

# Lyles & King

**Paulina Stasik: *Skin in the game***

**January 12 - February 10, 2024**

**Opening Reception: Friday, January 12, 6–8 PM**

Lyles & King is pleased to announce a solo exhibition of new paintings by Paulina Stasik (b. 1990, Poland). *Skin in the game* will be the artist's first solo exhibition with the gallery and first solo exhibition in the United States. At the core of Stasik's latest body of work is the female experience, highlighting hardships, tribulations, and the quest for emancipation.

Stasik's paintings narrate stories of women who embody protectresses, partners, mothers, daughters, sisters, rivals, extroverts, introverts, and dreamers. These are roles of our great-grandmothers, grandmothers, mothers, and ourselves within a patriarchal world. They carry psychic and physical experiences and traumas through life, into death, and into the generations who live beyond them.

Stasik's luminous oil paintings are united in palette, dominated by an obsessive use of blues, purples, pinks, and reds. The contrast between these colors is a tool to build layers of narrative in a world detached from realism. Her colors possess a strong aura and atmosphere meant to awaken metaphysical desires. The temperatures dance between warm and cool, life and death. Stasik's open compositions suggest a continuation of events, serving as a cinematic unspooling of past and present, conceptually akin to film stills. Her paintings delve into life as a process, showcasing rituals, patterns, and the influence of recurring urges. The protagonist, though modeled in the image of the artist, transcends conventional self-portraiture and offers an alternative story for each viewer. Miniature figures occupy many of the paintings, personifying various emotional states and subconscious desires. They are also familial specters—ghosts of the past unknowingly carried with us through life.

In the painting *Skin in the Game*, Stasik considers the risks women take when revealing true emotions and goals that push against the patriarchal system in which we still exist. The draped skin on the arm of the central figure is a shedding of expectations imposed since childhood. The central woman goes through a transformational process, from child to woman, carrying the child's skin on her shoulder like a trophy of her own metamorphosis. In *Bearing the Brunt*, the first painting in this series, she delves into the cycle of inheriting trauma. The shrunken characters sitting on the main figure's back cling tightly to her, bending her body under the weight of her history. She turns her head to acknowledge the passengers upon her back, these invisible burdens and ghosts of the past, unable to stand proudly upright.

Despite Stasik's primary interest in the lives of women, her paintings also evoke the theme of death. On the one hand, the body is an area of passion and desire, and on the other hand, it is a site of pain and loss, inextricably tethered. This is perhaps best symbolized by hair flowing and falling through multiple canvases. Hair continues to grow after death, known but unseen beneath the earth, just as the stories of the dead continue to weave themselves into the realm of the living. Memory maintains.

**Paulina Stasik** (b. 1990, Poland) has exhibited work at Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, PL; Spread Museum, Entrevau, FR; Lyles & King, NY; Raster Gallery, Warsaw, PL; UTA Artist Space, Los Angeles, US; The MODEM Center for Modern and Contemporary Arts, Debrecen, HU; Galeria Wozownia, Toruń, PL, Galeria Henryk, Kraków, PL; and Shefter Gallery, Kraków, PL; among others. She received her Doctorate in the Faculty of Painting at the Jan Matejko Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków, PL. Stasik lives and works in Kraków.