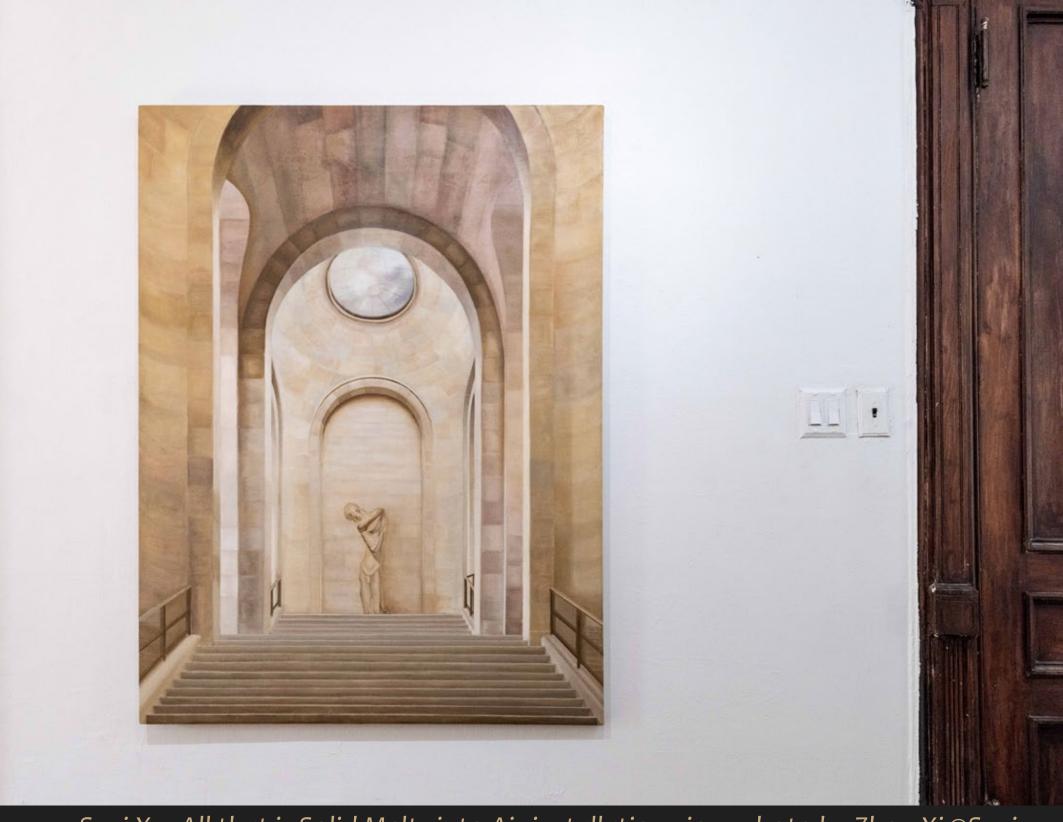
Planet China



Suyi Xu

Meditations on the Connection between Emotions and Architecture





Suyi Xu: All that is Solid Melts into Air installation view, photo by Zhou Xi ©Suyi Xu, Courtesy of Fou Gallery

with the role of investigating New York, 2022).

uyi Xu is a painter living and and modelling everything, un-Dworking in Brooklyn, New derlining with these the drama York. She received her B.A. of reality. In her artworks, the in Art History and Visual Arts strokes of colour evoke the from Barnard College in New accumulation over time, in its York and her M.F.A. in the Fine state of transitory but perma-Arts Department of School of nent moment. Furthermore, Visual Arts (New York) in 2022. in her paintings, architecture Xu's paintings are méditations has a bodily présence. Xu has on space, interiors, and archi- participated in several exhibitecture that evolve into color tions in commercial galleries field meditations. She paints and non-profit organizations through speculation and in- in the U.S. and Europe, includward thinking rather than di- ing group shows at New Colrect observation by incorpo- lectors Gallery (London, 2021), rating historical references Boomer Gallery (London, 2021) and idiosyncratic symbolic el- and A.I.R. Gallery (New York, ements. The painter observes 2021). Her first solo exhibition the nature of light and shadow in New York was All that is Soland entrusts colour contrasts id Melts into Air (Fou Gallery,



Could you please tell us a little bit about yourself? How did you become interested in painting? Who have you looked up to as a person and an artist?

My art education was a mismatch of things. I was submerged in the language of historical painting but see through the eyes of a formalist. The most influential class in college was on Postmodernism. My work embraces these influences—the idealism of historical tradition, the formal consciousness of the pictorial plane, and the pastiche of contemporaneity. I do not have a certain artist that could be a staple for who I am now. There are a lot of past spirits that live inside of me. Everything I made is both a homage and a critique of the ones that came before. Occasionally I get excited by a contemporary painter and it drove me into the studio instantly.

When did you get started? What were the most difficult challenges?

I came to painting late in college, and started to take painting seriously during grad school. Painting is one of the rare things that comes naturally. The experience of painting itself is easy compared to everything else one has to deal with to be an artist.

In Suyi Xu's paintings punctual and intense attention to grasp-

ing the visible data and not trying to create idealisation or transfiguration of reality was highlighted. Her painting has an intimate adherence to the reality she interprets, without imposing her vision, since her creative energies are inclined to reveal the eternal that

to reveal the eternal that adapts: she realistically paints light, but directs it where she wants, on particulars or details.

What does being a painter mean to you?

Below is a list of persona I found in painters from experience and observation. A mystic. A cynic. A scientist. A poet. An exhibitionist. A hermit. A hedonist. A stoic. An egotist. A humanist.

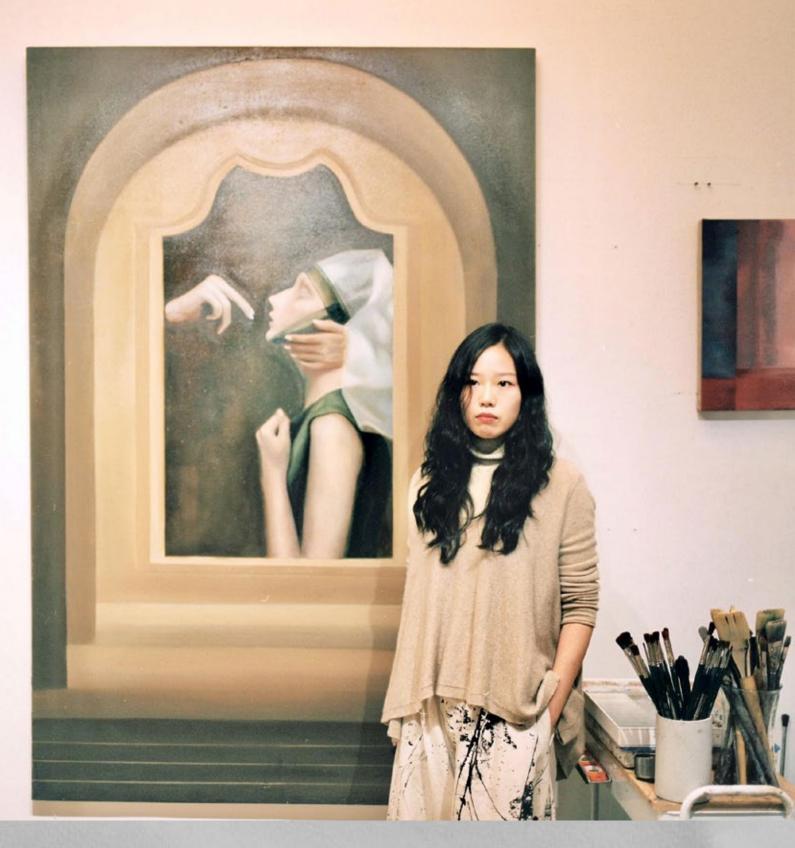
How long does it take you to complete one of your paintings, from concept to finished canvas?

It varies from days to months. Every painting carries the memory and knowledge from the one before. I often start a new painting just to resolve the problems from the last one, instead of fixing them directly. Gradually my work become a algorithmic loop that present different solutions



Suyi Xu, A Woman under the Influence, 2021. Oil on canvas, 72x48 inches ©Suyi Xu, Photograph by Xi Zhou, courtesy of Fou Gallery





Xu Suyi at Studio (New York), photograph by Meiko Gao.

to a recursive visual problem. The boundaries between concept and completion are often blurred. The initial idea could be simmering for months before I execute them in paint.

What, in your painting, best focuses your artistic personality? What messages would you like to be read? What impression do you try to arouse in those who look at your paintings?

Every picture has an internal distance from the audience. Some comes to you, some you have to go out of your way to meet it. Right

Her paintings lead the viewers in a recursive algorithm.
The repetitions evoke the cycles and loops of life, where there are elements of vulnerability, humanity, and universality. It creates new perspectives and energy by uniting disjointed realities in spaces, architectures, and interiors that deny time.





now I'm playing with this idea of distance. I have always believed in the power of absence over presence, like T.S. Eliot's darkened room (prepared for all the things said and left unsaid). I could never dictate the impression aroused in the viewers. I hope, when people stand in front of my painting, they can feel the density of my decisions and the passage of time summed up in one moment.

Suyi Xu: All that is Solid Melts into Air installation view, photo by Zhou Xi ©Suyi Xu, Courtesy of Fou Gallery

"My subjects are responses to the spiritual crisis of contemporary existence, and my method a visceral engagement with the painting medium driven by the idea of a sacred intent."

- Suyi Xu



idea behind it?

The geometric form lends itself paint it. onto the canvas. They are also deobserved in her diary that one can pandemic's outbreak? "Look at, it vanished." But look working? elsewhere—"the ceiling, the walkers in the park, the cheaper beats Among the cities I've lived in, no the sun.

with the colors you use?

for over-blending colors by paint- creating is my way of resistance.

Some of the elements that enrich ing teachers. "You're killing the your paintings recall profound paint." It took me several false exaspects of emotional reality set periments to return to my voice. in precise architectural environ- Now I'm not only killing the paint, ments. Can you tell us how this but also drowning it, fainting it, combination was born and the thinning it into non-existence. The difference between color transitions are so sneakily faint that you I paint architectures because they almost need to hold your breath are more forgiving than people. to see it. That's how I feel when I

ceptively neutral and reserved, giv- How much has New York changed ing me more freedom to project since you first arrived? How has myself onto them. Virginia Woolf life changed for Asians since the not write directly about the soul. affect your way of creating and

in the zoom, and the soul slips in." other place inspires the sentimen-The soul also slips in the afternoon, talization of experience more so when I look at the ascending stair- than New York. The threats to case, the arch of a hallway, and the day-to-day existence is glorified in grey area at a white wall struck by the "spirit and "toughness" of the city. The persistent tension of race and class is veiled by the roman-What relationship do you have ticism of narrative-making. Since the pandemic outbreak, waves of violence have been committed I am very attracted to Duchamp's against people that look like me. idea of "infrathin." I understand it To be in new york, one has to disas a sensitivity to the most minute sociate, compress pain. If all these shades of difference. My colors things have warped my sense of operate within the language of in-being a human, I make up in the frathin. When I first started paint- studio, where I practice paying ing my instinct was to smooth attention, being present, giving every color to achieve an impec- shapes to thoughts and forms to cable flat surface. I was criticized feelings. My way of working and