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YURI YUAN PRESENTS "THE GREAT SWIMMER" @ MAKE ROOM IN LOS ANGELES

February 4, 2022



Yuri Yuan
Goggles, 2021
Oil on canvas
20 x 24 in (50.8 x 61 cm)
Courtesy of the Artist and Make Room

In the past year, Yuri Yuan has often dreamed about water. Sometimes she sees a sinking ship, sometimes in a quiet ocean. Often, she finds herself on a diving board, perched over a blue swimming pool. Yuan's latest body of work is titled *"The Great Swimmer"* after Kafka's fragment of the same title. These limpid canvases explore different aquatic landscapes, but they most often return to the landscape of the swimming pool, with its diving boards, tiles, and changing rooms. Yuan 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.

"The Great Swimmer" marks a watershed moment in Yuan's practice. Working in a consistently larger format, the works showcase the influence of cinematic narrative on the artist's practice. Fascinated by the intricate visual constructions of filmmakers such as Wes Anderson and Wong Kar Wai, Yuan's new works seek to understand the innate connections between narrative and aesthetics. *"The Great Swimmer"* also takes influence from the deep ultramarine palettes of the Italian Renaissance, as well as the figural masterwork of French Romantics such as Géricault. *"The Great Swimmer"* presents a narrative in two sets of fragments, hopping between visions of the internal and external, the literary and the cinematic, the real and the dream.

Yuri Yuan is on view now through February 12 at Make Room 5119 Melrose Ave, Los Angeles.



Installation view of Yuri Yuan at Make Room. Photo by Josh Schaedel.