

YANQING LOW

b. 1985, Singapore

yqin.art@gmail.com | <http://yqin.art/>

Artist Statement // Whenever, Wherever (2023)

The premise of these pieces is simple – set a place, a time, and a material – rinse and repeat. On the surface, this may appear to be little much else that a pretty picture that has narrowly escaped the threshold of failure and/or non-completion, but the practice of it proves a little more than just so.

When charcoal hits the pavement, it promises a recorded pattern determined by this relief's place in time. This is a purely physical moment to myself; I read patterns and movements that seem interesting, discarding/retrying those that do not, noticing in my wanderings certain textures and places that afford me images that may work better than another. Thoughts pass through my head throughout, as they are wont to do, thinking about archeology and language, of property, of industry, of what it means to be this person thinking and feeling these things in each moment. Making the disparate connections that are rational and irrational, both, as I seek to understand what is before and around me.

I read before somewhere that identity changes from moment to moment. Our bodies replace billions of cells every day, and like the Ship of Theseus, we are built and rebuilt in each moment. And yet, somehow, we persist – through memory – as singular beings.

I put these thoughts and feelings of being/non-being, stuck within the macro-structure of existence, into the work, layering watercolour and dry pigment over charcoal, obscuring its origins like skin building upon flesh, building upon bone. It is different, to see and be seen; It is different, to know and be known – more than the mechanical parts of our making.

YANQING LOW

b. 1985, Singapore

yqin.art@gmail.com | <http://yqin.art/>

Artist Statement // Rising Tide (2023)

We are, today, perpetually online where most of our interactions occur virtually rather than in face-to-face encounters. It would be tempting to think of these digital realms as boundless, free from the constraints of time and space, making way for a greater sense of interconnectedness. But there is a flip side to this unlimited accessibility; the virtual space is relentless, always on, and can be overwhelming. The expanding virtual community, while providing connection becomes more rigid while drowning us in negativity and noise. It preys on our insecurities, as the mind seeks validation in the virtual realm, gradually distancing itself from the tangible world.

Compositionally, many of these paintings are arranged to place their viewers above the scene, looking down upon a swirl of arms and hands that grip at and bump up against each other. We become spectators to their condition, watching from a distance in space and time. It is crowded space that these implied bodies inhabit, in which they turn in upon each other, swimming over and under each other like fish fry that have grown too large for their enclosures and yet have no place else to go. Unaware of the impending harvest to which they are destined, they may only push against their boundaries, and each other, in search of some momentary reprieve. Their colors are often either predominantly blue or red, to evoke depressiveness and mystery, and activity and anger respectively.

These paintings are made with oil, wax, chalk and skin. There is a realness that I associate with the composition of oil paintings - pigments, dirt, oil, resins and skins - they feel simultaneously parts of a body and parts of a corpse; between living and dead. Its compounds remain volatile throughout a painting's creation until it settles into a something of a dead fish, to which we then attribute strange and alternate properties that might bring it back to life. Like those moments in between things happening, when we wonder what it means to really live, I wonder, at this inflection point in computing technologies and the social spaces they affect, what it means to be human.