

## **ELEEN LIN - LONG ISLAND CITY, NEW YORK**

December 3, 2014



*Chasing carp, 21 x 24, Oil and acrylic on canvas, 2014*

### **Briefly describe the work you do.**

As a Third Culture Kid inhabiting in non-places of generic cities, I have always been concerned with the subject of cultural hybridity. In the age of cultural cannibalism where everything is brought together and rearranged to formulate new identities, I reiterate Chinese folklore stories into contemporized cross-cultural narratives. *The Pet* series paintings transform mystical intimacies between man and animal to represent complex urbanites' obsession with pet ownerships. The paintings illustrate the nomadic solitary experience of drifting among various traditions, and the obscurity of cultural boundaries today. My current work looks at different narratives and how they are translated through alternative cultural lens. I take classical literature such as *Moby Dick* and reiterate them with overlapping narratives that are similar in other cultures.



*The ark, 72 x 84, Oil and acrylic on canvas, 2014*

**Tell us a little about your background and how that influences you as an artist.**

I was born in Taiwan and grew up in Bangkok, Thailand, where I studied at an international school. Later, I went to London for my undergraduate studies, and then to the United States for an MFA at Yale School of Art. My nomadic background has shaped the way I look at the world; drifting between various cultures and traditions, a kind of touristic outsider undefined by any particular identity. As a result, cultural hybridity has been the subject of my work. I decided to stay in New York after my studies; the city serves as new ground for me to search for more conflicting inspirations.

**The concept of the “artist studio” has a broad range of meanings, especially in contemporary practice. The idea of the artist toiling away alone in a room may not necessarily reflect what many artists do from day to day anymore. Describe your studio practice and how it differs from (or is the same as) traditional notions of “being in the studio.”**

My studio practice is definitely closer to the traditional notion of being in a studio. However, it doesn't necessary mean working in absolute solitude. I'm used to working with music and TV running in the background, or working while talking with family and friends on a hands free phone.



*The frog of the well, 96 x 72, Oil and acrylic on canvas, 2014*

**What unique roles do you see yourself as the artist playing that you may not have envisioned yourself in when you first started making art?**

I think most of us romanticize about the role of the artist as a person that can simply lock themselves in the studio and paint. On the contrary, a contemporary artist has a lot of different shoes to fill. He or she needs to be an all-rounder. It's not merely about being creative, but you have to know how to clearly articulate about your work; how to build, pack, protect and ship your pieces; how to fund and write proposals; and even how to self-promote. There are always new challenges in or outside of the studio.

**When do you find is the best time of day to make art? Do you have time set aside every day, every week or do you just work whenever you can?**

My parents nicknamed me the night owl ever since I was a kid. I like to take my mornings slow to respond to emails and run other errands, so I can dedicate my afternoons and evenings uninterrupted to paint. I feel like my most productive hours are from 9pm-2am. I work 7 days a week with the occasional luxury of gallery/museum hopping once a month.

**How has your work changed in the last five years? How is it the same?**

Even though I am still pursuing the same narrative driven subjects, there has been a shift in the origins of the stories. I am currently working on a series of work inspired by *Moby Dick*. In addition, the way I approach the canvas has been much looser and expressive, with brighter color and wider spectrums. I am still constantly seeking for a broader range of cultural indexes from all different sources.

**Are there people such as family, friends, writers, philosophers or even pop icons that have had an impact on the work you do?**

The obvious would be literary writers of classical literature, old legends and mythologies, and of course, my parents for being such wonderful advocates of Chinese and Aesop's fables. Others includes philosopher Zhuangzi and jazz musician Charles Mingus.

As for influences from other artists, I am especially attached to figurative painters who combine mysticism with everyday experience, artists who challenge visual complexity and, at the same time, respond to political and social conditions of their time. These artists include old masters such as Hieronymus Bosch and Hogarth; German Expressionists such as Max Beckmann, George Grosz, and Otto Dix; as well as contemporary artists like Paula Rego, Neo Rauch, Nancy Spero, Yun-Fei Ji, Daniel Richter and Raymond Pettibon. In addition to Western art, I am fascinated with perspectives and compositions found in traditional Chinese ink paintings, much of which documents travel.

**If you had an occupation outside of being an artist, what would that be and why?**

My great-grandfather was a Taiwanese glove puppeteer. The combination of decorative art, storytelling, intricate hand acrobatic performance, as well as recent introductions of laser lighting and pop music, makes them so intriguingly challenging. I would love to tackle this art form, but it would take a lifetime to master.

**About Eleen Lin**

Born in Taiwan and grew up in Thailand, UK, Vienna and the USA, Eleen Lin holds an MFA in Painting from Yale University School of Art, a BA from Slade School of Fine Art, UK. Her work has been exhibited in Guangdong Museum of Art, China; Queens Museum of Art, NY; Gwangju Museum of Art, Korea; and galleries throughout Austria, Thailand, Taiwan, United Kingdom and the United States. Lin has been awarded with Elizabeth Canfield Hicks Award, Sanyu Scholarships, and has participated with NYFA Immigrant Artist Projects as well as the AIM program from the Bronx Museum of Art.

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