

# YUCHU GAO @ GLIMMER SHRINE

b. 1993 | Hebei, China



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***Your work came with interesting titles. How do you name your work? Are they developed from an instinct or developed through time? Can you talk about the one that interests you the most?***

To me, the titles of my works belong to a part of my creative process. Each work possesses a nuanced approach to naming: some of them are produced in parallel with the process of painting, some of them summarize the connotations of the images, and for those that I could not come up with a name after finishing the work for a long time, I discuss about it with my friends. This naming

process is the same as the cycle of creating a painting – it may take as few as several days, or it may take up to about a year.

The title *Coco's Hair Salon* originates from an incident reported on news. In the US Atlanta Spa shooting of March 2021, there were 6 Asian women out of the 8 casualties, and one of them is even left unidentified at the mortuary. After about 20 days, a group of strangers decided to hold a special funeral for her. None of them knew beforehand about this woman who was now resting in a pink urn. There is also hardly any media report on her: 44 years old, single, new to the spa, and was known by the name *Coco* to the spa's clients.

The group of strangers who held the funeral for *Coco* included university professors, representatives from social organizations, and professionals from various fields. The woman in the pink urn symbolizes a polar opposite of these individuals: she could hardly speak English, was of rather old age, engaged in physically-demanding work more than 10 hours a day, did not have a green card, and had to confront the risks of robberies and sexual crimes. According to sources, *Coco's* pink urn was surrounded by flowers of light pink, hot pink, and purple colors – in juxtaposition to her personalities which were described by her ex-colleagues as friendly and quiet.

When I was creating this painting, the image I had in my mind was a scene of hugging between a woman and creatures similar to dogs. I wanted to create a feeling of friendship and companionship across species, emitting what is like a halo of Saint Mary. The bodies of these characters are warm, and their hair intertwines with one another's, void of individuality. If this painting has a smell to it, I hope it would be similar to the fragrancy of the blown hair in a spa after treatment. In this moment of time, the woman and the creatures do not wish to speak. Their mouths are sealed, leaving behind the sense of friendliness and quietude, just like *Coco*.

*Coco, a name frequently used in the service industry.*

*Pink, a symbol of woman.*

*The service industry, a kind of work many women engage in.*

***This exhibition showcased two of your towel works. They both carried strong visual language.***

***Can you tell us what they are/who they are?***

The images in these two textile paintings do not come from a specific person but are a summary of an intention. *Woman with Antennae* looks like a hybrid of humans, animals and insects, with spread legs and exposed genitals. Also like an insect that looks at the audience with fearlessness and innocence. If we consider the side with the blue border line as the main body, then the side with the skeleton can be seen as an x-ray of her.

Normally, I would place the side of my work that I want to exhibit outwards in regard to the exhibition space. There is not a fixated “front” or “back”, as I recognise each of my work as a complete whole instead of two separate creations from front to back. *Summer Dream* depicts the transition from Spring to Summer, like a nap on a lawn and a dream of a moment. It cannot be explained clearly – some mischievous, some enchanting, and some even stays on the brink of my nightmares. The two subjects – woman and bear – also merge together, enabling an open-ended interpretation by the audience. On the side with white as its major colour, a genitalia-like passageway can be seen between the woman and the bear. I think the relationship between them can be of a subject-mirrored entity one, which on one hand can be reminiscent of a self who was born from another world of mine, and on the other hand can also symbolise a scene where the two subjects are having . On the pink-coloured side, the bear is particularly mischievous wearing a pair of cat-eye-like glasses as its mask. A green snake is discreetly escaping from the Gardens of Eden, metamorphosing into a trail of smoke like a green mask of its own. The reason for me to choose this towel for *Summer Dream* is because of its soft quality. The slightly aged texture also makes this dream less frivolous, and at the same time induces a sense of familiarity comparable with daily objects. Newly-produced towels, to me, emit a strong sense of estrangement and industrialisation, void of life. Therefore, I always walk around second-hand shops and charity shops to stock in home-use textile products. Every cloth boasts a different character – its usage, its design, and its year (old or new) – and I always create according to these unique characters.

***In your three paintings, who are the figures in your work? Do they have relationships with each other? What's their connection?***

*Running Boy with Wiggly Eyes* is a little monster with red eyes, and I love how he can't stop rushing around, like our organs. I've always been interested in the digestive system, and I think it's

like a section of my intestines, rolling, writhing and moving. They call the intestine the second brain or even the enteric brain. Amid the constant late nights and daily life, the little monster in my belly is constantly on the move.

A Transparency is looking at me is a unique form of life, depicting a moment of joyful dance and the exciting joy of seeing a flower. At some memorable moments when the senses are enlarged, and the world is new and colourful, I think this is a rare state of life.

Whether home textiles or my canvas paintings, my inspiration comes from my daily life. If I talk about these three paintings alone, they are not directly related, but whenever I look at them, I always feel like they are different people living in Wonderland. They are also like us in this world, living in different realities. I often have a great sense of absurdity about living, and I draw this sense into various strange objects and images. I am expressing the experience of living in this world very emotionally.

### ***How do you see the relationship between you, a female artist, and your work?***

My understanding of the term “female artist” changes constantly. In the past, I believed that a good artist does not have to emphasise on gender; neither could I comprehend what gender identity represents. Therefore, I never used “as a female artist” as an opening phrase to refer to myself. However, nowadays I’m experiencing quite a nuanced stage – to put it in easier terms, I feel proud of being a woman.

As a woman; many women always face problems revolving around gender inequality. Some of these issues are apparent and infuriating; some other issues may look harmless superficially, but as we investigate deeper, it is not difficult to realise the structural imbalance in the gender system – all of which are obstacles that we would encounter in our lives. I don’t want to evade from these problems. In fact, I would like to not only confront them in my daily life, but also create more art that revolves around the theme of “woman”.

As a woman; the feminine aura expressed in our creations is intrinsic. It is also of my vital philosophy to allow feminine qualities and the female image to be defined precisely by women. Woman’s, female’s, she can be gentle, or violent, or peculiar, or painful, or silly, or sharp-witted – she can be anything. Through constantly innovating how woman is depicted, we can infuse different

interpretations as well as vitality into the female image, subsequently countering the stereotypes and social norms – this is exactly the statement I carry when I create my works.

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**你給作品起了一些有趣的名字。能說說你是如何命名的嗎？是直覺，還是經過深思熟慮的？談談你最感興趣的一個吧！**

作品的名稱對於我而言是創作的一部分，每張作品的命名過程會不太一樣。有的名稱是在創作過程中與圖像一起誕生的，有的是圖像產生的意象的總結，還有的完成很久但是遲遲想不到合適的命名，我會和周圍的朋友討論商量，就像一幅畫圖像上的創作週期一樣，少至幾天，多至一年左右。

《Coco 的美髮沙龍》名字來源於新聞事件。2021 年 3 月在美國亞特蘭大按摩店的槍擊案中，八名遇難者中有六名亞裔女性，其中一名華人女性的屍體在太平間里無人認領，二十多天後，一群陌生人為她舉行了特別的葬禮。他們之中沒有一個人認識這個粉色骨灰盒裡的女人，關於她媒體上的報道也只是寥寥數語，44 歲，未婚，剛來按摩店不久，店里的客人稱她為 Coco。

這些為她送葬的陌生人包括，大學教授，社會組織代表，社會各界精英等，而粉色骨灰盒里的女人則代表著他們的另一面：幾乎不會說英語，年紀稍大，每天持續十幾個小時以上的體力勞動，沒有拿到綠卡，偶爾還要面對搶劫和性犯罪的風險。據說，粉色骨灰盒被淡粉，艷粉，紫色的鮮花簇擁著，同事對她生前的描述是友好而安靜。

在創作這幅畫的時候，我腦海里呈現的是女人與類似於狗一樣的生物們簇擁在一起的場景，有一種跨物種的友誼與陪伴的感覺。她們散髮著類似於宗教聖母像一樣的光環，她們的身體是溫暖的。她們的毛發混到一起，不分彼此，如果這幅畫有味道，我希望像是美容美髮店里頭髮被吹風機吹過後，香波化開的味道。她們此刻不想說什麼，嘴巴合起，友好而安靜，如同 Coco 一樣。

Coco，一個在服務行業常見的英文名。

粉色，一種女性的象徵。

服務業，大量女性從事的產業。

這次展覽展示了你的兩件毛巾作品。它們都帶有強烈的視覺語言。你能告訴我們它們是什麼/它們是誰嗎？

這兩件家用紡織品繪畫的形象並不來自某一位具體的人，而是一個意向的總結。《有觸鬚的女人》像是一個在人類與動物還有昆蟲之間的產物，雙腿岔開，裸露生殖器。也想是昆蟲一般毫無畏懼的，天真的看著觀眾。如果把有藍色邊緣線的那一面看成主體的話，那有骨架那一面可以視為她的X光一般的呈現。

一般而言，我會按照場地和展覽的狀態，去調整朝外的家用紡織品繪畫的面。沒有固定的正面，因為我視她們為一個整體，而不是有前後順序的兩張作品。《夏日夢境》則像是春夏交接時，在草地上打的盹，做的夢。說不清，含含糊糊，有些調皮，有些明媚，還有些像是踩在了噩夢的邊緣。兩個主體合為一個，女人和熊是連在一起的，這件作品我希望觀眾對她的理解是開放式的。白色為主的那面熊和女人之間有一條類似於陰道的通道，我覺得她們既可以是本體與鏡像的關係，像是由一個我生出世界上的另一個我。也可以是兩個主體在做少女春夢般的景象。紅粉色面的熊帶上了貓眼鏡框 ( cat eye ) 式的面具是調皮的。綠色的蛇悄悄的從伊甸園溜出來，化作了一縷煙一樣的存在，是它帶來的綠色的面具。選擇這塊毛巾來畫這張畫是因為這塊毛巾本身的材質是比較柔軟的，舊舊的質感也不會顯得這個夢過於輕佻，同時帶來一種日常之物的熟悉感。新的毛巾對於我而言總是很強的陌生感和工業製造感，沒有生活的气息。所以我平時會逛各種二手店和慈善商店收集家用紡織品這個材料。每一塊布料的特質是不一樣的，它的用途，設計風格，以及年代，新舊程度，我會根據每塊布料的特質進行創作。

在你的三幅繪畫作品中，都表達了什麼形象？他們彼此之間有關係嗎？有什麼聯繫？

《蹦跑的逗眼男孩》是一隻眼里充滿紅血絲的小怪物，我喜歡它匆匆忙忙停不下來的狀態，就像是我們的器官一樣。我一直對消化系統感興趣，我覺得它就像是我的一段腸子，翻滾，蠕動的不停。大家稱腸子為第二大腦，甚至有腸腦一詞。在熬夜不斷，生活連軸轉的的日常中，肚子的小怪物也在不停的奔波。

《一種透明正看着我》是一種特殊的生命形態，描繪了快樂舞動的瞬間，以及看到一朵花的興奮的喜悅。在一些特殊時刻感官被放大，世界是新奇，多彩的，我覺得這是一種難得生命狀態。

不管是家用紡織品，還是我的布面繪畫，我的靈感都來自於日常生活。我覺得單說這三張畫的話，它們是沒有直接聯繫的，但是每每我在看它們的時候，總覺得它們像是生活在Wonderland里面的不同的居民一樣。也像是這個世界的我們，活在不同的現實(realities)中。我時常對於活著有極大的荒謬感，這種所感被我繪成了各種奇怪的生物和人像。我在以一種非常感性的方式，去表達生活在這個世界上體驗。

## 作為女性藝術家，你是如何看待自身與作品的關係呢？

我對於「女性藝術家」這個詞的理解是在不斷變化的，以往總覺得好的藝術家不必去強調性別，也不太明白性別認同所帶來的身份認同代表著什麼，所以前我從來不會以，「作為一個女性藝術家... ..」這樣的句式作為開頭。而如今我正經歷一個不太一樣的階段，簡單來說，我為我的女性性別感到驕傲與自豪。

作為女性；尤其是大多數女性多多少少都會經歷一些與性別不公相關的問題，有些問題顯而易見，令人憤怒，有些問題表面無傷大雅，可觀其內部就會發現結構非常失衡，這些几乎都是人生繞不開的坎儿。我不想迴避這些問題，不僅想在生活中直面面對，而且我還希望盡可能多的圍繞女性主題進行創作。

作為女性；創作展現出的女性氣質是自然而然的，讓女性氣質和女性形象由女性來定義，這點對於我極為重要。女性的，雌性的，母的，她可以是溫柔的，暴力的，怪異的，痛苦的，愚笨的，機敏的，她可以是任何。通過不斷地以新方式描繪女性，我們能為女性形象注入不同的理解和活力來抗衡刻板印象和陳舊的觀念，我在創作時也是帶著這樣的初衷來進行的。

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### YUCHU GAO

b. 1993, Hebei, China

"In order to digest reality, I often dream. And if I sleep long enough, reality often overlaps with my dream. The snake in my intestines starts dancing; tomatoes start rotting until their bones are exposed; an asteroid is becoming the size of half a giraffe; an unknown woman's hair is growing thicker and thicker; and a frog is getting enlightened before transforming into a Buddha. It is a mixture of sweetness, childishness, and weirdness, and so the image also sways in response to the interactions

### 高雨初

1993 年出生於河北，中國

「為了消化現實，我時常做夢，如果睡眠的時間夠長，現實會與夢境重合，腸道中的大蛇開始舞動，西紅柿腐爛露出白骨，小行星有半個長頸鹿那麼那麼大，不知名的女人毛髮越來越粗壯，青蛙終於修煉成佛。甜蜜，童稚與怪異混合，在具象與抽象之間搖擺，相互影響呈現畫面。日常生活所帶來的極大的荒謬感，繪成了各種奇怪的生物。我在以一種非常感性的方式，去表達生活在這個世界上的身體所感。」

between the figurative and the abstract. Inspired by the great sense of absurdity brought by daily life, all kinds of strange creatures also manifest. I choose to express in a very sentimental way how our body feels living in this world."

Graduated from Wimbledon College of Arts, UK and currently studying in Akademie der Bildenden Künste München, Germany, Gao Yuchu has appeared internationally in various exhibitions, including: "MIRROR MIRROR", Dachauerstr. 25 (Germany, 2021); "Underwhelming & Oversharing", Galerie der Stadt Schwaz, Schwaz (Austria, 2021); "The Grammatical Structure of Art", BACA Art Centre, Nook Gallery, Beijing (China, 2021); "Winter Exhibition", Echo Dark Art Space, Shenzhen (China, 2020); "Sampler", 27 contemporary painters, Arcade Fine Art, London (UK, 2016), and more.

高雨初畢業於英國溫布爾登藝術學院，現在於德國慕尼黑美術學院進修。她參與了全球多個展覽，包括：《鏡子鏡子》，達豪街 25 號，慕尼黑（德國，2021）；《Undermining & Oversharing》，施瓦茨城市畫廊，施瓦茨（奧地利，2021）；《藝術的語法結構》，BACA 藝術中心，沓見空間，北京（中國，2021）；《冬季展覽》，Echo Dark 空間，深圳（中國，2020）；《樣本-27 位當代藝術家》，拱廊畫廊，倫敦（英國，2016）等。