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Wendy White

Mark and Phil

May 20 - July 1, 2021

Denny Dimin Gallery is pleased to announce *Mark and Phil*, a solo exhibition by Wendy White at the New York location, on view from May 20 to July 1, 2021. This is White's first solo exhibition with the gallery.

The exhibition features White's newest body of work: highly-detailed trompe l'oeil paintings of plywood, inspired in part by the boards that enclosed the ground floor spaces of America's cities during the past troubled and tragic year. A humble material, plywood is highly visible recently in everything from shop windows to outdoor restaurant enclosures. White's ongoing interest in faux wood panels and the often gendered spaces they adorn—garages, man caves, basements, and auto body shops—is expanded here to include plywood, which seemed to become a catchall surface for angst, anger, and pure expression. As collective trauma and irreversible change have marked all of our lives recently, White's work calls on us to reflect on how we process emotions through an infantilized and consumeristic image culture, never more so than now.

In her monumental *Plywood Paintings*, White pairs innocent musings and declarations of love with humorous sayings and hieroglyphic symbols. Abbreviated phrases, words, and names, e.g. BARB (in bubble letters), a wobbly peace sign, a heart shot through with an arrow, and the phrase "I don't even go here," could have easily adorned a wall in a 1980s American high school. A second group of smaller paintings with handmade frames comprise the latest iteration of White's ongoing series called *Contained Paintings*, in which each painting's palette (in this case, black with pops of neon) extends onto a distorted, highly sculptural black frame.

The simple yet profound ways in which humans assert their presence has been a central theme for White for some time. How do we decide which marks are accidental and which are virtuosic; what marks belong in art history and who gets credit for them; which marks belong to specific spheres such as advertising, graffiti, and kitsch; and which marks transcend classification? One of White's appropriated phrases is "Kilroy wuz here," referring to the pre-internet meme from the WWII era, a precursory period of international crisis and the beginning of the so-called dominance of American culture. Elsewhere we see evidence of all levels of boredom and intent: inane scrawlings like "Whyyy," and "Up Yours" coexist with a version of the Rainbow Man petroglyph, the ancient Hawaiian symbol that asks man to take up the task of protecting the

land. There is a sense of balancing high and low, humor and seriousness, perhaps even life and death, that pervades all of the works.

Like wood, many of the signs and symbols that repeat in White's work are ubiquitous and mutable in culture at large. A giant mobile made from steel, dibond, epoxy, and LED could function as a collection of stand-ins for emotional states, askew yet somehow holding together and collectively stronger. Recognizable imagery—pixelated hearts, rainbows, and peace signs—have mass culture origins in everything from Lisa Frank stickers to weather apps, drawing out notions of lost innocence (a pixel heart, for example, represents a “life” in video games). Some of the shapes are cut from clean, shiny dibond. Others are sculpted, retaining the presence of the artist's hand, feeling flawed and human in comparison. The gallery installation also features site-specific, printed carpeting that further draws out the symbology at play with giant splashes and drips—almost as if the materials used in White's paintings and objects have spilled out or melted onto the floor, leaving a residue.

Mark and Phil, White's playfully personified and masculated title, points to basic modes of image building. She seems to suggest that when we're bored, overwhelmed, or searching for acceptance, we mark and fill—either accidentally, thoughtfully or with tremendous purpose—to announce, simply, that we are here.

Wendy White was born in Deep River, Connecticut in 1971 and lives and works in New York City. She holds a BFA from the Savannah College of Art and Design and a MFA from Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University. Her institutional exhibitions include The Brattleboro Museum and Art Center, Vermont (2021); Hokkaido Obihiro Museum of Art; Kushiro Art Museum; Hakodate Museum of Art; Sapporo Art Museum, Japan (2019); SCAD Museum of Art, Savannah, GA (2018); Perez Art Museum, Miami (2018); Savannah College of Art & Design, Atlanta, GA (2018); The Museum of Modern Art, Gunma, Japan (2016); The Museum of Fine Arts, Gifu, Japan (2015); M Woods, Beijing (2015); Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA (2014); and Kunstverein Rosa- Luxemburg-Platz, Berlin (2012). She has had solo exhibitions at Kaikai Kiki, Tokyo, JP; Leo Koenig Inc., New York, NY; Shulamit Nazarian, Los Angeles, CA; Maruani Mercier, Brussels, BE; Van Horn, Düsseldorf, DE; Andrew Rafacz Gallery, Chicago, IL; Galerie Jérôme Pauchant, Paris, FR; and Galeria Moriarty, Madrid, ES. White is the recipient of the Tieger Mentorship at Cornell University (2019), a Painting Fellowship from the New York Foundation for the Arts (2012) and a George Segal Painting Grant (2008). Her work was featured in Phaidon's anthology *Vitamin P2: New Perspectives in Painting* (2011). White's first solo museum exhibition is forthcoming at Museum Goch, Germany in Summer 2021.

The exhibition will be open Tuesday to Saturday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Appointments, which can be made on our website, are recommended to expedite your visit, but not required. Face masks are required. Denny Dimin Gallery is located at 39 Lispenard Street in New York City. For sales and press inquiries, contact Elizabeth Denny (+1-917-215-3723, elizabeth@dennydimingallery.com) or Robert Dimin (+1-917-445-7956 or robert@dennydimingallery.com).