

# LEILA HELLER GALLERY.

'ELSEWHERE'

By

Jingjing Lin



*Every Word You Spoke*, 2023, Acrylic, silk thread, archival pigment print on canvas, diptych 200 x 200 cm

Dubai, UAE - Leila Heller Gallery is pleased to announce Beijing- and New York-based conceptual artist Jingjing Lin's solo show 'Elsewhere' opening on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2023.

During the pandemic, Lin began a new series of multimedia paintings which show men and women gazing out the windows as U.F.O.s make contact with the Earth. These distinctive artworks alternate between the dystopian and the utopian. "Are these aliens here to destroy us or save us?", the artist seems to ask. This new series of works emerged from Lin's past two and a half years of thinking about the society and world at large. The pandemic and global happenings forced her to stop and contemplate about the situation we were living in. Through her work, Lin has been examining the effects of technology on the society. During unprecedented times like the pandemic, our real world felt quite unreal. The paradox between the digital and real-life and the overlap between the two, spoke to her.

'Elsewhere' is a collection of mixed media artworks on canvas which examines society's shared displacement from reality, because of the global events, which at times feel surreal. During the pandemic, there was an enhanced collective sense of urban alienation, when windows transformed into a primary portal of connecting to the physical world outside. The large windows in Lin's works reveal sights of urban and natural landscape, where the imagery feels familiar yet alienated. In this series of mixed media paintings, the solitary figures dressed in futuristic attires looking outside of the window is a metaphor for how the perception shifts when it becomes the primary medium of connection to the outside world. The composition of these near theatrical works is partitioned by black, bold lines, as if the viewer is looking through the window.

The shared experience and the desire to be anywhere other than home, while being confined within a space during the pandemic, inspired the title of this exhibition. 'Elsewhere' is what most people sought to be. The materiality of Lin's works echoes the paradoxical nature of the images. She edits a photo image and prints it on the canvas, over which she then paints. The addition of stitches to the canvas accentuates this, as a stitch repairs but also creates holes.

In comparison to the conventional negative representations of aliens in popular media and academia, Lin's use of highly saturated colours and contrast represent conflicting undertones of both optimism and gloom. The artist believes that the constant technological advancement is continually redefining society's pre-existing notions of reality. By introducing her audience to an alternate universe in which fact and fiction often mimic each other, Lin highlights infinite possibilities in a world without the anchors of reality. Technology acts like a window, to the world beyond, which looks quite dramatic.

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Jingjing Lin is a conceptual artist, based in Beijing and New York. Her work primarily deals primarily with social-political themes. Lin explores the depths of social and personal identity in the context of modern society, often examining themes such as confusion and quest, existence and absence, constraint and resistance through a lens of paradox. Of particular focus is how individuals define themselves amongst the effects of the outside world, vis-à-vis culture, politics, history and the economy. Her artwork spans painting, drawing, performance, installation, mixed media, sound, light, photography, and video. She is also well known for layering thread over painting, installation, and other mixed media to create dazzling worlds. Her work has been sold by both Sotheby's and Christie's.

Jingjing 's works have been exhibited in major public museums including Neues Kunstforum in Cologne(Germany), the National Art Museum of Chile in Santiago, the Long Museum in Shanghai, the Ivam in Valencia(Spain), the Kunstraum in Vienna, Galeria Herold in Bremen, Saint Mary's University Art Museum in Halifax(Canada), the Leonard Pearlstein Gallery in Philadelphia, the Tikanoja Art Museum in Vaasa (Finland), the Nanjing Museum, Guangzhou Art museum, the Du Land Modern Art Museum (Shanghai) and Song Zhuang Art Museum(Beijing) in China, Ljubljana Castle in Slovenia, etc.

Jingjing's work has been reviewed in major publications such as Asia Art Pacific, Artforum, Artnet News, AsiaArt, Southern Weekly, Kolaj magazine, Randian, China Daily, Luxuo, Hong Kong Economic Journal, South China Morning Post, etc. Her work has been showcased in Art Basel Hong Kong, Art Basel, Art021 in Shanghai, Asia Now in Paris, Sydney Contemporary, Taipei Dang Dai, GIGE Beijing, Art Shenzhen, Art Beijing, Art Silicon Valley San Francisco, Art Stage Singapore, etc.

## ABOUT THE GALLERY

Since its establishment over four decades ago in New York, Leila Heller Gallery has gained worldwide recognition as a pioneer in promoting a creative dialogue and exchange between Western artists and Middle Eastern, Central and Southeast Asian artists. It has garnered a reputation for identifying and cultivating the careers of artists leaving a lasting impact on contemporary art and culture. Currently representing a diverse roster of Western, Central Asian, Southeast Asian and Middle Eastern artists, the gallery is also active in the American, European, and Middle Eastern secondary art markets. In November 2015, Leila Heller Gallery opened its first international location in Dubai's Alserkal Avenue. At 16,000 square feet, the state of the art gallery features three exhibition spaces, making it the largest gallery in the UAE. Showcasing leading regional and international artists, many of whom will be presenting their work in the Middle East.

In addition to presenting a dynamic exhibition schedule, Leila Heller Gallery actively organizes shows with world-renowned curators, hosts educational panels and film screenings, and produces catalogues and books with scholarly essays. Each year the gallery participates in major international art fairs and stages off-site projects as a platform for exploring new conversations within a wider context of galleries, artists and institutions. Gallery artists have consistently participated in international museum exhibitions and biennials, and are included in leading institutional collections worldwide.

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