



METAMORPHOSIS

Jacob Littlejohn, Madeline Peckenpaugh, Effie Wanyi Li, Tianyue Zhong

09 February — 06 April, 2024

The gallery is pleased to announce *METAMORPHOSIS* - a group show featuring works by Jacob Littlejohn, Madeline Peckenpaugh, Effie Wanyi Li, Tianyue Zhong.

The title of the show refers to a change of language that we recently witnessed in the young generation of artists, who feel the urgency to use an increasing abstract vocabulary to express themselves. Specifically, we noticed a progressive transformation from figurative to abstract art and it is our interest to show the in-between language that has been generated from this spontaneous evolution. Like the meaning of “metamorphosis” in its ancient greek origin - we can define this transformation as “beyond shape”.

It's interesting indeed to see how shapes and figures are not totally erased from the canvas, they are instead hidden or deconstructed or manipulated. Each one of the invited artists developed a personal language that express this concept.

Jacob Littlejohn and Madeline Peckenpaugh, for example, are both exploring the topic of abstracted landscapes. **Madeline Peckenpaugh** (b. 1991, Wisconsin) is a sort of *Alice in Wonderland*, shifting the scale of the reality she is representing and merging the nature of real things and the nature of imagined things. Her gestural brushstrokes wants to reduce shapes to simple marks on the canvas, just suggesting what they are representing without screaming it loud.

Similarly, **Jacob Littlejohn's** practice (b. 1995, Scotland) is connected to a personal interaction and investigation with the natural world. The initial inception begins around the concept of landscape, exploring the tension between conscious and subconscious interpretations of place and spaces. Through continually re-working intervals of space, rhythmic movement and pointillistic brushstrokes, his work critiques the human consumption of natural locations often overlooked, while honoring the poetic everyday subject matter. Each work attempts to converse the momentary sublime rooted in the vastness of the natural world - translating the image into a field of colors.

We see a different approach in the practice of **Effie Wanyi Li** (b. 1995, China). In her paintings, figurative shapes of external reality leave space to abstract biomorphic shapes of intangible inner body. According to eastern philosophies and Chinese Medicine that conceive human body as a flux of energies influenced by emotions, the artist attempts to give (an abstract) shape to what is invisible to the eye. “In my painting practice, I strive to perceive subtle bodily sensations and emotional experiences, translating them into a visual space. I enter this space in the form of consciousness, commencing a journey through the realms of perception and expression. If the body is currently the only available container for carrying my life, I wish to leave behind more records within it. In this unknown inner world that I can only access through consciousness, I observe the dynamics that my emotions, memories, and thoughts bring to the internal world of the body. Painting, as a powerful medium to communicate the intimate connection between the physical and expressive aspects of the self, faithfully reflects every state of my body and mind.” While observing these paintings, the viewers might contemplate their own bodily experiences and start a journey toward self-exploring.

In the paintings of **Tianyue Leah Zhong** (b. 1994, China), we see how figures are reduced to ghostly lines - overwhelmed and lost into an expressive field of colors. Key words in her practice are *time* and *movement*. Starting from pre-existing and reinventing imagery, Tianyue’s narrative is never static - the whole storytelling is layered and overlapped on the same canvas. As the artist says: “By diminishing the human body, I intend to infuse colors into a plane that seems transparent with multiple stages. There seem to be moving objects in the painting, but the audience is uncertain about what exactly is there. *It feels as if the wind rushes fast*”. The viewers are invited to stop looking desperately for any distinguishable fragment of figure, and to leave their comfort zone by embracing the flow of the *wind*.

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Gallery hours | Tuesday - Saturday, 11am - 7pm

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