

NICODIM

Lian Zhang: Fast Dreams, Slow Days

Nicodim Los Angeles, Upstairs

September 3 – October 15, 2022



Lian Zhang, *Windy Paradise*, oil on canvas, 2022

Lian Zhang: Fast Dreams, Slow Days is the artist's first exhibition with Nicodim. Zhang's works hint at multifaceted narratives that strain from multiple directions simultaneously. Each composition is a theater of contradictions that blend past and future, good and evil, myth and reality, tragedy and comedy, interweaving allusions to historical moments and classical forms from Zhang's Eastern and Western heritage. Investigating the connections between interior and exterior worlds, she constructs scenes from both personal memories and imagined landscapes wherein figures and objects operate fluidly between stasis and motion.

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Set within rich art historical tradition, Zhang's works draw from Surrealism, Symbolism, Taoist philosophy, and her personal experience living in London as an immigrant. Challenging preconceptions through painterly narratives, the artist's work negotiates a space for her own intersecting cultural identities.

Within *Fast Dreams, Slow Days*, gods, fairies, demons, humans, plants, and animals morph into and repel against one another. In *Forever and Ever* (2022), a half goat/half human figure holds court beside a circular mirror-portal into a traditional Chinese garden. Resembling the Greek god Pan (god of poetry, music, and love) the figure's sly smile implies a sinister edge, where creation and dreams teeter on destruction and horror. An auspicious symbol in Taoist tradition, the gourd in his hand is a container that holds the elixir of life, a magical substance produced through Chinese alchemy. The gourd and the god are both capable of unlocking everlasting power, but can also be weaponized for destruction.

Her piece *Windy Paradise* (2022) questions and confronts the socio-political dynamics of the United Kingdom, her second homeland. The work encapsulates the beauty and strangeness of establishing a new home where she has built her family and career by her own hand. Also inspired by the Yu Xiuhua poem "Wind Blow," Zhang's painting acts as a visual homage to the text. The poem discusses the life cycle of a morning glory, whose petals open and close depending on the time of day. Zhang's mother and daughter figures, skirts swept up by a gust of wind panging English seaside cliffs, mirror Xiuhua's gentle blue morning glories, their vines climbing upwards, forever reaching for something on which to hold.

Lian Zhang (b. 1984, Hangzhou, China) lives and works in London. Zhang received a Masters degree in Painting from the China Academy of Art, Hangzhou, in 2010, and a second Masters degree from the Royal College of Art, London, in 2013. Recent and forthcoming solo exhibitions include: *Fast Dreams, Slow Days*, Nicodim Gallery, LA (2022); *Weathering with You*, Lychee One, London (2022); *Constellations and Folds*, Lychee One, London (2020). Selected group exhibitions include: *Dream Baby Dream*, Fitzrovia Gallery, London (2022); *An Ode to Orlando*, Pi Artworks, London (2022); *A couple of: The Dual-mechanism of the New Generation of Asian Artists*, Hive Art Centre, Beijing (2021); *Unfair Weather*, Lychee One, London (2021); *Fortune Exhibition of Li's Family House*, White Space, Beijing (2021); *Fertile Laziness*, Platform Projects, London (2021); *Human-ish*, SYNT, New York (2021); *Antisocial Isolation*, Saatchi Gallery (curated by Delphian Gallery), London (2020); *Bone Memory*, Lychee One, London (2019); *Rifts in Silence* (with Wu ding and Zhao Qian), M Art Center, Shanghai (2018); *Flickering Boundaries*, Madeln Gallery, Shanghai (2018); *Mingled Spaces* (with Caroline Walker and Gareth Cadwallader), Lychee One, London (2017). Zhang's work features in many international private collections including Marcelle Joseph Collection, the GIRLPOWER Collection, and the Giovanni Springmeier collection in Germany.

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Lian Zhang

° Born 1984, Hangzhou, China
Lives and works in London

Education

2013 MA, Painting, Royal College of Art
2010 MA, Painting, China Academy of Art

Solo Exhibitions

2022 *Fast Dreams, Slow Days*, Nicodim Upstairs, Los Angeles
Weathering with You, Lychee One, London
2020 *Oil on Paper*, Lychee One OVR, London
Constellations and Folds, Lychee One, London

Selected Group Exhibitions

2022 *YOU ME ME YOU*, Nicodim, Los Angeles
Dream baby dream, Fritzovia Gallery, London
Ode to Orlando, Pi Artworks, London
2021 *A Couple of*, Hive Art Center, Beijing
Unfair Weather, Lychee One, London
'Fortune exhibition of Li's Family House', Whitespace Beijing, Beijing
Fertile Laziness, Platform Projects, London
2020 *Antisocial Isolation*, Saatchi Gallery, London
2018 *Bone Memory*, Lychee One, London
Rifts in Silence, M Art Center, Shanghai
Flickering Boundaries, Madeln Gallery, Shanghai
2017 *Mingled Spaces*, Lychee One, London
2015 *Elsewhere*, Lychee One, London
Art 15, Lychee One, London
2014 *10 Year Anniversary Exhibition*, Cynthia Corbet Gallery, London
The Open West 2014, Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum, Cheltenham
Deserts of Humanity, Display London, London
2013 *Painting Show & Performance*, Winter Projects, London

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Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2013 *The masks we wear*, Arteco gallery, London
RCA degree show, Royal College of Art, London
Notes to Self-Thinking, Royal College of Art, London
- 2012 *Summer Show*, Royal College of Art, London
Interim Show, Royal College of Art, London
- 2011 *Graduation Show*, China Academy of Art, Hangzhou
- 2010 *Giant*, Today Gallery, Beijing
- 2008 *Art Spring*, Orientation Gallery, Hangzhou
Spade, 798 T Space, Beijing
- 2007 *New Generation of South River*, Eye Level Gallery, Shanghai
Personate, Hong Temple Art, Shanghai
- 2006 *Reflection*, Zhejiang Museum, China

Publications / Awards

- Acne paper issue 17(upcoming)
Artsinsquare issue 1
Artmaze Mag issue 22
Artmaze Mag issue 20
Artmaze Mag issue 19
- 2014 Curator's Prize The Open West
- 2013 Hine Painting Prize 2013
Shortlisted for Valerie Beston Award