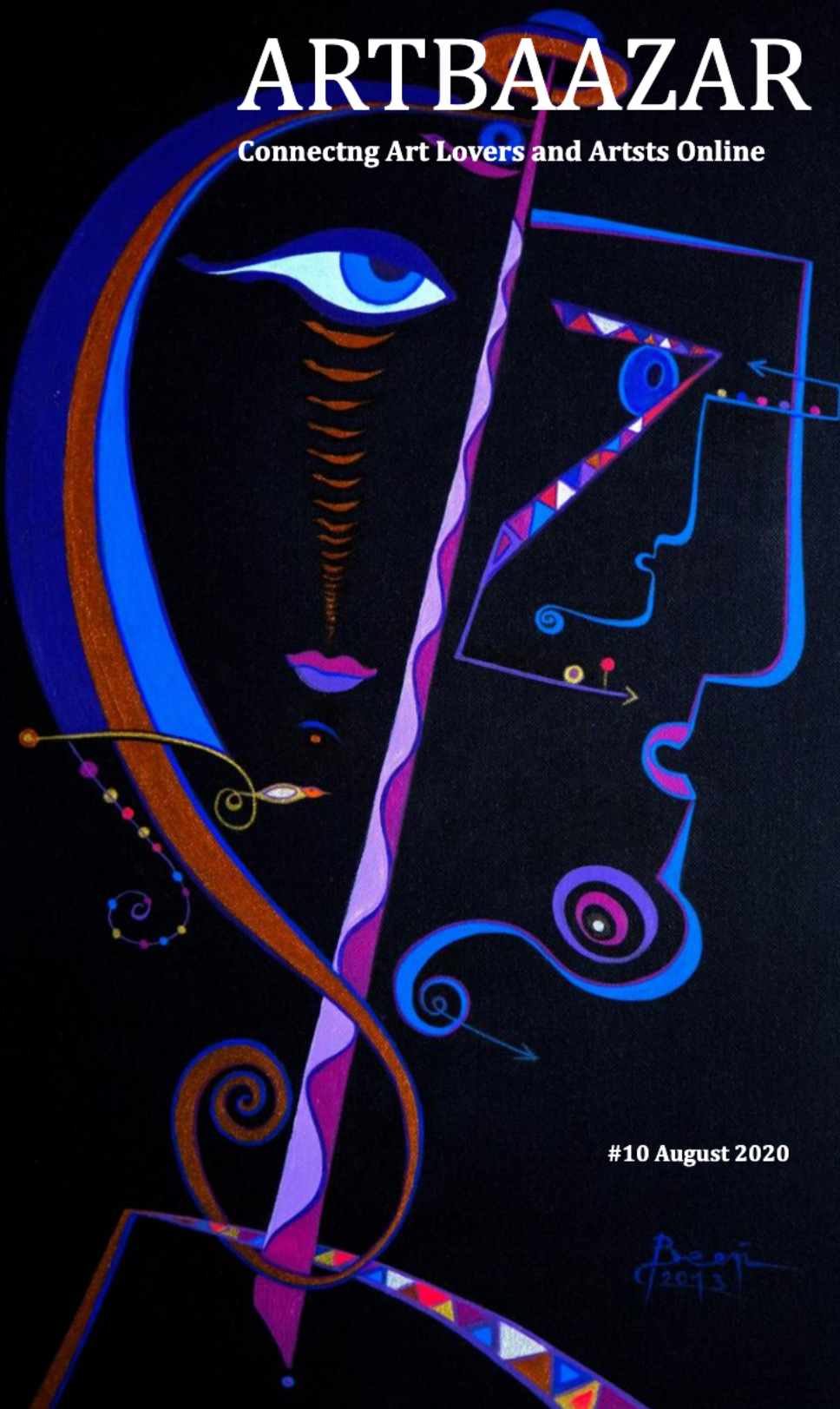


ARTBAAZAR

Connectng Art Lovers and Artsts Online



#10 August 2020

Questioning The Social Concepts of Female Beauty with Su Yang

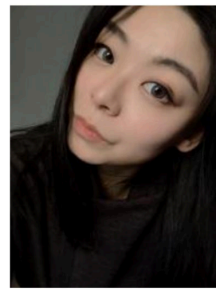


"Stripping Off Face 1", Su Yang, Oil on Canvas

Su YANG 杨苏 is an artist from Beijing, China and Melbourne, Australia. Yang holds a Ph.D. in Visual, Asian Cultural, Gender and Sexuality Studies from the University of Melbourne in Australia, a Master of Fine Arts in Painting from the State University of New York at Buffalo in the US, and a Bachelor of Arts in Design from Tsinghua University in China. Currently, she is a faculty member in Art and Design at The University of Melbourne.

Su Yang's multidisciplinary practice conveys her feminist investigation on female representation and her sense of social responsibilities for contemporary social issues including anti-racism, de/anti-colonialism, and social justice. Yang works across painting, photography, video, and short film.

Yang is also a scholar in Chinese feminism and feminist art studies. Her doctoral research project re-theorizes Chinese feminist art through the case studies of Chinese women artists and the new generation of Chinese feminist artists.



Chinese artist, Su Yang

"My current art practice complements my creative artistic research that investigates the representation of women in China from the 1990's up to the present with feminism methodology. The art of my paintings, photographs and videos about but beyond unnecessary harmful non-therapeutic cosmetic surgeries questions the invisible ideologies that encourage women to conform their appearances to the ideal beauty in global consumerism, marketing and the patriarchal ideologies in Chinese Confucianism in China. These works are to challenge the hierarchical representations of women and the conventional definition of women's art as to present femininity in contemporary Chinese art. My continuous feminist art project rebuilds the female images that have been utterly disrupted by patriarchal social, sexual, legal, cultural and religious structures."



"Double Faces Pre-post Cosmetic Surgery 2", Su Yang, Oil on Canvas, 2016



"Face-Lift", Su Yang, Oil on Canvas

What initially drew you towards becoming an artist?

I learned painting in my father's studio. I painted my first oil painting when I was six and have been trained by my father in the traditional European academic way of painting and drawing since I was ten years old. I could also go to a music institute for my undergraduate study, but I found I excelled in art and decided to take the enrolment exams of Tsinghua University.

What pushed you in that direction and how can you see your work evolving in the future?

I started my feminist series paintings about cosmetic surgery in my MFA study at the State University of New York at Buffalo. I was encouraged to become an artist by the selected solo show at Anderson Gallery. To continue my art practise and academic research, I relocated to Australia to pursue my PhD at The University of Melbourne.



"Anesthesia", Su Yang, Egg Tempura on Clay Board

What inspires you in your work, is there a driving factor that draws you to the easel?

My paintings focus on the theme of female representation, specifically about female beauty and the body from a feminist perspective. I have been thinking about the theme while reading magazines and blogs, watching news and films, and browsing social media. I was also inspired by the news of women who underwent failed cosmetic surgery procedures.

When it comes to creating your work, do you have a preferred medium, certain types of brushes or tools you love to use?

I have come to work in mixed media, video, and performance, partly because painting seems to be an old media for women in the contemporary era. However, I choose painting with reasons. The paint in my paintings is not applied by extra fine detail paintbrushes

made from soft hairs, but by hard and stiff bristle brushes that allow me to paint impasto style, which is in the opposite style of the smooth and glossy surfaced Chinese neoclassicism. Male artists use this style to portray women and make the representation of women in their paintings with soft and lustrous skin. Instead, I use the chunky paint to depict women's skin to strengthen the power delivered both by the paint and the image.



"Recovery Period", Su Yang, Oil on Canvas

When it comes to the subject matter of your work, what draws you to those themes?

My multidisciplinary practise conveys my feminist investigation on female representation, and recently my sense of social responsibilities for contemporary social issues including anti-racism, de/anti-colonialism, and social justice.

Could you describe your normal day as an artist? Have you set routines and rituals or is it more a case of when the moment is right you work?

It is a little bit hard to set routines or rituals because I am working in a university. But no matter how busy I am or whatever the studio condition is in, it is important to me to keep enthusiastic and carry on painting.



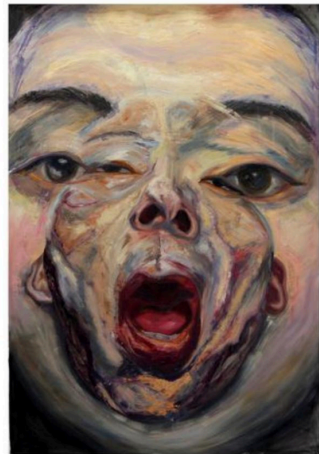
"Tummy Tuck", Su Yang, Oil on Canvas

When you work, do you focus on one piece at a time until completion or are you working on multiple pieces at the same time?

Sometimes I work on multiple pieces in the same series. At other times, I focus on one piece. But none of my paintings exists as a single project. Each painting is under a particular theme with other paintings that are regarded as one project.

What are you working on at the moment?

Currently, I am working on an on-going project "Invisible/Visible Hands" across painting and performance recorded video. This series of works aims to question the invisible socialized ideas of female beauty become the visible impulse to change women's bodies. I have been exploring using art as a vehicle for her voice to respond to social injustice and racial inequity and to engage with society.



"Double Faces Pre & Post Cosmetic Surgery 3", Su Yang, Oil on Canvas

When is your next exhibition? Is it a solo or group exhibition? Could you tell us a little about the exhibition, when and where it is?

One of my paintings is currently exhibited in the online exhibition "Metamorphic", which is curated by No Vacancy Gallery. My next solo exhibition will be shown in Black Cat Gallery in Melbourne in January 2021 if it is not affected by COVID 19.



["Double Faces Post Cosmetic Surgery", Su Yang, Oil on Canvas](#)

Visit - [Online Gallery of Su Yang](#)



["Liposuction of the Legs", Su Yang, Oil on Canvas](#)