

Lyn Liu

SELECTED PRESS

Western Galleries Are Scooping Up Female Chinese Artists Born in the 1990s. Here's Who You Need to Know, and Why They Matter

Meet five artists whose markets are on the rise.

VIVIENNE CHOW
AUGUST 15, 2022



Lyn Liu, *Big-hand smokers* (2022). Courtesy of the artist and Kasmin Gallery.

[EXTRACT]

They are young. They grew up in an era of modern China that has undergone the most transformative change due to rapid economic expansion, while receiving education in the west. And now, their art careers are about to take off.

Unlike the preceding generation of Chinese avant-garde artists, who were brought up during the upheaval of the Cultural Revolution and remained largely unknown to the outside world until much later in their careers, younger Chinese artists are now getting the spotlight straight out of art school. An increasing number of them are getting attention from western

galleries and gaining global exposure, appearing in group shows, art fair booths, and even solo presentations in Europe and the U.S.

Auction results might offer a glimpse into the market potential of these post-'90s Chinese artists. While total sales of Chinese contemporary art in the auction market has been relatively stagnant since the peak between 2011 and 2014, according to data retrieved from Artnet's Price Database, overall sales began to pick up again in 2021, when Chinese contemporary artists raked in \$538 million, a 45.4 percent uptick on the \$370 million achieved in the pandemic year of 2020, itself up 5 percent on 2019. Sales of works by artists born between 1990 and 1999 saw the biggest growth compared to artists born in the previous eras, reaching more than \$2 million in 2021, more than three times the \$636,571 total achieved in 2020, and some 17.5 times more than the \$114,240 the cohort achieved in 2019.

These young, western-educated Chinese artists have a specific appeal in Europe and America that sets them apart from their western counterparts, and this is not just down to their artistic skill, according to Thomas Stauffer, art advisor and co-founder of Gerber & Stauffer Fine Arts, Zurich, who has been working with these young artists and western galleries. "In the context of the global world with its complex interconnections and interdependencies, this East-West dialogue of these young Chinese artists, which Western artists often lack, is attractive to collectors, gallery owners, and curators," Stauffer told Artnet News.

Here are five post-'90s Chinese artists worth paying attention to, and they all happen to be women.

[...]

Lyn Liu (b.1993)

Gallery: Kasmin Gallery

Who: The New York-based Liu was born in Beijing and has received training in various places in the west. She received her BFA from the School of Visual Arts, New York, in 2016, and studied for three years at the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris. This year she received an MFA from the School of the Arts, Columbia University, New York. She has just opened her first solo exhibition, "Dogville," at Kasmin in New York.

What she makes: She works in printmaking, independent publications, and figurative painting that appears to be layered with stories. The subtle yet dramatic combination of mysterious human figures and occasionally animals, and still objects conveys an emotive response to a distorted, repressive reality observed from afar. The alienation the artist has experienced from traveling between cultures has also influenced her work.

Why she appeals: "While Lyn's exhibition history may be in its early days, she has developed a distinctly sophisticated and thoughtful visual vocabulary that is the result of a decade of study and refinement. Her technical prowess as a painter is equally mature, and we envision a very long career ahead of her," said Eric Gleason, senior director at Kasmin Gallery.

Price range: \$5,000 to \$15,000.

Lyn Liu

“Dogville”

JUNE 14, 2022



Installation view of Lyn Liu. Photography by Christopher Stach.

Liu's work addresses the psychological tension underpinning relationships between individuals through a sequence of uncanny cinematic tableaux. Comprised of paintings realized between 2019–2022, the exhibition draws from the artist's personal experiences of alienation, utilizing symbolism and an atmosphere of the absurd to provoke reflections on what Liu considers our oppressive social reality. This is the artist's first solo exhibition.

Conceiving of her compositions as stills in an overarching though dislocated narrative, the artist takes a filmic approach to considerations of light, staging, and costume. Depicting scenes often situated in the evening or at night, Liu's tightly rendered dreamscapes feature figures whose identities are concealed, masked, presented alongside a doppelganger, or hidden in shadow. This voyeurist instinct—a longing to see without being seen—acts both as a visual strategy and a window into the artist's experience as a child, when she traveled between cultures feeling like a perpetual outsider.

The striking symbols in Liu's paintings pulsate with a nihilist or existentialist philosophy in the vein of Albert Camus and Franz Kafka, whose work the artist has referenced throughout her oeuvre. In *Huggermugger* (2022), a rotund, diamond-patterned structure conceals the identity of two bartenders who offer glasses of what might be champagne yet carry the risk of poison. Liu's interest in the book *The Architectural Uncanny* by Anthony Vidler further elaborates on the metaphorical potential of buildings and interiors in the work to speak to our modern condition.

The artist repeatedly returns to animal subjects as counterparts to her human figures, such as in *Conference* and *Cherry Pie* (both 2019). Recognizing both wild and domesticated animals as unknowable, unpredictable, and potentially dangerous, Liu's use of ostriches, frogs, and kangaroos as symbols occasions a fissure between the cycle of mutual observation found in human society. Employed here, they act to highlight the confusion of spectacle and the sense of alienation that can attend a condition of being observed.

Noah Becker's

WHITEHOT
MAGAZINE
of contemporary art

Lyn Liu at Kasmin Gallery

June 10 through August 12, 2022

JONATHAN GOODMAN

AUGUST, 2022



Lyn Liu, *Burden*, 2022, oil on linen, 46 x 60 inches. Courtesy of the artist. Photography by Diego Flores.

Born in 1993 in Beijing, Lyn Liu received her BA from the School of Visual Arts and her MFA from Columbia University. She currently lives and works in New York City. "Dogville," Liu's first show with the gallery, is composed of dark, allegorical paintings whose meaning is not easily retrieved (we remember that *Dogville* is an American movie from 2003, devoted to the exploration of malice in our culture). The views in the paintings are often partial, their fragmentation indicating metaphysical difficulties that tend toward the dark. Although Liu is an artist from China, she has embraced a Western realism whose troubling implications suggest that people have not yet learned how to escape the difficulties of everyday

life. Liu's darkness of palette mirrors her theme, which presents puzzles resistant to being solved. We don't know how to complete the partial information the paintings present, but recognize the darkness, literally and metaphorically, that has taken over her tableaux.

Burden (2022) is simple enough on first glance: a set of three pieces of tableware—a plate, on top of which rests a shallow dish. Resting on the second piece of chinaware is a bowl. The color of all three pieces is a muted gray. The objects occur within a very dark frame, which adds to the mystery facing us. Why would the artist give so simple a subject the resonant title *Burden*? It is difficult to say, but so suggestive a name, along with the enigmatic nature of the dishes, whose purpose is beyond us, feels enigmatic, even dark—this despite the simple nature of the image. *Big-Hand Smokers* (2022) depicts two smokers, a few feet apart in a large, dark empty space. Both of the smokers are women; the person on the left, wearing a dark overcoat, faces away from us; we see only a small part of the right side of her face. It looks like the woman on the right is intent on keeping her cigarette going; she wears a look of concentration, cupping her hands around the smoke. This person also, strangely, wears a pierrot-like costume. Both figures have abnormally large hands. Again this Allegorical meaning is suggested but is impossible to specify.



Lyn Liu, *Traverser*, 2022, oil on linen, 40 x 40 inches. Courtesy of the artist. Photography by Diego Flores.

Traverser (2022) presents three persons of Asian background, each standing against a square column rising from a platform that might be a train station. They stand in darkness. It is hard to tell whether the figures are men or women; they wear white shirts and light blue pants and stare blankly into space. In front of the platform, a person in dark orange clothing

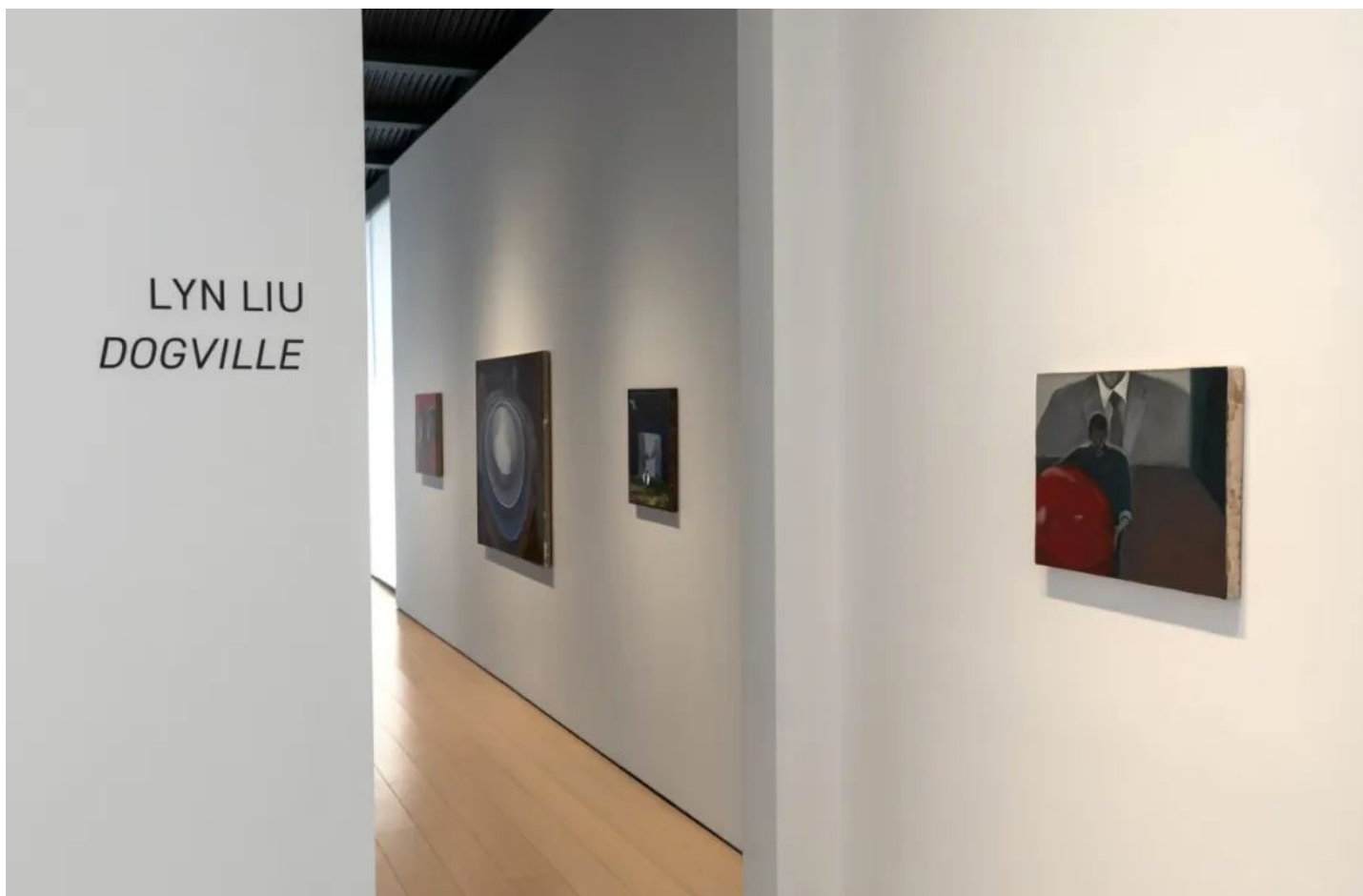
rides a bicycle toward the left. Darkness takes over the foreground and the spaces in between the columns. Is the painting an extended metaphor exemplifying a journey? The three figures are waiting for something, but we don't know what. The person on the bicycle is supposedly traveling with a goal in mind. But we cannot determine the destination. Liu makes indeterminacy a major part of her point of view. It is up to the viewer to decide the meaning of the work, whose self-sufficiency is both an attraction and a challenge.

Liu's paintings belong to a new internationalism, in which personal background and geography are eschewed in favor of a style we cannot specify by culture or geography. The internationalism is an urban phenomenon, occurring in cities crowded with artists coming from far away. Cultural identity is reserved for transparently political art. But Liu is doing something different; her paintings pose questions that offer little guidance. It is likely this is deliberate, stemming from the artist's decision to imply rather than assert. The brooding atmosphere, coupled with images that don't make sense, might be called surreal. Yet this is not an art driven only by paradox. Instead, it seems to rise from the unconscious, suggesting a feeling that comes close to dread. The puzzles we come across in Liu's art are meant to defy reason, portraying a felt, but not fully understood, world.

毕业季，聚焦海外艺术硕士项目里的中国年轻人 | 下篇

GEORGINA ZHAO & YIREN SHEN & YUAN Z HENG

JUNE 7, 2022



刘佳林个展“狗镇”（Dogville）现场图片：致谢卡斯明画廊摄影：Christopher Stach.

夏季往往是全球艺术市场的“慢季/度假季”，在新冠疫情两年之后，从业者们欣喜看到“慢季”的回归——这既意味着“年度艺术活动日历”的归位，也暗示着正常（normalcy）的归位。

2022年夏天，又有一批来自中国的艺术家从各个海外院校的艺术硕士项目毕业。于是，我们发起聚焦这批艺术家的新专题，其中涵盖的艺术家来自 Artnet 新闻中文网海外编辑的个人举荐，本篇是该专题的下篇。

刘佳林

她是谁：刘佳林 (Lyn Liu) 1993 年出生于北京，现居纽约，于 2022 年获得纽约哥伦比亚大学艺术学院的艺术硕士学位，2016 年获得纽约视觉艺术学院的艺术学士学位，2017 至 2020 年间曾就读于巴黎国立高等美术学院。

她曾与 Steven Zevitas Gallery、J: GALLERY 等中外画廊合作，最近，刚毕业的她便在纽约切尔西的卡斯明画廊 (Kasmin) 举行了个展。从校园走出立即与业界领先的大型画廊合作，刘佳林也从一开始的手足无措，以“上了堂突击补习班一样”的心态，通过高强度的学习得到了迅速成长。

关于她：她的创作媒介主要为绘画、版画及独立出版。对刘佳林来说，油画是唯一一个能完全靠自己完成的媒介，因此对其创作过程十分重要。她创作油画的方式像拍电影，会提前想好剧本、灯光、服装、声音等电影元素——通过这种策划，她试图用油画表现一个倒叙电影的开头。最近，她的绘画主题不乏对现代社会异化现象的困惑。她关注个体之间相互依存的关系，无论是人与人、人与建筑、人与社会之间，她都认为存在一种“自愿性强制”的关系，脆弱而稳定，隐形但又无法挣脱。谈及疫情对创作的影响，刘佳林表示自己很幸运，研二恢复了线下教学后对自己的创作影响不大，“因为平时也是关起门来画画”。



刘佳林个展“狗镇” (Dogville) 现场图片：致谢卡斯明画廊摄影：Christopher Stach.

毕业创作：在哥大的毕业展中，刘佳林展出了五幅绘画作品，其中一张题为《大手烟客》，画面是两个各自点烟的人，她们用来遮火的手比正常人稍微大一点。艺术家认为，既然常年戴眼镜的人会眼球更凸出，那么想象如果一个人常年孤僻又抽烟上瘾，永远自己给自己点烟，她的一只手也许会越长越大。画面中的两人保持着不远不近的尴尬距离，因为一起抽烟的陌生人们在对话的开始就知道了这段对话将在几分钟之内结束，所以都在试探和控制这段对话的亲密程度。



刘佳林, 《大手烟客》 (Big-hand Smokers), 2022, 亚麻布油彩, 142.2 x 116.8 cm

接下来: 刘佳林正忙着搬新工作室, 准备下一个展览。她现在的创作尺幅越来越大, 最近的几张草稿同样关注人与人交往的平衡点。虽然她对其它媒介也很感兴趣, 但现在一心想先完成手上的绘画作品。