

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

Alumna Yuri Yuan '21 Featured in Solo Show at Make Room Gallery

January 25, 2022 | Catherine Fisher



Image courtesy of Yuri Yuan '21 and Make Room Gallery (c) Joshua Schaedel

Alumna [Yuri Yuan](#) '21 is featured in a solo show at [Make Room Gallery](#) in Los Angeles. Featuring all new paintings from this up and coming artist, this show will remain on view until February 12, 2022.

This exciting new exhibition, *The Great Swimmer*, takes its name from a short story by Franz Kafka in which an athlete returns home from winning a medal in swimming at the Olympics only to reveal that he is not from the country he competed for and does not know how to swim.

Using this unsettling narrative as a point of departure, Yuan ties in her reoccurring experience of water in her dreams. Over the past year, the artist dreamt of all types of water-related incidents and places, from a shipwreck to

the ocean, but returned most often to the swimming pool. According to the press release, these dreams “tapped into her memories of swimming lessons she took at age 13, having just moved to Singapore from China. These classes were a minefield of linguistic, bodily, and emotional alienation—not unlike the alienation expressed by Kafka’s swimmer.”

This exhibition also marks a formal evolution in Yuan’s career, featuring larger pieces and displaying the influence of filmmakers such as Wong Kar Wai on the artist’s work. In the painting *Swim Class*, 2021, we see a protagonist that emerges throughout the series of paintings seated centrally while other imagined characters blur around her, illustrating the isolation of young adulthood and the formation of the self.

Yuan was born in Harbin, China and raised in Singapore. She received a BFA from Art Institute of Chicago and an MFA from Columbia University. Yuan was a recipient of the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation scholarship in 2020, and the Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation Grant in 2019. Yuan currently lives and works in New York, NY. Yuan has exhibited work at Center for the Arts, Umbria, Italy; Make Room Los Angeles; and Asia Art Center, Taipei. Yuan recently had a solo show at Alexander Berggruen, New York.



Image courtesy of Yuri Yuan '21 and Make Room Gallery (c) Joshua Schaedel



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'Swim Class,' 2021. Oil on Canvas, 48 x 60 inches. Image courtesy of Yuri Yuan '21 and Make Room Gallery (c) Carter Seddon