March 28, 2026, at 4pm**. RSVP is required as space is limited; please email press@petzel.com to reserve your seat.

About Nicola Tyson

Nicola Tyson (b. 1960, London, England) attended Chelsea School of Art, St. Martins School of Art, and Central/St. Martins School of Art in London, and currently lives and works in New York, NY. Recent solo exhibitions include *I am a teapot*, Petzel, New York, NY (2025); *90s Paintings*, Petzel, New York, NY (2024); *Nicola Tyson (a survey of drawings)*, Nino Mier Gallery, Los Angeles, CA (2024); *Nicola Tyson: A Bit Touched*, Nino Mier Gallery, Brussels, Belgium (2022); *Holding Pattern*, Sadie Coles HQ, London, UK (2021); and *Sense of Self*, Petzel, New York, NY (2020); *Nicola Tyson*, The Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, St. Louis, MO (2017); *Beyond a Trace*, The Drawing Room, London (2017).

In 2025, Tyson was commissioned for Hayward Gallery's public project banner in London. In 2023, *Nicola Tyson: Selected Paintings 1993-2022*, the most comprehensive overview of the artist's work to date, was published. In 2011 Tyson released the limited-edition book, *Dead Letter Men*, a collection of satirical letters addressing famous male artists. Her unique archive of color photos documenting the London club scene of the late 1970s—*Bowie Nights at Billy's Club*—was the subject of shows, both in New York and London, in 2012 and 2013.

Tyson's work is included in major collections such as Museum of Modern Art, New York; Whitney Museum of Art, New York; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; UCLA Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington D.C.; Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; and Tate Modern, London.

Petzel is located at 520 West 25th Street New York, NY 10001. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 10am–6pm.
For press inquiries, please contact Karolina Chojnowska at karolina@petzel.com, or call (212) 680-9467.