



***Paradise and Other Fires***  
solo exhibition by Leslie Brack

May 8 - June 20, 2021  
opening reception May 8, 12-7PM

*The descent to hell is easy / Its doors are open wide / But to regain the air of Paradise / And view again  
its hopeful skies / This is the struggle and the labor / It's here the trouble lies.*  
--Virgil's *Aeneid*

In *Paradise and Other Fires*, Leslie Brack's nine narcotic and explosive watercolors of recent wildfires and urban upheavals offer a dark but blazing descent into the present.

At the entry, an unseen incineration. A delicate, defoliated landscape drained of color and of life. An ominous space for contemplation. Brack's show opens with a blast from the past, an image of a WWI no man's land that slows and then propels us into warmer scenes of smog and palms--our tropical apocalypse. And then, the gallery explodes, crackling with Brack's fierce and ravishing fires.

Six blazing hot paintings, in glowing reds and oranges, ignite the gallery. Riots and wildfires burn from Portland to Malibu, from Atlanta to Rio. Torched trucks roar, tail-lights burn through crimson clouds, buildings smolder in a wall of heat or erupt into blinding light. Their aqueous medium makes the flames weirdly watery; their spilling, liquid colors prompting us to hear the word "bleed" as we look.

Brack's saturated pigmentation amplifies the violence of the scenes, while their material delicacy signals fragility. Each painting's wild chaos belies their fanatical control, and the tension between the gorgeous, detailed, jewel-like work and the ferocity of the subjects is, of course, part of their seduction. They cast a spell, not to numb, but to attune us to the moment, to let us consider the shocks we suffer. Brack's paintings ask: What might be born in flames? How might disasters pierce the cruel inertia of the status quo? For while one theme is destruction, another is revolution--its raging sparks the catalyst for change.

*Exhibition text written by Catherine Taylor, author of You, Me, and the Violence (21st-Century Essays / Mad Creek Books), APART (Ugly Duckling Presse).*

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**The artist and gallery have agreed that 10% of all sales from Paradise and Other Fires will be donated to the Transgender Emergency Support Fund sponsored by Queens-based LGBT Center Intercultural Collective Inc and Lorena Borjas Community Fund.**  
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**bio:** Leslie Brack is a painter living in New York State. Her most recent solo exhibitions include Ithaca College (2017), Brooklyn's Cathouse Proper (2017–18), and the Herbert F. Johnson Museum at Cornell (2015). She has also organized exhibitions at New York City galleries Momenta Art (2009 and 2000) and Winkleman Gallery (2011). In 2009, she co-researched and launched the Womanhouse website, the most popular internet resource for the influential feminist-artist collaboration from 1972. Brack has received support from the Pollock-Krasner Foundation, the Corporation of Yaddo, the Ucross Foundation, and the Millay Colony, among others. She teaches painting and drawing at Cornell University and at Auburn Correctional as part of the Cornell Prison Education Program.

**image:** Leslie Brack, *Wendy's*, watercolor on paper, 12" x 16", 2020



Cathouse Proper @ 524 Projects  
524 Court Street, 2nd floor  
(enter Huntington St.)  
Brooklyn, NY 11231

Thursday–Sunday, 12–6pm  
F/G to Smith & 9th St.

The gallery is situated on unceded indigenous Lenape land.

The gallery is located on the second floor accessible by stairs only; should you need assistance gaining entry, please contact the gallery before or upon arrival.

for information, press and sales inquires  
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