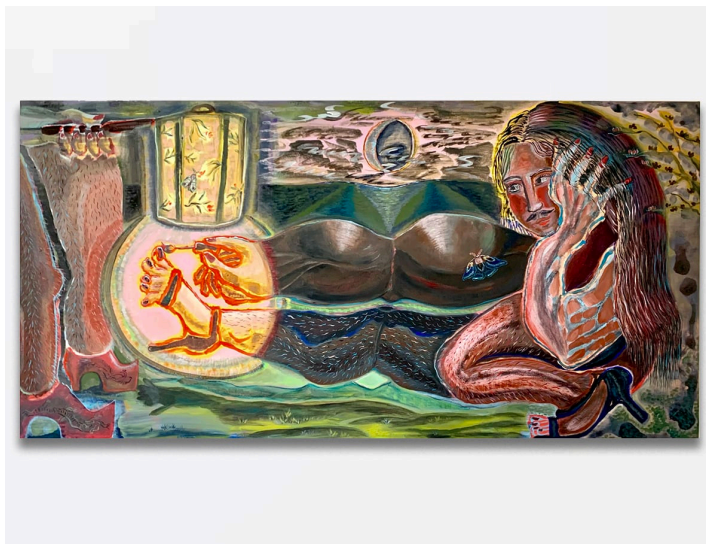


OBSERVER

Make Room Los Angeles' Group Exhibition "Desire Encapsulated" Heats Up Hollywood

By [Laura Pitcher](#) • 06/22/21 5:39pm



Pedicure and Pistol Squad by Yesiyu Zhao, 2021. Acrylic, flashe and tempera on canvas, 24 x 48 inches. Courtesy of the artist and Make Room Los Angeles

Across the art world, you'd be hard pressed to find a piece of art that doesn't capture or explore some element of love or desire. The feeling has fueled culture, an innate part of the human

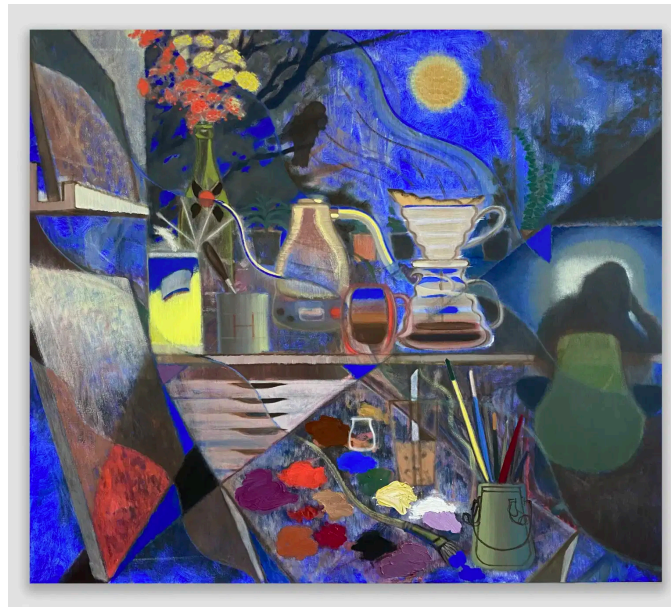
experience, from Greek myths to historical paintings. So much so that Make Room Los Angeles' upcoming exhibition "Desire Encapsulated" focuses on it solely and is on view through July 31.

The group exhibition inaugurates the gallery's new location (5119 Melrose Avenue, Hollywood) curated by Make Room founder Emilia Yin. Yin looks at desire as exploring fundamental human needs, beyond being boxed into the erotic category. "Desire is this really primary drive of how one navigates through their life," she told Observer. "We consider our process of art making as a container for the artist to encapsulate their desire."

The artists participating bring their own lens to the broad topic, from exploration of identity by Brooklyn-based painter Yesiyu Zhao, to the critique of Hollywood film industry by Sula Bermudez-Silverman. Make Room's move to the new 2500-square-foot space in the heart of Hollywood aims to serve its clients with a flexible space that is designed to create intimacy with the artwork on view. Artists will be invited to create site-specific works in the courtyard to complement the traditional gallery space and opportunities for onsite artist residencies will

be available, with the first residencies taking place in August 2021.

“For me, to desire means to seek beyond the conventional borders of reality. In *Pedicure and Pistol Squat*, the non-binary character is putting nail polish on their toes while being in a pistol squat,” Zhao said to *Observer*. “The idea of challenging physical limitations and imagining a world beyond the gender binary is to desire in this specific scenario.”



Blue Studio by Guimi You, 2021. Oil on canvas, 40 x 48 inches. Courtesy of the artist and Make Room Los Angeles

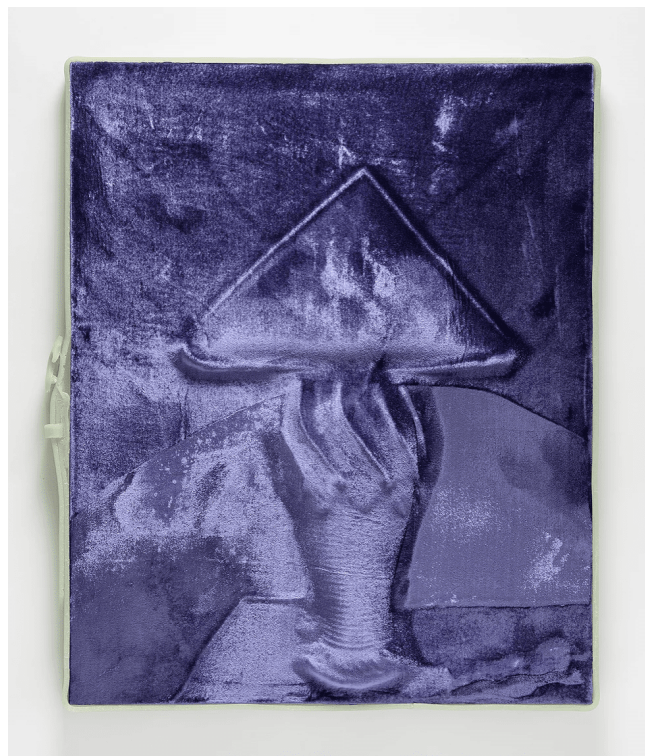
Guimi You's featured painting, *Blue Studio*, a colorful depiction of an intimate scene of her working in the studio, connects with

the relationship between an artist and the desire to create. “The painting mirrors an artist working late into the night with coffee,” You told Observer. “The fluid curve of the kettle’s shape flows into the rest of the painting. The fragrances of coffee, paint, and flowers all echo in the painting.” The piece captures a tender moment, where day and night blurs.

With the lineup including Joeun Kim Aatchim, a Korean-born, New York based artist, and Hiba Schahbaz, a visual artist born and raised in Karachi, Pakistan, it’s no accident that the exhibition highlights international talent. In fact, intentionally bringing artists together from very diverse backgrounds has always been part of the gallery’s DNA. Established in 2018, Make Room is Yin’s brainchild, named after her want to actively “make room” for culture-bridging conversations.

“I myself am from Hong Kong so I’ve always been interested in creating space for diverse conversation with some of the most amazing artists of our generation and seeing how international art is being contextualized in America,” she told Observer.

One of these up-and-comers is Lior Modan, born in Tel-Aviv, who's features mixed-media piece *The Thread of Smoke* encapsulates another lonely dimension through the "muddy lens" of velvet. "Desire happens within ourselves. It is triggered by the other, but we experience it alone, as individuals," Modan said to *Observer*. "Desire often becomes a bittersweet memory." The desire in the pieces, says Modan, is hovering amongst a series of highlights and shadows.



Heat Wave by Lior Modan, 2018. Velvet, nitrile, epoxy putty in cast rubber artist frame, 18 x 22 inches. Courtesy of the artist and Make Room Los Angeles

A deeply personal topic, by exploring desire we are granted a peak into the innermost longings of the artist. As exhibiting

Afro-Caribbean American artist Miguel Angel Payano Jr. puts it: “The seed of desire is sown in absence—wanting what is not present. A mirror without a reflection, a sunset without a sun, a clenched fist without a hand, a sidelong gaze without a focus, all imply absence. And in this absence, sprouts our longing.”

Filed Under: Arts, Visual Art, Hiba Schahbaz, Emilia Yin, Sula Bermudez-Silverman, Yesiyu Zhao, Joeun Kim Aatchim, Lior Modan, Miguel Angel Payano Jr.