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Pablo Picasso (Spanish, 1881-1973), *Girl before a Mirror*, 1932, oil on canvas, 64 x 51 1/4 inches. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Mrs. Simon Guggenheim. © 2011 Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Henri Matisse (French, 1869-1954), *Dance II*, 1909, oil on canvas, 102 1/2 x 153 1/2 inches. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Nelson A. Rockefeller in honor of Alfred H. Barr, Jr. © 2011 Succession H. Matisse, Paris / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Andy Warhol (American, 1928-1987), *Self-Portrait*, 1966, silkscreen ink on synthetic polymer paint on nine canvases, each canvas 22 1/2 x 22 1/2 inches, overall 67 3/4 x 67 3/4 inches. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Philip Johnson. © 2011 Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

The Wells Gallery in Charleston, SC, Offers Works by Earl B. Lewis

The Wells Gallery in Charleston, SC, will present the exhibit, *Lotto Icons: A Global Perspective*, featuring works by Earl B. Lewis of children's portraits that call attention to desperate families who turn to scratch-off lottery tickets for hope, on view from Oct. 7 - 22, 2011. A reception will be held on Oct. 7, from 5-8pm. Partial proceeds will benefit the Community Center of St. Matthew's, a local outreach that serves children and families in the Charleston area and seeks to end generational poverty by addressing illiteracy in youth.



Ella #9 by Earl B. Lewis

For more than two years, Earl B. Lewis was an artist with writer's block. An accomplished painter and award-winning illustrator of children's books, Lewis was set on creating a series of new paintings that would have true relevance. After years of combing art galleries and scouring books for inspiration, he ultimately stumbled upon it during a mundane stop for coffee at a convenience store. The result is a thought-pro-

voking body of work. The series of mixed media paintings were born from numerous trips Lewis made to a Wawa in New Jersey where he observed impoverished adults purchasing scratch-off lottery tickets, many times while their children looked on.

"I started noticing the people in there just buying these scratch-off tickets and scratching their lives away trying to get that winning ticket in a million-to-one shot, a million-to-one opportunity," Lewis said. "A lot of times, they would have their children there and ... I began wondering, 'You know, you're buying these tickets and it almost appears that you need to get something to eat.'"

Disturbed by this on many levels, Lewis, who is based in New Jersey but also has a studio in Charleston, conducted research and discovered a large number of people living below the poverty line spend a disproportionate amount on lottery tickets, particularly the scratch-off kind. In addition, he learned that desperation and a feeling of powerlessness motivate this spending. Ultimately, Lewis felt a need to take action because bearing the brunt of these sad facts are children, whose parents cling to the hope that their next ticket, despite the massive odds, will deliver them from poverty even as it exacerbates it.

Lewis' artistic approach was to purchase scratch-off lottery tickets, which he did not scratch, and use them as the background for intricate portraits of some of the children he encountered. He symbolically covered each child's portrait in a layer of gold leaf, which he then carefully scraped away - much like a lottery ticket - to reveal the iconic images of the children.

"I felt this was a statement I needed to make," Lewis said. "...These pieces are basically speaking of our culture, speaking of our society and how we spend so much time in that frivolous pursuit of getting rich quick. And all we need to do is realize that

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our children are our most precious commodity and if we just scratch them enough and scratch them deep enough, we will find that to be true."

The show includes portraits of children from the Charleston area, as well as from Lewis' travels throughout the US and other countries.

Earl Bradley Lewis was born Dec. 16, 1956, in Philadelphia, PA. Lewis has illustrated more than 50 books for children, including Nikki Grimes' *Talkin' About Bessie: The Story of Aviator Elizabeth Coleman*, which was the 2003 Coretta Scott King Illustrator Award Winner. Inspired by two artist uncles, as early as the third grade, Lewis displayed artistic promise. Beginning in the sixth grade, he attended the Saturday morning Temple University School of Art League and studied with Clarence Wood. Lewis attended the Temple University Tyler School of Art. There, he discovered his medium of preference was watercolor. During his four years at Temple, Lewis majored in Graphic Design and Illustration and Art Education. After graduating, he taught art in public schools for 12 years. Presently, Lewis teaches at the University of Arts in Philadelphia, continues to paint and illustrate and is a member of The Society of Illustrators in New York City.

The Community Center of St. Matthew's is an active family life and learning center in downtown Charleston. Its mission is to improve the lives and well-being of people by addressing the whole family through education and the support of healthy lifestyles. For more than 10 years, the center has sought to end generational poverty by addressing illiteracy in Charleston's youth. They work to improve the reading skills of area children through the various literacy programs including: AS Kids after school mentoring program, Summer Kids Reading Program and reading assistance with its computer-based Academy of Reading. Additional basic needs of participant families are met through the center's Emergency Food Pantry and Sharing With A Neighbor benevolence programs. In addition, the center offers comprehensive English as a Second Language instruction throughout

the year. The center is grateful to the countless volunteers and generous patrons who have supported its mission to improve lives through health and education.



Strange Fruit #17 by Earl Lewis

Located on Meeting Street, next to the Gibbes Museum of Art in historic downtown Charleston, collectors can feel confident they will find both integrity and expertise at the Wells Gallery, where quality and value are paramount and a wide array of significant art is offered. Works including paintings, bronze sculptures and hand-blown glass are offered from national, international and emerging artists. An additional gallery is located in The Sanctuary Hotel at Kiawah Island Golf Resort.

For further info check our SC Commercial Gallery listings, call 843/853-3233 or visit (www.wellsgallery.com).

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