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Folkerts, Hendrik. "Mutter, ich bin dumm!: Evelyn Taocheng Wang." *ArtAsiaPacific* 124 (July/August 2021): 44-51.



Shape-shifting

Whether adopting pseudonyms, exaggerating personas, or inventing alter-egos, artists have been leading imagined existences throughout time in order to tease out the fine lines that divide fiction and reality. There are many para-fictional approaches to art-making today, as hiding one's identity can engender pluralistic and ambiguous forms of expression. Wearing a mask can conceal but also reveal.

Beginning in 1967, the Los Angeles-based artist Carl Cheng began branding his creations under the name John Doe Co., a wryly generic corporate moniker for his "Nature Machines." The company name served multiple purposes: it placed the artist's experiments into a dialogue with the rapid technological developments happening in American industries of the postwar era while also deflecting attention away from his Chinese heritage amid rising anti-Asian sentiment during the American war in Vietnam. In this issue's cover Feature, deputy editor HG Masters traces Cheng's early awareness of how human technology would soon be able to recreate natural processes, leading to a world entirely shaped by humans, and how Cheng's later disenchantment with the art market led him to concentrate his energy on installations and projects for the public sphere.

Our second Feature brings us to Evelyn Taocheng Wang's solo exhibition "Reflection Paper" at the Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen in Düsseldorf, where Wang alludes to a host of artistic and literary figures—among them Agnes Martin, Eileen Chang, Silvia Federici, and Ingeborg Bachmann—in her paintings and videos. Delving into the artist's explorations of identity construction and fictional biographies, Hendrik Folkerts, contributing writer and a curator at the Art Institute of Chicago, writes: "Rather than appropriating the work of these often queer and female authors directly, [Wang] chooses a para-fictional approach to citation, using irony, wit, or absurdism as strategies to inhabit the space between her and them. Indeed, in order to stage a perpetual (re)formation of identity through a process of narrative reciprocity, she projects onto these figures her own meditations on body politics, artistic labor, the Kafkaesque bureaucracies of immigration, and language."

Rounding out the Features, Up Close highlights Jes Fan's three new sculptures commissioned for the 2021 Liverpool Biennial; Deniz Gül's deconstructions of language at her recent SALT Galata exhibition in Istanbul; and Zhao Zhao's new series of mixed-media paintings *The Buddha* (2021). For Inside Burger Collection, writer Kimberly Bradley traces the arc of artist Bianca Kennedy's practice, from her films and VR works focused on bathing to her speculative animations created with The Swan Collective.

For Profiles, writer Sheila Regan spoke to photographer Pao Houa Her about her connection with the Hmong community

in St. Paul, where she grew up, and her birth country, Laos. Elsewhere in the section, associate editor Ophelia Lai examines multimedia artist Aki Inomata's interspecies collaborations, and managing editor Chloe Chu writes about how photographer Miti Ruangkritya tracks the dizzying transformations of Bangkok.

This issue's Essay is focused on the project "Owned by Others," which sought to create conversations around the colonial histories behind the artifacts held on Berlin's Museum Island. Comprising performances, public installations, and showcases, "the encounters of 'Owned by Others' became instances of micro-resistance," writes Berlin desk editor Clara Tang, that respond to how "newly diverse and remarkably retrograde histories were simultaneously reinscribed into Berlin's urban landscape in the year 2020."

In Dispatch, curator Raphael Fonseca describes the recent shifts in the arts landscape of São Paulo, most notably the inclusion of more Afro-Brazilian artists and curators in the public programs of museums and galleries. For the Point, artist, curator, and incoming Asia Art Archive director Christopher K. Ho probes how transnational communities of the many Asian diasporas might find new forms of solidarity. Artist Trevor Shimizu pens the latest One on One column, declaring that "Dan Graham and [his show] 'Deep Comedy' saved my art, and my life."

Lastly, for Where I Work, contributing writer Frances Arnold visited aaajiao's Berlin home and working space, which serves as a "portal to a global cyber studio," where the new-media artist creates large-scale installations, websites, and interactive games reflecting on humanity's relationship with virtual environments. In his recent, open-ended metagame *Deep Simulator* (2020), he encourages players to explore freely, encouraging "free will and an opportunity to reflect on what kinds of decisions we make and why."

Whether it is through the 21st-century technologies that enable us to live double lives in the virtual worlds of the internet, or reflecting on the culturally unbounded personas that allow us to adapt ourselves to different places and people, artists expand the intersection of the imaginative and the real.

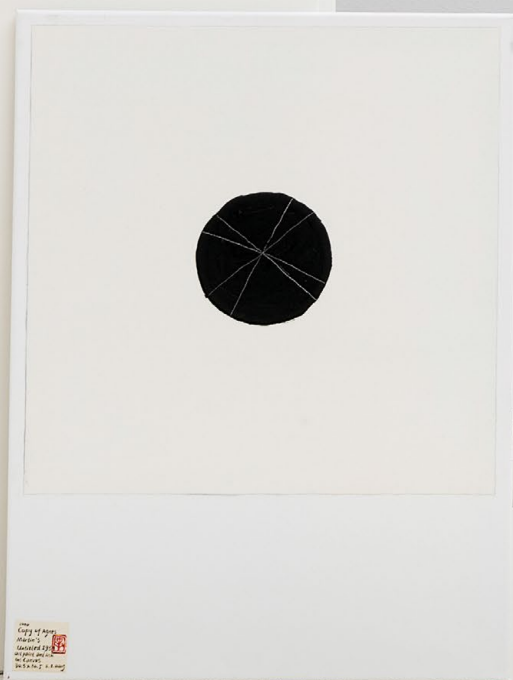
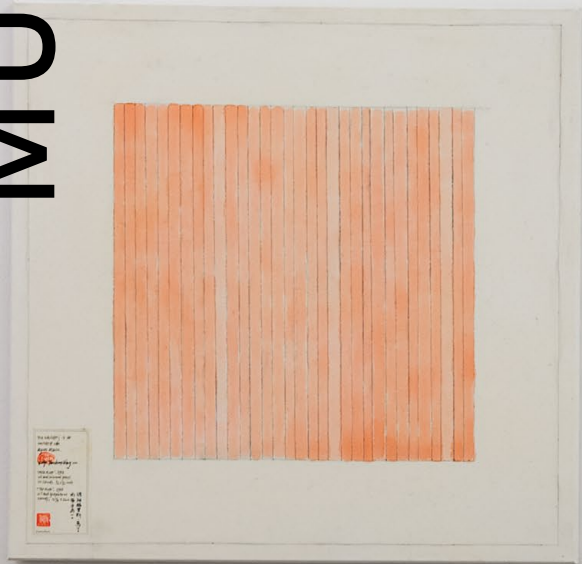


ELAINE W. NG

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MUTTER, ICH BIN DUMM!



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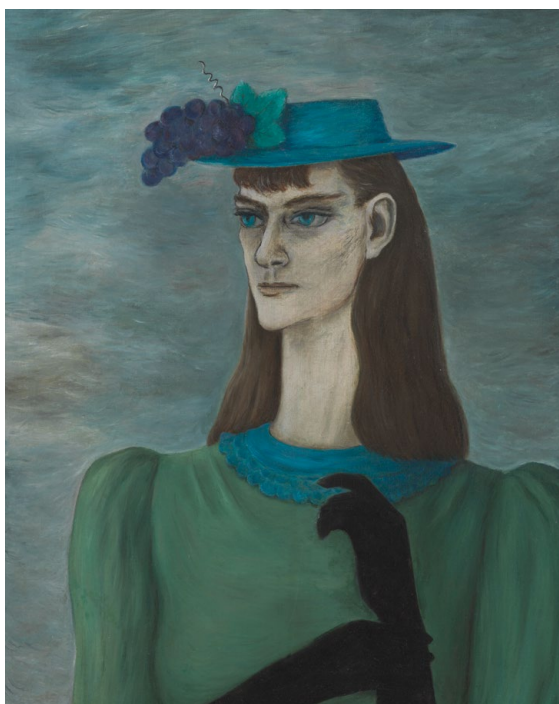
BIOGRAPHY AS FICTION IN
EVELYN TAOCHENG WANG'S
"REFLECTION PAPER"



BY
HENDRIK FOLKERTS

I am looking at a painting by the Chicago-based Surrealist artist Gertrude Abercrombie, *Self-Portrait of My Sister*, created in 1941. The woman has sharp features, an elongated neck, and her gaze projects onto an unknown horizon beyond the picture frame. The radiant blue of her eyes echoes the green and blue of her dress, collar, and hat, the latter adorned with dark purple grapes and a corkscrew. Her lips are pressed, giving her face a stern, austere expression, in subtle contrast with the playful gesture of her right hand embracing her left wrist. Tellingly, Abercrombie was an only child. The artist used self-portraiture to create an alter ego, an imaginary sister—was she smarter, prettier, meaner, or more real somehow? In her records, she would refer to this painting as “Portrait of the Artist as Ideal,” stating: “It’s always myself that I paint, but not actually, because I don’t look that good or cute.” The painting reminds me of Evelyn Taocheng Wang, and all the other possible Evelyns envisioned by Wang.

Evelyn’s work engages with the age-old philosophical question: what if we are fiction? Fittingly, Evelyn has invited me to virtually—fictionally?—attend her latest exhibition, “Reflection Paper” at the Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen in Düsseldorf, since I cannot visit in person. The exhibition is modeled on a clinic. Will I be treated, healed, or transformed? As Evelyn starts our tour, I am distracted by her outfit and underwhelmed by mine. She is meticulously dressed, wearing black trousers and elegant brown leather shoes, erring on the masculine side of the fashion spectrum. A square-cut, double-breasted tweed jacket with a black vest and a white blouse (buttoned up) underneath completes the fastidious ensemble. Her make-up is clean, understated. The pièce de résistance is a modestly-sized black hat that rests on the right side of her head; it is embellished with a blush-pink faux-flower that resonates with the shades of rouge that I see painted in large circles on the walls of this gallery-turned-clinic. I, on other hand, am wearing sweatpants and a rather dismal-looking Adidas sweater. I have no shoes on. I am truly ready to check into this establishment. Pay attention! Evelyn introduces the exhibition. “So now I would like to walk away for a moment, but I believe your eye will follow my



Left: **STUDIO E.T. WANG**, *DO NOT AGREE WITH AGNES MARTIN ALL THE TIME (Overall)*, 2021, artist’s print, dimensions variable, produced on the occasion of “Reflection Paper” at Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, Düsseldorf, 2021. Photo by Roman Szczesny. Courtesy Antenna Space, Shanghai; Carlos/Ishikawa, London; and Galerie Fons Welters, Amsterdam. Right: **GERTRUDE ABERCROMBIE**, *Self-Portrait of My Sister*, 1941, oil on canvas, 68.6×55.9 cm. Courtesy the Art Institute of Chicago.



Installation view of "Reflection Paper" at the Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, Düsseldorf, 2021. Photo by Katja Ilner. Courtesy the artist and Antenna Space, Shanghai; Carlos/Ishikawa, London; and Galerie Fons Welters, Amsterdam.

step. And I would like to give you a really cozy and special evening.” Let the *Ausstellungsrundgang* [exhibition tour] begin.

Evelyn introduces me to the clinic’s permanent residents: seven giant pieces of “grandmother” underwear, washed and ironed, and draped across laundry racks. You can wear them as a dress, too; they conveniently cover your head. As Evelyn explains, “Your body becomes exactly an object, which is blind.” She then reads from an adjacent painting, based on a memory from the Artdeco Sauna in Amsterdam, where the granny pants inevitably must come off and the body is no longer “blind”: “Female body is more beautiful than male body not only because male body represents violence, strength, and occupied power but also western art history objectify its view. My body has no curved, attractive figure at all, and ‘what is false and what is real’ is the truth of human-being and its art history.”

It seems that a few other guests have recently checked into the clinic as well, old friends and new acquaintances looking for a moment of respite, getting some work done, or just pausing to reflect on “living in the moment of now,” as Evelyn suggests. I see painter Agnes Martin reposing in the center of the space; writer Eileen Chang is hiding in the dark corners of the black box in the back, and luminaries Ingeborg Bachmann and Silvia Federici are spread out on long tables, their stories touched by the cool lighting of the library lamps positioned above them. I am sure the mischievous conceptual artist Ulises Carrión is gossiping in the corner somewhere as well.

Martin, Chang, Bachmann, and Federici join a cast of characters that Evelyn has channeled as avatars in her paintings, performances, and video installations over the last decade. Rather than appropriating the work of these often queer and female authors directly, she chooses a para-fictional approach to citation, using irony, wit, or absurdism as strategies to inhabit the space between her and them. Indeed, in order to stage a perpetual (re)formation of identity through a process of narrative reciprocity, she projects onto these figures her own meditations on body politics, artistic labor, the Kafkaesque bureaucracies of immigration, and language, lots of it: her native Chinese, but also English, German, Japanese, and Dutch, slightly off but always just right,



Sauna, 2020, ink and watercolor on paper, 57 × 48 cm. Courtesy the artist and Antenna Space, Shanghai; Carlos/Ishikawa, London; and Galerie Fons Welters, Amsterdam.



Screenshot of the artist's tour of "Reflection Paper." Courtesy Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, Düsseldorf.

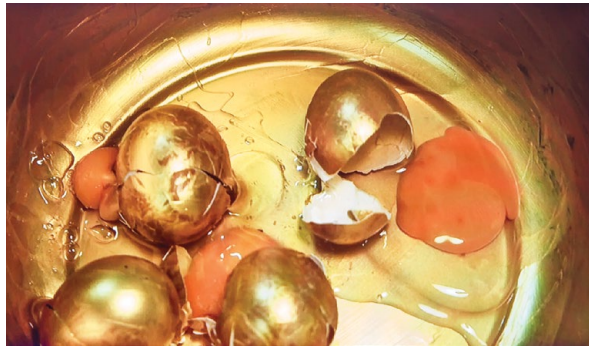
a transformation of words to mean something different—to be lost and found in translation.

Continuing our tour, Evelyn leads me into the garden at the heart of "Reflection Paper," an intricate scenography of intersecting white walls with circular spaces carved out of the "white icy lacquer," like Chinese moon gates or Constructivist structures. I look around and find myself surrounded by gridded abstractions in pastel, off-white, and gray shades. These are Evelyn's reproductions of Martin's paintings. Some lean against the garden's arches, others are installed on the surrounding antiseptic walls of the clinic. We sit down on the edge of one of the circles in the wall, among the ruins of modernism, and remain silent for a few minutes. Moments pass before Evelyn describes the canvases as "decorative posters for our clinic" or "children-sized paintings." They are part of the treatment, a space of reflection and meditation.

Evelyn used images from Martin's Tate Modern retrospective catalogue as source material, reversing the process that the latter artist was so well known for: converting the postage-stamp-sized composition that formed in her head into a sketch that she then scaled up exactly and painted onto a perfectly squared canvas of 183 by 183 centimeters. Evelyn's intentions appear both ironically melancholic and profoundly sincere, as she transposes Martin's lifelong quest for beauty and serenity through mathematical precision onto commercially produced, rectangular canvases. As such, Evelyn creates an environment where we can trace the memory of Martin's vision for beauty and freedom. I look at her with suspicion and she smiles, faintly. She quotes Martin: "I don't have a friend, and you are one of them." Once again, Evelyn does not merely copy or imitate: she measures the distance between herself and Martin, and allows us to momentarily inhabit this space. The paintings look like pages out of a book or exhibition posters, each one marked in the corner with Evelyn's signature red seal along with the number of the catalogue page that she drew from, the size of Martin's original painting, Evelyn's own name, and the year of production. They remind me of a poster of Vincent Van Gogh's *The Starry Night* (1889) on the wall of my childhood bedroom that



Clinic Agnes Martin, *OP. 8*, 2020, oil and graphite on canvas, 100 x 80 cm. Courtesy the artist and Antenna Space, Shanghai; Carlos/Ishikawa, London; and Galerie Fons Welters, Amsterdam.



I used to stare at, having never set foot in a museum at that time. I get lost in memories . . . Evelyn has walked off already, and I follow.

If the garden is the heart of the exhibition, the video series *Reflection Paper I-IV* is the brain. Created in 2013–14, these videos are visual and linguistic meditations, anchored in the work of literary rebel and solitaire extraordinaire Eileen Chang, who was born in Shanghai and died alone in her apartment in Los Angeles. Quotations from Chang’s literary work appear on the screen and merge with Evelyn’s own language in a high-speed voiceover that sounds both comical and poignant, a stream of consciousness in which she reflects, ponders, worries, and panics about her body, her visa, her art, and her politics. It is hard to say where Chang’s language stops and Evelyn’s voice-over begins: “She wasn’t a bird in a cage, she wasn’t a bird in a cage, she wasn’t a bird in a cage. A bird in a cage, a bird in a cage, a bird in a cage. When the cage is opened, when the cage is opened, when the cage is opened. Can still fly away, can still fly away, can still fly away.” Much of the language is visualized, literally or metaphorically in the videos. There are golden rotten eggs, squashed in a bowl; the decaying corpse of a bird; the rainy surroundings of Amsterdam; excerpts from porn movies; male and female bodies; and color, in all its fugitive abundance. It is strange to see these works again, as they are layered with memories—they were my first connection to Evelyn, and, as with all first loves, they still feel painful and exquisitely frivolous in their melancholic earnestness. Together with another video, *Park of Washing Scissors*, which Evelyn created with fellow student Colin Whitaker at the Städelschule in Frankfurt in 2011, *Reflection Paper I-IV* are among the few works that are not produced on the occasion of this exhibition. Rather, they exist as documents that elucidate the arc in Evelyn’s practice, and create another protagonist in the exhibition in the form of the artist as a young man, sharing the stage

Stills from *Reflection Paper I and IV*, 2013–14, HD video: 5 min 28 sec and 8 min 44 sec. Courtesy the artist and Antenna Space, Shanghai; Carlos/Ishikawa, London; and Galerie Fons Welters, Amsterdam.

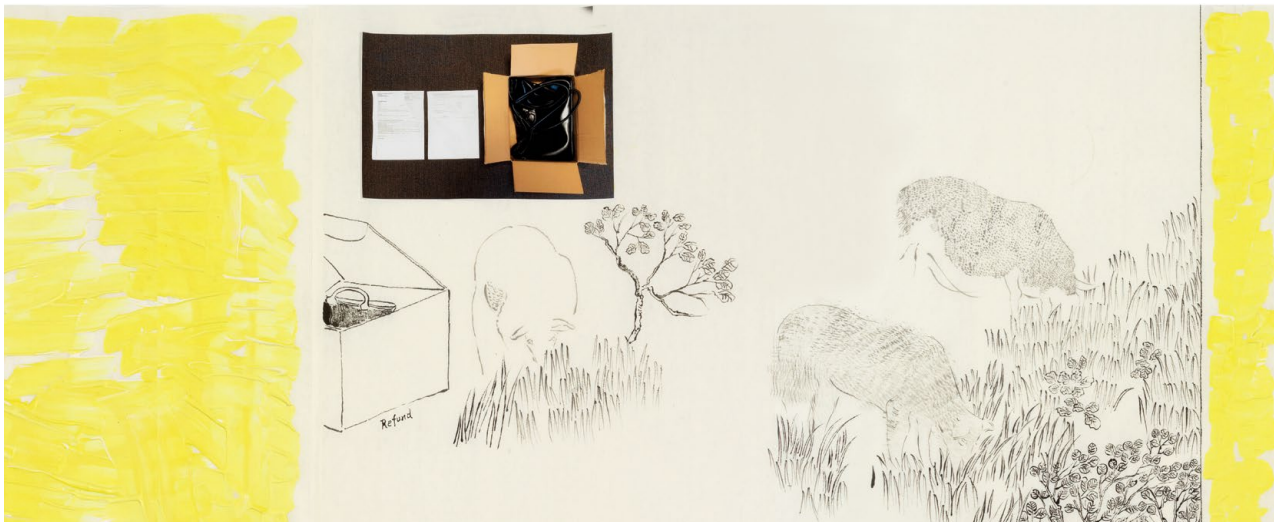
with Eileen, Agnes, and all the others. If this is a clinic, these videos are regressive psychoanalytical treatment.

Suddenly, we find ourselves on a crowded street in Turin, Anno Domini 1889. Friedrich Nietzsche is trying to cross the road. Let's face it, his mental health is already quite fragile at this point. Whispering words to himself about the city's unparalleled gelato, he is distracted by the sound of lashes, ripping into the flesh of a horse. Meanwhile, mere meters away, Evelyn is out shopping with her girlfriend. Perfume, scarves, shoes, a bonbon—the essentials. They observe the strange-looking man with the moustache as he approaches the horse that is being whipped by its owner. The man falls on his knees and utters, "Mutter, ich bin dumm [Mother, I am stupid]," before he lies down on the street, quietly defeated. Evelyn's friend asks her: "Are you doing OK?" Evelyn, nailed to the ground as if she has seen a ghost, says in disbelief, "... my compact mirror is broken," staring at the shards of glass before her. What a day to be in Turin! As we walk past the painting that depicts this auspicious occurrence, Evelyn whispers: "That is why I want that false poster here, because nobody knows if I was really in Turin or not." Whether or not she was actually in Turin is perhaps best captured in the words at the top of the painting, "Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung" [The World as Will and Representation], evoking Arthur Schopenhauer's 1819 foundational philosophical treatise on the impossibility of knowing the world beyond our subjective cognition.

One of the most enigmatic writers of 20th-century Austria, Ingeborg Bachmann is the lead character in the large scroll-drawing that Evelyn leads me to next. Bachmann believed that language accumulates meaning through subjectivity and context, rather than a more universalizing principle that would stipulate language means the same thing everywhere, to anyone. On the scroll, Evelyn has transcribed a number of Bachmann's poems, written in German, and annotated them with her Chinese translations. They do not mean the same thing. On the right side of the scroll, in between the poems, are Barnett Newman-esque fields of color invoking either Abstract Expressionism or Expressionist Abstraction (or maybe neither). Evelyn recalls a story of how, during her 2019 residency in Mönchengladbach, she'd spend time at a cake shop, Konditorei Heinemann—a happy place, where one can sit in granny pants with a Longchamp leather bag, enjoying some *Kaffee und Kuchen*. The Konditorei had a "library feeling," a sentiment emulated by the lamps on top of the scroll's vitrine. But bad things happen in happy places: Evelyn lost her leather bag. Thankfully, it was found and recovered, despite, or because of, the sprawling bureaucracy of German law enforcement. It was returned with a three-page form that Evelyn collaged onto the scroll, next to a picture of the bag in the box that it was sent back in, documenting



False Poster, 2020, ink, pencil, and water color on paper, 180.5×98 cm. Photo by Gert van Rooij. Courtesy the artist and Antenna Space, Shanghai; Carlos/Ishikawa, London; and Galerie Fons Welters, Amsterdam.



Detail of *Booklet of Bachmann_Lost Leather Shoulder Bag Refund*, 2020, ink, digital inkjet print, glue, acrylic, and pencil on raw rice paper, 48.7 × 800 cm. Courtesy the artist and Antenna Space, Shanghai; Carlos/Ishikawa, London; and Galerie Fons Welters, Amsterdam.

all the personal belongings in the bag, including Evelyn's copy of Bachmann's collected poetry. She contends, "I wanted to give the whole context to create a new kind of understanding together with the poetry." As I walk by the vitrine, I look at Bachmann's writing in one language that I kind of understand and another that I cannot read at all, the texts hovering between translation, visualization, and internal dialogue, as language often does in Evelyn's work. The police form, the photograph of the Longchamp bag, and the colorism of postwar abstraction that has faded to pastels appear as stops on the route that Bachmann's book has traveled, from Rotterdam to Mönchengladbach, from the cake shop to the hands of a good Samaritan, from one police department to another, from the employee of the lost-and-found department to the doorstep of Evelyn's host, and back to the cake shop. Was Bachmann quietly reciting her work along the way, seeing how the words resonated in different places?

It is time to reapply some rouge, this *Rundgang* has been a tour de force. We stop at two paintings, one evoking a Mark Rothko-type suspension of yellow and gray color blocks, the other a monochromatic field of coral, a color undecided between red and orange. I am uncertain if I'm looking at an allusion to late modernism, a watered-down version of the German flag, or simply the magnification of an eyeshadow compact, which Evelyn shows off to illustrate her use of yellow. Either way, we're masquerading. "People will always ask me about my national identity issue, but it's not about that, it's just for beauty," Evelyn says provocatively. Appropriately, we end with a meditation on color, in the form of these two paintings that emerge from a painstaking process of dyeing layers of fragile paper, conjuring a dialogical relationship between dyes from Evelyn's childhood and art education on the one hand and the balance between the Apollonian and Dionysian forces that govern our existence on the other. True to the marks of authentication that we see across her work, Evelyn has applied numerous stamps (including one of a turtle) and her signature on the top left of these "eyeshadow certificates." Her words, "... it's just for beauty" echo in my mind. Is this what it feels like to put on eyeshadow every day? I should start using it. It's just for beauty.

I am discharged from the clinic now, having realized that I, too, am fiction—or at the very least, mere representation. Just like Gertrude Abercrombie, I begin drawing a picture of my imaginary selves. A brother perhaps, his name is Anthony. A sister, her name is Evelyn, and Eileen, and Virginia, and Ingeborg, and Agnes, and Ulises, and Silvia. I leave the show and step into my story again.



Top: *Color Certificate - Casandra*, 2020, mineral color of goose beak yellow (Chinese: *e-huang se*), Chinese ink, six layers of dye on four layers of ripe rice paper with folded corner as certificate, 183 × 99 cm. Bottom: *Color Certificate - Minium*, 2020, mineral color of minium (Chinese: *zha sha se*), six layers of dye on four layers of ripe rice paper with folded corner as certificate, 183 × 99 cm. Courtesy the artist and Antenna Space, Shanghai; Carlos/Ishikawa, London; and Galerie Fons Welters, Amsterdam.

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Archev, Karen. "Karen Archev on the art of Evelyn Taocheng Wang." *Artforum* 59, no. 6 (April 2020): 128-131.



OPENINGS

EVELYN TAOCHENG WANG

KAREN ARCHHEY





Above: Evelyn Taocheng Wang, *Booklet of Bachmann_Lost Leather Shoulder Bag Refund*, 2020, ink, ink-jet print, glue, acrylic, and pencil on raw rice paper, 1'7 1/4" x 26'3".

Opposite page, bottom: Evelyn Taocheng Wang, *Reflection Paper*, no. 3, 2013–14, HD video, color, sound, 7 minutes 31 seconds.

Below: Evelyn Taocheng Wang, *So You Were Also There*, 2019, ink and mineral color on raw rice paper, 18 7/8" x 37 3/4".



THERE IS NO ONE THING that we could call the “immigrant experience,” but certainly everyone who has immigrated is familiar with how mundane misunderstandings can reveal cultural tectonics, of how humor can sometimes be mobilized to leaven pain. What’s the correct time of day to introduce yourself to a new neighbor? How earnestly should you respond to the question “How are you?” Will you come off as suspicious to the neighbors if your curtains remain drawn? The answers to these questions might seem relative or merely dependent on personal proclivity, yet one’s approach to these everyday situations constitutes, in part, the *je ne sais quoi* of national belonging. And while learning a new culture can be refined into a science, other qualities will still mark us as different, factors comprising who we are, where we come from, and our appearance.

China-born, Netherlands-based artist Evelyn Taocheng Wang takes the subject of authenticity, and how we go about performing it, as fodder for a sprawling practice that includes installation, performance, video, sculpture, and a range of painting and drawing styles. Her work often touches on Dutchness and Germanness, pairing observations on immigration and

belonging with reflections on other aspects crucial to our understanding of the self, such as our gender and class presentation or our sense of style. Yet she eschews a confrontational approach to these hot-button topics, broaching themes such as cultural assimilation and gender expression with a healthy sense of humor and poetry, making references in her work to art history, language acquisition, literature (she has a fondness for Virginia Woolf, American-born Chinese modernist Eileen Chang, and the Brothers Grimm’s “The Frog Prince”), and embodied experience (such as the way in which daylight filters through the seventeenth-century windows of the Amsterdam Hermitage). Wang knowingly emphasizes personal appearance and material possessions—her work frequently invokes clothing brands and makes use of garments and textiles—in ways that fly in the face of so much European and American art of the past fifty years, with its grounding in supposedly objective and neutral Conceptualism and cerebral claims to criticality. When speaking of her instructors at the Städelshule in Frankfurt, she expresses surprise at their analytic approach, saying, with wry bewilderment, of one (white male) teacher, “He can even explain what beauty is.”

For Wang, the conditions that create beauty are, by nature, ineffable, and when they are stated, the spell is broken.

One recent work, *Spreading Elegance*, 2019, is entirely based on Wang's affection for the brand agnès b. On Facebook, the artist offered items from her lovingly acquired collection of the label's clothing to her friends in exchange for a handwritten letter. Wang presents these notes in tabletop vitrines, placing them alongside her own photos and drawings of the corresponding articles of clothing. Lit by a small tabletop lamp and furnished with a simple stool, each table is dedicated to an individual garment set free from the artist's collection. agnès b.'s simple, understated femininity epitomizes a modern European sophistication to which many women outside Europe—and, according to Wang, Asian women in particular—aspire. The key to the work lies in one of the letters, in which a confidante describes her initial reservations about the project. "Isn't this Agnès B. thing a bit superficial?" the friend writes. "It's fashion, clothes, capitalism—I'm missing substance, a critical perspective." But then she comes around. "When I went to see the show at the gallery, everything changed. . . . It's all about the question: How can I be someone? How can anyone be someone?" Being someone, Wang suggests, is less about the expression of some authentic interiority or self and more a process of rediscovery and play, of pleasurably pretending or putting on airs.

BORN IN 1981 in the Sichuan capital city of Chengdu, Wang learned about Soviet Realism, the Russian avant-garde, and European modernism in high school. At Nanjing Normal University, she studied Chinese classical literature, calligraphy, and landscape painting, as well as mathematics and English. In 2007, Wang, who had been living in Shanghai, departed China for a residency in Germany, where she met artist Monika Baer, who advised her to enroll at the renowned Städelschule.

After graduating, Wang became a resident at the De Ateliers in Amsterdam and relocated to the Netherlands, where she has lived since 2012. As any newcomer will attest, learning to speak Dutch is a monumental task, not only because of the complex grammar and the throat acrobatics required, but because of the frustratingly friendly insistence of all Dutch people on speaking English to anyone who looks or sounds remotely foreign. In fact, it wasn't until Wang had lived in the country for several years that she found herself "immersed" in Dutch for the first time. While attending a concert at Luther Museum Amsterdam, Wang encountered a group of Dutch senior citizens who spoke the language exclusively and did not revert to English; she found that the experience made her feel integrated into Dutch society. Shortly thereafter, Wang announced via email that she had embarked upon a performance in which she would only speak Dutch or German for one year, and that friends and curators collaborating on institutional exhibitions who did not speak those languages would have to hire a translator to work with her. Communication hiccups, mistakes, and delays in exhibition preparation followed, underscoring the dominance of English as the art world's lingua franca. But more than that, Wang's action subtly challenged an institutional system that rewards artists for simultaneously occupying two irreconcilable positions: that of the outsider gazing inward at society and that of the insider able to conscientiously administer her own creative pontifications.

Wang has a long-standing interest in bureaucratic insignia of authentication. In Chinese painting and calligraphy, a finished piece received a stamp to certify its authority, indicating that it was made according to strict customs and principles of composition. Wang wondered if she could simply make the stamp herself, bypassing all the fuss of the compositional rule-book—traditional Chinese landscape painters would laugh at this ruse, she



Wang's line drawings appear almost like virtuoso drypoint etchings, emerging and disappearing from the picture plane with spectral indifference.

says. The resulting drawings, which form the cornerstone of her practice, combine Chinese landscape-painting techniques with elements, such as rice-paper scrolls, her "fake" Chinese authenticity stamps, collage, and calligraphy. For the artist's 2020 Hermitage exhibition, "*Het bloemblaadje, dat tijdens het ochtendkrieken was gevallen, pakte ik op in de avond-schemering*" (the title, which intentionally includes a Dutch grammatical error, translates to "I picked up the flower petal which had fallen in dawn in the evening twilight"), she created numerous such pieces, combining artifacts from her integration into the Netherlands, like Dutch-language homework, with paintings of everyday Dutch items: architectural elements including ornate cast-iron railings and the iconic Dutch gable; the Dutch delicacy *oliebollen* (fried dough); and the flashy faux chandeliers found in

the oliebollen trucks that serve them. Made with Chinese watercolors designed for rice paper, the paintings are further detailed with oliebollen-munching animals copied from Qing-dynasty paintings, all rendered in red, yellow, and blue in tribute to Piet Mondrian. Wang's authenticity stamps appear throughout—including one with her initials and another featuring a turtle above the word MOVE.

WANG PRESENTED additional rice-scroll pieces in "Reflection Paper," her recent exhibition at Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, Düsseldorf, including the twenty-six-foot long *Booklet of Bachmann_Lost Leather Shoulder Bag Refund*, 2020, which recounts the story of a lost handbag. While Wang was doing a residency in Mönchengladbach, Germany, she left her Longchamp purse behind in a café. A good citizen found it and turned it over to the police, who then returned the bag to Wang with a five-page report. Wang collaged the report and a photo of the returned bag onto a rice-paper scroll that she also painted with a pastoral scene of sheep grazing in a Rhineland meadow. As in many such works, Wang's line drawings appear almost like virtuoso drypoint etchings, emerging and disappearing from the picture plane with spectral indifference. This effect carries over to her replicas of Agnes Martin paintings, an abundance of which here encircled the gallery and even lay on the floor; these are at once dutiful copies, with the original title noted on a placard, and playful riffs, marked with authentication stamps and referred to by the artist as "posters."

Like most of her exhibitions, Wang's Düsseldorf show invited the viewer to literally sit and reflect. The show included four videos inspired by writer Eileen Chang. Wang has long been attracted to female modernists, particularly the tragic mood they sometimes evoke, and these works, dated 2013–14 and shot in a self-consciously amateurish, impressionistic way, combine Chang's texts as scripts with fleeting scenes caught on video. *Reflection Paper no. 4*, which was filmed in a zoo, derives from Chang's writing on marriage, child-rearing, and feelings of captivity: She was not a bird in a cage, which has the ability to escape should the door be opened, but rather a bird embroidered onto a beautiful scarf, never to be able to move again.

The rest of the show comprised a litany of other media: architectural elements such as sunshades; a gigantic, bloody papier-mâché womb laid on the ground; a set of drying racks festooned with gargantuan granny panties that double as dresses (also depicted in the drawings *Granny!*, both dated 2020). Wang installed the ersatz Martin paintings around a series of moon gates, intersecting arches in the shape of an O found in upper-class Chinese gardens. Wang has described the exhibition itself as a garden, a closed-off space for reflection—a metaphorical womb able to produce life inside of itself. The lives we envision for ourselves—be it in a faraway land, transformed like the Frog Prince, having faked it till we've made it—are, to Wang, a matter of continual becoming. □

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Opposite page, top: **Evelyn Taocheng Wang, *Spreading Elegance* (detail), 2019**, watercolor, acrylic, and ink on rice paper, envelopes, ink on paper, twenty wooden tables, twenty desk lights, twenty stools, Plexiglas, dimensions variable.

Opposite page, bottom: **View of "In the Presence of Absence," 2020–21**, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. Foreground: Evelyn Taocheng Wang. *Spreading Elegance*, 2019. Wall: Evelyn Taocheng Wang, *Quoted Elegance* Nos. 1–5, all 2019. Photo: Peter Tjihuis.

Left: **View of "Evelyn Taocheng Wang: Reflection Paper," 2021**, Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, Düsseldorf. Floor: *Thoughtless Garden*, 2020. Foreground, from left: *Clinic Agnes Martin*, 2020; *Clinic Agnes Martin*, 2020; *Clinic Agnes Martin*, OP. 8, 2020; *Clinic Agnes Martin*, 2020. Photo: Katja Illner.

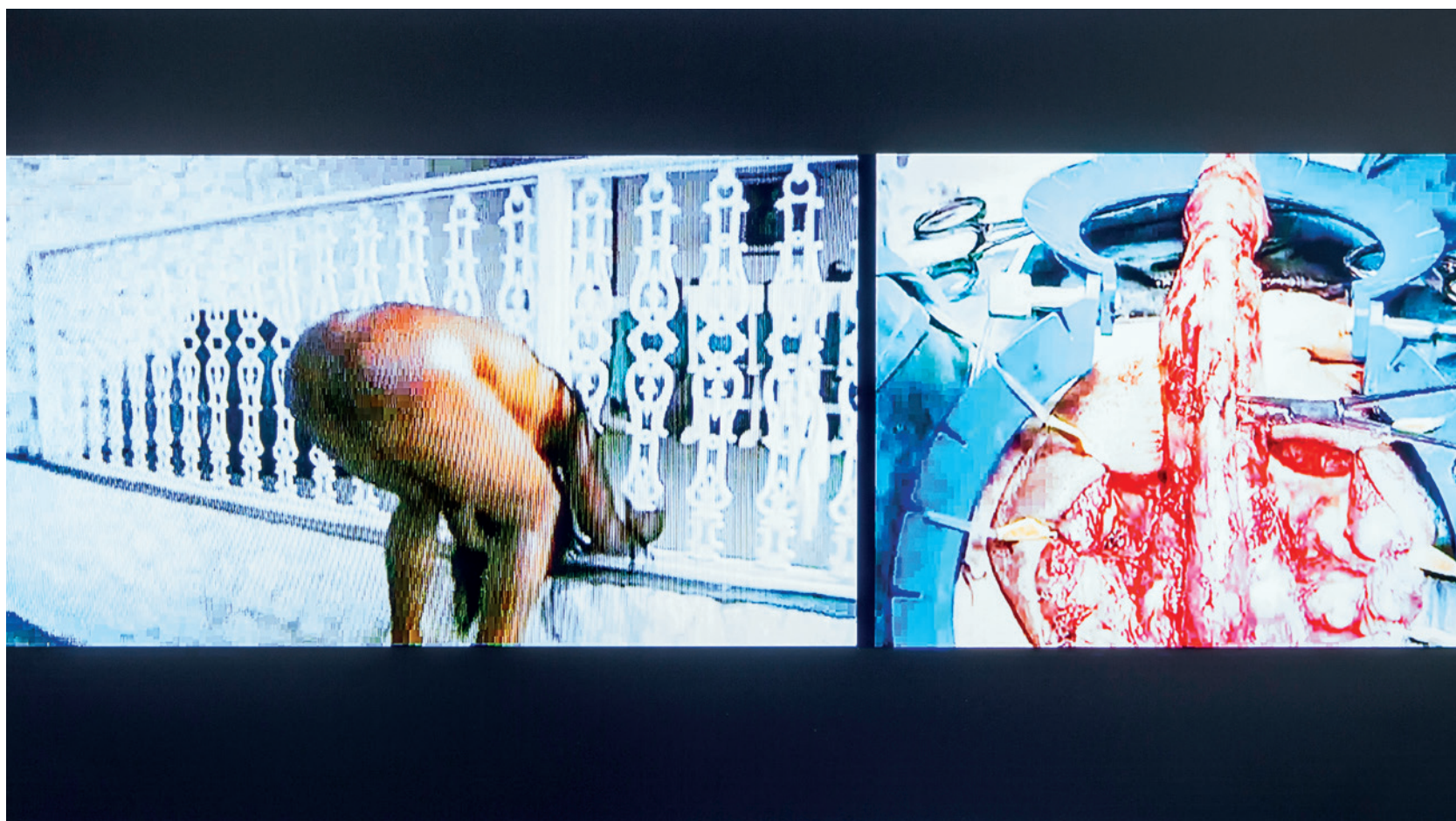
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Folkerts, Hendrik. "Evelyn T. Wang: Four Women." *Mousse* 63 (April/May 2018): 94-101.

Language is an integral part of Evelyn Taocheng Wang's work, not only as a linguistic presence in many of her drawings, paintings, and videos and the literary references that she takes as inspiration, but also in how she herself speaks. Words, sentences, mistakes, and corrections become a space to negotiate the relationship between fact and fiction, what could be almost be false or most certainly real. In the conversation that follows she speaks to Hendrik Folkerts about four women—Eileen Chang, Princess Kaguya, Virginia Woolf, and Evelyn Taocheng Wang—and how they manifest, in spirit or in actuality, in a number of key works she has produced since 2012.



FOUR WOMEN

HENDRIK FOLKERTS

One of my first encounters with your work was the video series *Reflection Papers 1–5* (2013–2014). You had recently moved to the Netherlands to participate in the residency at De Ateliers in Amsterdam, coming from Frankfurt, and prior to that, your hometown of Chengdu, China. These five videos felt like sketches in moving image, existential self-portraits that captured personal reflections on relocating to a foreign country, cultural assimilation, sexuality, desire, and the significance of making art in these new contexts, resulting in observations and confessions that showed your own ambiguity toward these issues. One key source of inspiration for these video works was Eileen Chang (1920–1995), the controversial Chinese writer who migrated to the United States. The titles of the individual works in the *Reflection Papers* series—*Moonlight*, *White Bird*, *Are you still young? Don't worry, you're going to be old soon*, *If you love flower, visit the zoo!*, and *Lover*—indicate a direct association with Chang's observations of daily life. Can you say something about your relationship to Chang and her writing, and how her work played a role in *Reflection Papers*?

EVELYN T. WANG

A first way of answering this question is to talk about how Eileen's works made me want to become her. During Japan-occupied Shanghai, in the 1930s and 1940s, to make a living she

wrote novels and criticism. The themes in her novels are mainly romance, love, and marriage. Her writing style is a two-dimensional narrative, a “list of images” as I call it, influenced by traditional Chinese literature, such as the Qing dynasty novel *The Dream of Red Chamber*, and by Western modern English literature, including W. Somerset Maugham (queer), Virginia Woolf (bisexual), and also Western films from 1930s Hollywood (macho). She said in her article “Writing of One’s Own”: “So my fiction, with the exception of Cao Qiqiao in *The Golden Cangue* (1943), is populated with equivocal characters. They are not heroes, but they are of the majority who actually bear the weight of the times. As equivocal as they may be, they are also in earnest about their lives. They lack tragedy; all they have is desolation. Tragedy is a kind of closure, while desolation is a form of revelation.”

Specifically her background and biography made me want to become her. She came from a powerful family background, but had a broken, sad, and violent childhood, although she got a very good education in Chinese traditional culture and Western cultures. She represents that bourgeois time of having a good education and good tastes, which were all eradicated during the Cultural Revolution. Today Chinese people want it back, but it is gone, so everyone needs to construct their own fantasy of history.

Making the *Reflection Papers* videos leads me toward her, makes me closer to her. It was the right time and the right place for me because I had just moved to Amsterdam, and I saw myself (still and forever) as an immigrant and an artist. I recalled my own culture from overseas, and at the same time I was learning many things from the art world in the Netherlands. It was the beginning of “being in the middle” between two cultures, between reality and my dream of being a successful artist in Western countries. My historical dreams—as an overseas Chinese, as a pre-woman, as an artist/self-imagined elite class (as opposed to today’s trashy interpretations)—all projected onto her and her writing. I saw myself as a strange figure, like Eileen said, “being in desolation, equivocal, in graceful statues and in loneliness.” I selected excerpts from her novels, and based on them, tried to film those “lists of images,” scattered collages into film, with my own voice-over that sounds like she is talking to me personally. Eileen passed away lonely in her apartment; the Los Angeles police found her body. She was

lying on a canvas camp-bed surrounded by her text works, dressed up, in an empty house without any furniture, but lots of her custom-made dresses, and a final note: “I will take wind and leave. Do not let people touch my body and send to cremation immediately, spread my dust into a remote area with no inhabitants; give all of my possessions to Mr. Song Qi.”

HF Were you ever tempted to paint or draw yourself as Eileen? Do you ever draw yourself?

ETW *Reflection Papers* could be a good example of me drawing myself onto Eileen’s portrait—like she is writing those texts, but I am the one holding the pen and controlling the ink, via the video piece. I took her writing out of context (her novels and essays), and then Eileen is drawn by my self-invented “comments” on those selected texts.

Right - *Two Sights of the Elegant Mysterious Unearthly Princess Kaguya & Her Beggarly Nurtured Aristocratic Life Before She Flies Away With A Shining Ship*, 2015, performance at Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, 2015. Courtesy: the artist and Galerie Fons Welters, Amsterdam. Photo: Ernst van Deursen

Opposite - *Reflection Paper No. 5* (still), 2013. Courtesy: the artist and Galerie Fons Welters, Amsterdam



For example, in the way I speeded up the voice-over to describe the golden eggs smashed into a golden basin in *Reflection Paper No. 1*, I tried to desynchronize the relationship between image and voice, and found myself there.

HF Let's talk about Princess Kaguya, the main inspiration for—and one could say, central protagonist of—your diptych film *Forest, a Man, a Baby & Aristocratic Life* (2015) and its performance counterpart that premiered at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, *Two Sights of the Elegant Mysterious Unearthly Princess Kaguya & Her Beggarly Nurtured Aristocratic Life Before She Flies Away with a Shining Ship* (2015). Both works are based on the Japanese tenth-century fairy tale of the bamboo cutter. Kaguya is the most beautiful princess, an alien, a feminist, and an adopted daughter of an ordinary woodcutter. Tell me about her.



ETW

The tale of the bamboo cutter is a Japanese *monogatari*, or fictional epic prose narrative. It is considered the oldest existing Japanese prose narrative; the oldest known manuscript dates to 1592. Based on this story, there are many films and theater plays relating to Kaguya's life.

First of all, she is not a human, but she tried to be. When she finally understood human beings, she suffered from the gap between being an alien and being a normal human on the Earth—although she was very beautiful. She also struggled with herself in that one day she would leave this earth and go back to where she came from, in space. Although we don't



know why she needs go back to the moon (the UFO comes and picks her up in Kyoto's palace), and there are no religious questions. Her existence is equivocal! In my two video pieces, which were used as a "wall screen" during the performance, I dig into her equivocal character, and use it as a parallel description.

Second, I am not sure if this story was written in ancient classical Japanese. The long distance of a language flowing in time, between contemporary interpretation and gossip of old times, gives us a wide space to dream about her. Kaguya has her own language, her way of facing concrete life challenges. She built up new meaning for a life, with its special aesthetics, and fabricated a new way of expressing herself. She didn't even need to learn an instrument but could play it immediately, she was so concentrated and so strong. I wish she will be able to see my performance and this video work if she comes back from the moon again.

HF What would she say?

ETW She might sound like the wind and say: "Evelyn, you are slightly mean, and your interpretation is shoddy, because that is you—you never feel grounded in reality, in real life!"

HF You appear in the film *Forest, a Man, a Baby & Aristocratic Life* as an ambiguous, mysterious figure that somehow mediates the space between Kaguya as a fictional character and you as, well, an existing character. Why did you choose to do this?

ETW The two short films describing Kaguya's subconscious world can be seen as independent video works or used for the performance. In *Forest, a Man, a Baby & Aristocratic Life*, based on the part of the story when the poor bamboo cutter found the Kaguya baby in the forest, I acted as a mysterious woman ghost standing by the lake and the black forest. That moment when the bamboo cutter saw her and touched her, sensitively, in a nostalgic mood, he felt like he had met her before, somewhere in an old memory, but not really. It is not a scene of "in reality." Unlike the original story, it can be reversed, like I thought it was Kaguya who found him, not him finding Kaguya. She is an alien, but she knows what she is doing and what she is going to plan—get a man, get a father, to find a reason to come to this mortal world. I could act her because I mixed it into my own background. So this scene is not mysterious at all but actually very down-to-Earth!

I think I play the cultural reference between Asian and Western. It was not a bamboo forest but the Black Forest where we filmed, where many fairy tales and philosophical theories come from. It is not a Japanese man but a blond Dutch actor. Kaguya remains forever an Asian woman—me, as an Asian woman living and working in the Western world, being dropped by a UFO sent from the moon,



Summer, 2017, Four Season of Women Tragedy installation view at Galerie Fons Welters, Amsterdam, 2017.
Courtesy: the artist and Galerie Fons Welters, Amsterdam. Photo: Gert Jan van Rooij

looking passive and spaced-out. Maybe it is her pretentiousness of being elegant and moderate. A masculine dominated Western rational man could find her and reach her with his passions, and then he found the Kaguya alien baby. This scene and my role in it has sexual, sensual suggestions.

HF A group of works assembled under the title *Massage Parlor* (2016) reflects further on your position as a Chinese woman living in a European context. At that time, you were working in a massage parlor in Amsterdam to make a living, but simultaneously exploring the parlor as a site where many paths, desires, and people intersect. Both a deeply personal piece as well as a more general reference to the status of migrant workers in the wellness industry,



Massage Parlor, 2016, Dorothea von Stetten-Kunstpreis installation view at Kunstmuseum Bonn, 2016. Courtesy: the artist and Galerie Fons Welters, Amsterdam. Photo: David Ertl

Massage Parlor included massage tables and room dividers, drawings, and a performance in which you provided massages to “customers” of the Kunstmuseum Bonn in Germany, where the work was first exhibited. How personal was this work for you? And how did conversations with your coworkers and encounters with clients inform the piece?

ETW

It is a very personal work for me; it was part of my life. I don’t see being personal as dangerous or even taboo for doing art. This project draws on many “diaries,” for instance what I heard from my massage colleagues—about the customers, the interior design of the salon, the weather, income, and so on. They are all young and poor and powerless Chinese women who search for a better life in Holland. The language and style of my diary were pretty much influenced again by Eileen Chang’s writing style.

For *Massage Parlor*, conversations between my colleagues and their clients are the primary material, which offers references and inspirations for the related drawings, the paintings, and those curtain installations. The titles of the drawings are directly taken from conversations, such as *A Hong Kong-Dutch Client Licking My Arm during the Massage Treatment*. Those conversations were hollow, shallow, trashy, and sexual, but speak about the immigrant’s gender issues as a woman or a transgender. They reveal and at the same time hide the truth, which resides in personal problems and social problems, in intimacy and in a public space. When the “clients” were lying inside the curtain-bed, they asked me the same questions as those clients in the red light district in Amsterdam: money, where I come from, if I will provide sexual services for them, do I love to receive tips, why do I do art, et cetera. Those conversations, recalling my original massage diaries, were written down on rice paper and glued onto the backside of each painting I showed in this re-created massage salon. No one can read them because you can’t see them.

I also wanted to create an economy. The Kunstmuseum Bonn provided me a budget and an artist fee, so they are “the money.” I used them transparently, turning the art museum into a massage business site. What we earned inside there (including tips!) by giving massages to our curator friends, to art friends, to family, to academic professors, to museum worker guides, we gave back to the art museum. I signed an agreement with Kunstmuseum Bonn to rent

the room, and it worked exactly like any massage parlor business, except it was in the special real estate of the museum. The labor relationship between artist and art institution is often not so clear on the money issue. Eileen Chang said: “To sell your beautiful intellectual thoughts to people is not so much different from those who sell their labor, and their body.” So this parlor of Kunstmuseum Bonn became a middle space connecting the intellectual meaning of doing art/performance and the lower social labor of earning money. We are in the same boat!

HF The paintings that you refer to, on the backs of which you attached the transcripts of the conversations with clients, are reproduced images of antique Greek vases. Can you talk about how the Greek vase entered that space of the massage parlor?

ETW The Greek vase paintings were based on the real interior design of the massage parlor I worked at in Amsterdam. My boss decorated her own store with those trashy vase paintings that she bought from IKEA. She said: “They are Europe things, they are art! They are about the beauty of naked bodies, we are ashamed about it! And massage is also an art of naked bodies. We need those paintings for decorating our business! Bring money to me!” That was her personal understanding of Greek art and the body reator-business.

Not only you, but almost everyone was asking why those paintings were hung there. There was a condition before we answered your question. Every client had to fill out a questionnaire before they could have a massage treatment: “Do you think a massage will relax your body? If so, can it also relax your history?” or “Do you

Evelyn Taocheng Wang (1981, Chengdu, China) lives and works in Rotterdam. She studied classical painting in China, continued her education at the Städelschule, Frankfurt and was resident artist at De Ateliers, Amsterdam (2012-2014). In 2016 she received De Volkskrant Beeldende Kunst Prijs as well as the Dorothea von Stetten Art Award. Recent solo exhibitions include: Frans Hals Museum | De Hallen Haarlem, Carlos|Ishikawa, London, Chateau Shatto, Los Angeles, Tale of a Tub, Rotterdam, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam (performance). Selection of group exhibitions: ICA, London; Kunstmuseum Bonn; Manifesta 11, Zurich; The Kitchen, New York; Greene Naftali, New York; De Hallen Haarlem; The 9th Shanghai Biennale, Shanghai; Galerie Fons Welters, Amsterdam. Wang’s work is part of collections of: ABN AMRO; Bonnefanten Museum, Maastricht; Stedelijk Museum Schiedam; Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam.

think what we are doing now, specially inside the art museum, is a performance? If not, do you think a straightforward massage business could be run inside an art museum?”

Greek vase paintings are based on the perfect human body. I vanished those bodies while I was making them, to invite real bodies into the space where they are hung. We see it clearly here that we are imperfect, we are human, we have emotions, we can do trashy things, we have dreams, we need money, we are tourists in this mortal world. Our sadness, our love, our cultures, and heavy, funny, dark individual stories are told through the process of massage. I hope it can relax your history. If ancient Greek was such a perfect concept of art, I do hope the massage parlor looks like a ruin.

HF Let’s turn to Virginia Woolf, who has a presence in your latest body of work, *Four Season of Women Tragedy* (2017), recently acquired by the Art Institute of Chicago. In this series of large-scale drawings, photographs, sculptures and agnès b dresses you create metaphors for female life and the tragedies that occur in small and seemingly fleeting moments rather than grand gestures. How did Virginia Woolf and her writing come into *Four Season of Women Tragedy*? I would suggest that Eileen Chang and Princess Kaguya appear almost as avatars in previous works; does Woolf “manifest” in a similar way?

ETW My English is still poor. You can imagine how difficult it is for me to read Woolf’s work, because my British friends say that even for them it is difficult to understand. But I did, I used an English dictionary. I would read a page, then try to figure it out and also remember what I had just read, then I wrote down the English words on paper and tried to remember them, like a high school student. I have read *To the Lighthouse* (1927). This book gave lots of inspiration for preparing and working on *Four Season of Women Tragedy*.

Woolf’s language is very poetic, sharp, and suggestive; it has many undercurrent structures, like collages of subconscious patterns from people’s minds. Her mode of storytelling is very feminine. *To the Lighthouse* focuses on the parent-kid relationship between painter Lily and Mrs. Ramsay. Lily is stuck and struggles with her own identity between parents. It mentions war, which destroys everything, including time. Lily finds herself through painting in the end. The theme of this book—almost all of Woolf’s books—is sad, remote, desolate, and tragic.

Virginia Woolf is my idol. She didn’t eat food—she always found some reason not to eat—she tried to kill herself, she was very strong, and isolated, she wrote *Orlando* (1928), which says sex can change! Her mind was intellectual and very sharp, her style of dressing up was very good! For this exhibition I used my own clothes, from the brand agnès b. There is a specific reason. Our era is way more trashy than Woolf’s time or Chang’s era, but maybe more free? They all were wearing clothes, I dare to say, very similar to agnès b. Perhaps it is my own fantasy or not. That’s why I said I am not a fashion person, because I only love agnès b designs. They seem to retain the mood of a kind of old European bourgeois chic style, very feminine. Maybe that is why the brand is so famous in Asia, especially Japan, because it is beautiful. It fulfills my own dream of being a skinny middle-upper-class woman and being intellectual in my own head. (Such classy women can be very trashy nowadays too, so I don’t see them as women in my head). Eileen Chang once said: “I do not like muscular woman. Men have more freedom and power than women, but if I choose, and only because men cannot wear nice dresses and various design of skirts, I would not like to being a man!” I think this phrase fits into *Four Season of Women Tragedy* too. Woolf, Chang, Kaguya are all there, they are there with me all the time!

HF The agnès b dresses, once worn by you, return in the drawings as clothing for the depicted female figures. How do they serve as connections—or interlocutors, if you will—between physical materiality and representation, between real life and fiction?

ETW For this body of work, I showed my own dresses and I made big drawings based on short tragic stories told by my female friends. I put the dresses on the ground, close to the drawings, so people will see that the dresses are actually in the drawings. They might want to touch the dress and touch the drawing with their own hand instead of watching them. I think these elements create an environment where our subconscious could swim in



Save my baby first, 2017, *Four Season of Women Tragedy* installation view at Galerie Fons Welters, Amsterdam, 2017. Courtesy: the artist and Galerie Fons Welters, Amsterdam. Photo: Gert Jan van Rooij



Jogging on Rotterdam Harbour, 2017, *Four Season of Women Tragedy* installation view at Galerie Fons Welters, Amsterdam, 2017. Courtesy: the artist and Galerie Fons Welters, Amsterdam. Photo: Gert Jan van Rooij

those narratives and see those related objects. Like when I read Virginia Woolf's book. There is a circulation inside of her words. Those female figures in the drawings are created as embodiments of women; they are my references and the results of my research on how to be a woman. Then I needed narratives to support those figures. I collected stories from female friends on Facebook and Instagram. And those stories are really "the connections." They are very personal and private. For example, my Chinese female friend sent me the old classical fairy tale "White Snake," and I used it as a theme in my drawing *Save My Baby First!*

Another one is less romantic and the morality is low: *A Horrible Daily Mail News with Summer Dress* (2017). My transwoman friend Yu-ka sent me a link from the *Daily Mail* that showed a picture of a woman's head steamed and resting on a golden classical Russian-style plate and decorated with cooked oranges and white goat cheese. There was another female hand touching it. The picture was taken in 2006. Next day the *Daily Mail* deleted this horrible picture for no reason. It refers to a real news story about a Russian cannibal family, a young military man who worked for an officers' pilot school and his wife. One day, a local cleaner found a cellphone while he was working and opened it, and he saw a picture of the young man biting a woman's hand. This cleaner called the local police. The cannibal family's neighbor told the policeman said that they were a very nice, happy couple, teaching students, ordinary and healthy. That steamed female head in the photo belonged to a woman who had an affair with this cannibal husband. They found each other on Tinder, then he and his wife killed her and cooked her after they had sex.



Four Season of Women Tragedy installation view at Galerie Fons Welters, Amsterdam, 2017. Courtesy: the artist and Galerie Fons Welters, Amsterdam. Photo: Gert Jan van Rooij

Hendrik Folkerts, recently appointed the new Dittmer Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at the Art Institute of Chicago, was curator at documenta 14 (Athens, April 8-July 16 / Kassel, June 10-September 17, 2017) from 2014 until 2017. With a focus on performance and scores, indigenous practices and Southeast Asian & Pacific art, he curated a larger number of new artist commissions and together with the team led by artistic director Adam Szymczyk, was responsible for the exhibition in Athens and Kassel. Prior to this, Folkerts was Curator of Performance, Film, and Discursive Programs at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam (2010 until 2015). He studied art history at the University of Amsterdam, specializing in contemporary art and theory, feminist practices, and performance. From 2009 to 2011, Folkerts was coordinator of the Curatorial Program at de Appel Arts Centre in Amsterdam. His texts have been published in journals and magazines such as *Artforum International*, *South as a State of Mind*, *Mousse*, *The Exhibitionist*, *Metropolis M*, *Art & the Public Sphere* and in various catalogues. Folkerts is coeditor of *The Shadowfiles #3: Curatorial Education* (2013), *Facing Forward: Art & Theory from a Future Perspective* (2014) and the journal *Stedelijk Studies #3: The Place of Performance* (2015).

