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Yongqi Tang: *Lullaby*
Jupiter Contemporary
May 28 – June 24, 2023
Opening reception: May 28, 6-8 PM
1217 71st Street, Miami Beach, FL 33141



Miami – May 11, 2023 – Jupiter Contemporary is pleased to present *Lullaby*, an exhibition of new works by Yongqi Tang that draw upon disparate art historical references from the West to East Asia—and the Middle Ages to the present day—to investigate the constructs of identity, cultural specificity, and the modalities of painting.

Featuring painting, drawing, and sculpture, the exhibition visually articulates the breadth of Tang’s practice and the ways in which her process of creating each large-scale painting involves the articulation of its subject in multiple media, each iteration of which results in a distinct work. Displayed in conjunction, these works, which range widely in size and style, evidence the artist’s practice of thinking through not only her medium and subjects, but also her artistic identity and a desire to not be beholden to any one visual language.

The centerpiece of the exhibition, *Strange Tales: The Painted Wall* (2023), exemplifies this process as it was preceded by three charcoal drawings of the same name that hang together as a triptych and four intimately scaled ceramic works. Instead of painting from photographs, Tang has increasingly cultivated her imagery solely from her imagination, enhancing its often surreal and abstracted manifestations. Despite this move away from source material, after beginning with a series of sketches, the artist renders her compositions in charcoal and ceramic as the latter provides a three-dimensional reference from which to compose her paintings in oil.

While Tang’s practice is thus highly self-reflexive, so too is the relationship she’s established between the subject and form of *Strange Tales*. Inspired by “The Painted Wall,” a tale from a 1700s-era book of Chinese ghost stories, this monumentally scaled painting illustrates the story about a Chinese scholar who ventured into a temple and became so enraptured by a mural that he stepped into it and fell in love with the woman pictured therein. Tang collapses this narrative into one composition in a manner reminiscent of Renaissance frescos: at the far left the man stands in front of the painted wall, farther to the right he becomes infatuated with the beautiful woman who glows like a beacon, at the center the man and woman make love in a bed, under which the man also hides when chased by the painting’s guardian, and at the far right he attempts to escape back into the real world.

By visualizing the narrative on a horizontal painting of this magnitude that echoes the form of a Chinese scroll, Tang fuses art historical references which, though being culturally and historically disparate, have served to shape her own identity as an artist. The result serves as an analogy for the effect of painting itself, as viewers of Tang’s work ultimately take on a position similar to that of the man depicted: they become enveloped by its breadth and pulled into its depths by the enchanting glow of the young woman.

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Such a collaging of references also manifests in a series of more intimate works that similarly feature art historical allusions but are rather executed in a diverse set of styles and techniques. This ongoing series, entitled *Wild Strawberries*, thus provides a framework within which Tang can experiment. By reimagining canonical paintings—for example transforming *Saturn Devouring His Son* (1819–1823) by Francisco Goya into a self-portrait of the artist, and Édouard Manet's *Luncheon on the Grass* into a vision bathed in red—Tang celebrates experimentation and difference.

When taken together, the works on view channel an unexpectedly cohesive vision via Tang's weaving together of history and personal experience into a visual language all her own. The exhibition thus not only offer a glimpse into her process but also, what may very well be, her unconscious. Led from one surreal composition to the next, wherein familiar peoples, places, and sights merge with the unfamiliar, viewers may find themselves ensconced in Tang's vivid world of waking dreams.

About the Artist

Yongqi Tang (b.1997 Shenzhen, China) received her BA in Art and BS in Psychology, and subsequently her MFA from the University of Washington, Seattle. Tang's work has been exhibited in solo and group shows at T293, Rome; Specialist Gallery, Seattle; Latitude Gallery, New York; Strada World, New York; Sandpoint Gallery, Seattle; Jacob Lawrence Gallery, Seattle; and Northwind Arts Center, Port Townsend; amongst others. She is the recipient of the Bernie Funk Artist Scholarship, Boyer and Elizabeth Bole Gonzales Scholarship for Excellence, and the Puget Sound Group of Northwest Artists Scholarship Award. She was an artist in residence at the Field Projects Gallery, New York and is currently one of the artists in residence at the Amazon 2023 AIR Program. Tang lives and works in Seattle and currently teaches in the University of Washington's Painting and Drawing department. lives and works in Brooklyn.

Caption: Yongqi Tang *Self Portrait as a Butcher (after Goya)*, 2022, Oil on panel, 24 by 18 in. 60.96 by 45.72 cm.

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