

Olivia Jia *Perimeter*

Margot Samel is pleased to present *Perimeter*, a display of paintings by the Philadelphia-based painter Olivia Jia (b.1994, Chicago IL). This is Jia's first solo exhibition with the gallery.

Painted in what the artist has described as a 'nocturnal' palette, these works have a somnambulant quality, appearing as if scenes encountered in a state between sleep and waking. Each is constructed around a tableau that the artist has arranged, often incorporating material collected by herself, or in the possession of family members. Ideas of kinship and heritage – in this instance informing Jia's own diasporic identity, as the child of Chinese immigrants to the United States – are negotiated through the constellations of elements she gathers together in her compositions. Staged in a studio workspace, depicted either late at night, or in an imagined facsimile of that location, these paintings act as tools with which a greater degree of self-recognition might be arrived at.

It could be said that our sense of belonging is partly understood in relation to our belongings, and the belongings of those closest to us. This is a principle that Jia employs to reconcile personal narratives with broader cultural dynamics. Artefacts resembling family heirlooms, lost during periods of political upheaval, are sought out in the annals of art history. Genres, be that of the Still-life, Huaniaohua, the Chinese tradition of 'Bird and Flower' painting, or American Naturalist illustration become prospective frameworks to be infused with anecdote or biographical allusions, and mined for accidentally shared motifs. What is being honed in these paintings is an iconographic system, one that reflects on the points at which individual experience intersects with collective accounts.

Images, carefully folded for storage, and books left open at resonant pages, frequently act as framing devices within Jia's compositions. These devices draw our attention to the mechanics of printed reproduction, and its capacity as an authoritative repository for knowledge. What they also highlight, however, is how affect can be produced through combinations of such factual information. The sombrely lit surfaces upon which these objects and images are depicted are at once tabletops or pinboards upon which objects might be placed, and psychic spaces onto which desire might be projected. Here, the act of painting itself is presented as analogous to the nature of Jia's arrangements of collected material: as it too constitutes an archival structure in which the objective properties of documents and the subjective nature of memory are able to coalesce.

Margot Samel
295 Church St
New York, NY 10013

+1 212 597-2747
info@margotsamel.com

margotsamel.com

- Neil Clements

Margot Samel

Olivia Jia (b. 1994, Chicago, IL) is a Philadelphia-based painter. She received a BFA from the University of the Arts, Philadelphia in 2017. Honors include the Ellen Battell Stoeckel Fellowship to attend the Yale Norfolk Summer School of Art in 2015 and the President's Award at the University of the Arts. Recent solo exhibitions include *Perimeter* at Margot Samel, New York, NY (2023) and *Ex Libris* at Workplace, London, UK (2022). Selected group shows include *To whom do I owe the power behind my voice?*, curated by Tally de Orellan, Commonweal, Philadelphia, PA (2023); *To be a giant and keep quiet about it*, Margot Samel, New York, NY (2022); *Painting As Is II*, Nathalie Karg Gallery, New York, NY (2022); *Kaleidoscope*, Workplace, London, UK (2022); *To be a giant and keep quiet about it*, Yee Society, Hong Kong (2022); *An Exchange of Shifting Atmospheres*, curated by Leslie Moody Castro and Ricky Yanas, Tiger Strikes Asteroid, Philadelphia, PA (2022); *It feels like the first time*, Mana Contemporary, Chicago, IL (2021); *Room for One*, Napoleon Project Space, curated by Daniel Oliva, Philadelphia, PA (2020); *Second Nature: The Poetics of Re-presentation*, The Woodmere Museum 78th Annual Juried Exhibition, curated by Eileen Neff, Philadelphia, PA (2019); *Making It*, Hamilton Hall, University of the Arts, Philadelphia, PA (2018); *Into the Light*, Bridgette Mayer Gallery & Friends of the Rail Park, Philadelphia, PA (2017); *Dear Fleisher*, Fleisher Art Memorial, Philadelphia, PA (2017); *Untitled*, Dongsomun, Seoul, Korea (2017). Jia has an upcoming solo exhibition at Fleisher Ollman, Philadelphia, PA in September 2023.

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