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Nicola Tyson
Art Brussels Solo Presentation
Brussels, BE
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“In art, and in painting and music, it is not a matter of reproducing or inventing forms, but of capturing forces. For this reason, no art is figurative.” Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sensation*

For the 2026 edition of Art Brussels, Nino Mier Gallery is pleased to present works on paper by British artist Nicola Tyson (b. 1960, London, UK).

Through painting, drawing, sculpture, and writing, Tyson has posited questions about embodiment, identity, and the female form for over three decades. Since the beginning of her career in the early 90s, her drawing oeuvre has been recognized as equal to that of her painting practice; not merely preparatory work, but a parallel investigation, taking advantage of drawing’s immediacy to capture fleeting impressions and sensations. “When I begin to draw, I have no idea what’s going to appear. I work fast, to stay ahead of language and rational decision-making. I just let forms grow, self-organize, with me making the necessary adjustments towards a dynamic equilibrium within the constant information flow that is sentience.”

Tyson's practice is grounded in a sustained investigation of how bodies are imagined and destabilized through systems of gender and sexuality. As an art student in the 80s, she was inspired by the work of the French theorists Monique Wittig and Luce Irigaray, who rejected masculinist histories and instead urged women to ‘write the truth of their bodies,’ using non-linear, performative, and autobiographical language to describe the truth of a new kind of body.

Disjointed anatomies oscillate between whimsy and arresting intensity, probing those abject features of identity and embodiment that are simultaneously unnerving and seductive. Pockets of negative space render the boundary between figuration and dissolution unintelligible. Her work is imbued with affects ranging from humour to horror to pathos. “I use the figure as a playground. I rearticulate it and reanimate it in unlikely ways, working from the inside out.”

Politically potent yet playfully peculiar, the dual nature of Tyson's work arises from her sense of humour, which she deploys to destabilize as much as to amuse. The titles, always arrived at afterwards, often create further visual puns, adding a levity to the uncanny representations. She has stated: “A successful drawing for me is one that surprises me... and I can honestly say, ‘I have no idea where that came from.’”

In these works, worlds tilt as compositions become points of connection rather than portals to the alienated world—a transformation that includes but extends beyond a single human subject into other creatures, plants, and even the landscape.

Tyson's painting practice furthers this transformation from alienation to interconnectedness. In her series of acrylic monoprints on paper titled *Head #1–8* (2016), slender striations of colour resemble the grooves of wood grain. In the 2000s, Tyson embarked on an extensive series of monoprint “heads,” created by painting on glass, placing a piece of paper over the painted image, and then applying varying degrees of pressure, thus controlling

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the resulting pulled image through careful, intuitive manipulations. For Tyson, this process was a way to escape drawing and an enduring “battle with the line” that curtails her approach to form. “I had often felt trapped by the self-sufficiency of my graphic line that already carried so much conclusive information. In these monoprints, working fast with pure colour, I was able to break free of that ‘controlling’ line.”

Nicola Tyson’s works on paper are included in the collections of MoMA, the Hammer Museum, the Walker Art Center, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago. Her first retrospective at the Kunsthalle Zürich in 1998 featured a comprehensive overview of her graphite and charcoal work and was documented in an accompanying catalogue. Tyson’s latest exhibition of new drawings, NEED, is currently on view at Petzel, NY through April 25. Her solo retrospective of works on paper, titled Beyond the Trace, took place at The Drawing Room in London in 2017, and her drawings have been included in various publications and gallery exhibitions internationally.