

Sherbet Green



My-Lan Hoang-Thuy, *Hanada*, 2022, 36 x 25 cm, pigments, acrylic binder, acrylic painting, and inkjet printing

Into My Arms

Sonya Derviz, My-Lan Hoang-Thuy, Shamiran Istifan and Li Li Ren

PV: Wednesday 18 January, 6 - 9pm

19 January - 4 March 2023

From the ether, the gentle uncanny. Glimpses seemingly through windows; angelic figures in a state of embrace; stalactites congealing on electric chorals: the phantasmagoric particles of life on earth. A never-ending history of surrealism, modernised and mechanised. Across painting and sculpture, Derviz, Hoang-Thuy, Istifan and Ren look to comfort, voyeurism and the spiritual as inexplicable embellishments of the mundane, constant renegotiations of situation, mind and body.

About the works:

Sonya Derviz

"...[a] function of transformation [that is] less involved in making sense of the world and more involved in exploring the possibilities of being, of becoming, in the world [...]" - Mark Fisher

Although recognisable, the figures present in Derviz' works are mined from the subconscious. In her *Wise Young Girl* series, the artist continues her investigation into unspoken behaviours and the human psyche. She begins by materialising her painting through memory, familiar faces or references to visual cultures, before letting herself move freely in response to the unfamiliar. She describes her painting practice as 'a repetitive process of letting go and accepting the intuitive relationship between a fleeting subconscious and the materiality of the canvas; accepting the familiar, finding something new.' They are worked and re-worked; their final appearance connecting images with sensations and memories, and evoking notions of isolation and abandonment.

My-Lan Hoang-Thuy

Hoang-Thuy moulds her own canvases out of acrylic paint, layering the material before letting it dry out. She then paints or prints photographs onto their surface; mixing different techniques in a delicate play of medium and chance, and a formal interrogation of painting. Small in scale, the works invite the viewer into the artist's imagination. They bear the imprint of the artist's family history, between traditional Vietnamese aesthetics, with certain colours, materials, and curvilinear forms woven throughout; and predominantly late-nineteenth-century art-historical references such as the Nabis, which become apparent in the work.

Shamiran Istifan

Istifan's practice is rooted in a desire to tell stories, originating in the comprehension of growing up in a so-called parallel-worlds-system, which formed for her generation. The artist's practice focuses on layered social dynamics, motivated by her personal experience of the way class, gender and religion shape collectivism, politics and interpersonal relationships. Suggesting a version of futurism as a haven for the shapeshifters, the work is articulating itself visually like oral mythology.

Through an intimate aesthetic, the artist's current body of work points to the way symbolism permeates daily life. The two angels kissing in *House with No Past* are

allegorical of preservation and remembered affinities. The artist remarks that 'many see sentimentality and romance as an escape from reality, but for some they are a space to sustain realities that have been denied. When physical spaces don't provide a home for certain bodies, they create a reflection of it through each other.'

Li Li Ren

In these works, Ren envisions inter-body and inter-temporal connection through the aquatic. Driven by an interest in the physics of water flow as symbolic of a desire to understand not only the distant presence of human memory and intimacy, but that of natural organisms beyond the anthropoid, the artist uses a wide range of materials to sculpt, weave and cast ambiguous sea-life forms and geologies.

Central to Ren's ongoing body of work is a preoccupation with semiotics, and more specifically communication beyond verbal and written language. In her submerged realm, marine lifeforms surpass spatial disjunction through electric currents running between them, interpreted by specialised receptors of sensation that await information.

An integral element to the makeup and origin of this body of work is the parallel between ancient-or-future creatures communicating through waves and ripples, and the ineffable sensation of motherhood and the imagining of the womb as akin not to our constructed worlds and languages, but rather to something older, rooted in sensation.

Sonya Derviz (b. 1994) lives and works in London. She graduated with a BA in Fine Art from Slade School of Fine Art in 2018, having previously completed her Foundation Diploma at Central Saint Martins. Solo exhibitions include: *The eyes have all the seeming, of a demon's that is dreaming*, Daniel Benjamin Gallery, London (2022); and *Pas de Corps*, V.O Curations, London (2018). Selected group exhibitions include: *First Light*, curated by Hector Campbell, Collective Ending, London (2022); *Inside Out*, The Artist Room, London (2022); *It Seems So Long Ago*, Matthew Brown, Los Angeles (2020); *Minimal | Maximal*, LVH Art, London (2019); *Parfum d'épines*, Phillips x V.O Curations, Paris (2019); and *Paintings by*, Alex Vardoxoglou, London (2019).

My-Lan Hoang-Thuy (b. 1990) lives and works in Paris. She graduated from the Ecole Duperré in 2015, and the Beaux-Arts de Paris in 2018. In 2018, she was nominated for the Prix des Amis des Beaux-Arts, won the Graduate Photography Award, and then exhibited at the Salon de Montrouge. She participated in the Artpress Biennial of Young Artists at the Museum of Modern Art in Saint-Etienne in

2020. Selected solo exhibitions include: *Belle Orchidée, Pissenlit Passable* at Galerie Mitterrand, Paris (2022); *Chez Espagnolveu*, 32 rue des Ormeaux, Paris (2020); and *Pale Violet*, Galerie Derouillon, Paris (2019). Selected group exhibitions include: *Cloud Point*, Paradise Row, London (2022); *Making Worlds Exist*, Asia Now Art Fair, Paris (2021); *Scratching the Surface*, Galerie Derouillon, Paris (2021); *Canons*, Galerie Derouillon, Paris (2020); *The Plates of the Present*, Centre Pompidou, Paris (2020); *Salon Jeune Création*, Fondation Fiminco, Romainville (2020); and *Salon Approche*, Le Molière, Paris (2019). Hoang-Thuy will be the subject of a solo exhibition at the Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Paris, in 2023.

Shamiran Istifan (b. 1987) lives and works in Zurich. Istifan's visual arts practice focuses on layered social dynamics, motivated by her personal experience of the way class, gender and religion shape collectivism, politics and personal relationships. Recent solo exhibitions include: *Precious Pipeline*, Rose Easton, London (2022); *Law & Order*, Kulturfolger, Zurich (2021); *G by Destiny*, All Stars, Lausanne; and *Micro Entities*, Material, Zurich (2020). Selected group exhibitions include: *Reflection is the Daughter of the Scandal*, Angela Mewes, Berlin (2021); *As We Gaze Upon Her*, Warehouse421, Abu Dhabi (2021); *Depuis des Lunes*, Urgent Paradise, Lausanne (2021); *5th Floor*, Centre d'Art Contemporain, Geneva (2021) and *Nour el Ain*, Karma International, Zurich (2021). In September 2021, she was awarded the Werkshau Prize by Kanton of Zurich for her work *Ex Amore Vita: Ladies' Room* (2021).

Li Li Ren (b. 1986) is a sculptor living and working in London. She uses tactile materials ranging from the soft and ethereal to the hard and heavy to create intimate narratives in space. She gained her BA Fine Art from Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts London, in 2010, and her MA Sculpture from the Royal College of Art, London, in 2017. Her first two solo exhibitions have been held at institutional spaces: *Frantumaglia*, Qimu Space, Beijing (2021) and *Sunset as Burning Bruise*, Magician Space, Beijing (2022). Select group exhibitions include: *Memorias del subdesarrollo*, Qimu Space, Beijing (2021); *In/Out*, Guardian Art Center, Beijing (2020); *Silence in Violence*, Spectrum Art Space, Shanghai (2018); and Camden Arts Centre, London (2017).

With thanks to Galerie Mitterrand.

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