

YaYa Yajie Liang Artist Biography

YaYa Yajie Liang's painting practice revolves around the continuous metamorphosis of the body and the transformation of perception, seeking to establish a form of symbiotic alliance with nonhuman lifeforms and inanimate matter. Through phenomenological encounters with materials, landscapes, and diverse organisms, she approaches the body as an open, perceptual field of transformation rather than a fixed, enclosed human subject.

Her practice is informed by Roger Caillois's theory of mimicry, though in Liang's context, mimicry is not seen as disguise or evasion, but as an outward-facing sensory act—where the self, when drawn into contact with otherness, becomes permeable and morphologically altered. In her paintings, mimicry is not a replication of representation, but a becoming force: a dynamic interplay between body and nonhuman entities. Through the continual shifting and dissolving of form, mimicry becomes a pathway toward symbiosis and de-bordering.

For Liang, painting is a living organism. Colours and forms collide, overlap, and unfold across the canvas, generating unclassifiable figures within uncertainty. These ambiguous presences do not seek recognition but exist in a fluid state, inviting the viewer into a maze where distinctions between self and environment dissolve. Informed by Agential Realism and Queer Ecology, Liang resists centralized control in her practice, emphasizing the agency and guidance of matter in the painting process. She refers to this as the “third hand”—a force beyond conscious intention, transforming her role from controller to perceiver.

Her works often emerge from embodied experiences—wandering, gazing, and touching the natural world. From fossilised marine life beneath the White Cliffs to the hidden mycelial networks of the forest floor, these nonhuman scales of time and structure are transposed into her paintings' rhythmic flows and layered complexity. In her view, lifeforms do not exist in isolation; the human body is a geological composite of multiple nonhuman agencies, sedimented, metamorphosed, and reshaped across deep time. Within this co-creative field, the canvas ceases to be a passive surface and becomes an ecological site—painting itself a metamorphic experiment between body and material.

YaYa Yajie Liang (b. 1995, Henan, China.) lives and works in London, where she is currently pursuing her PhD research in Painting at the Royal College of Art. Liang received an MA in Painting from the Royal College of Art, and a BA in Fine Art from China Central Academy of Fine Arts. Her recent solo exhibitions included *I'm similar, not similar to something, but just similar* at Galerie Kandlhofer, Vienna, AT (2024); *Particles Maze* at Lyles & King, New York, NY (2024); *Summer Palace*, curated by Kat Saperia at Cob Gallery, London, UK (2023). Recent selected group shows include *Tomorrow is Already Behind Us*, Lyles & King, New York, NY (2025); *Embodied Forms: Painting Now*, Thaddaeus Ropac, London, UK (2024); *Dante's Inferno*, Unit, London, UK (2024); *The Dance*, Luce Gallery, Turin, IT (2023); *Sweet Spot*, BLANK Gallery, Shanghai, CH (2023); *Universe 25*, Gillian Jason Gallery, London, UK (2023); *Wilderness of Being*, HdM Gallery, London, UK (2022); *Machines of Desire*, Simon Lee Gallery, London, UK (2022); *Beacon*, Josh Lilly's Gallery, London, UK (2020), among others. Liang has been shortlisted for The Waverton Art Prize in 2022. She has taken part in residency at Vannucci Artist Residency, Umbria, IT in 2022.