



Yun-Fei Ji, *Leaves with Holes*, 2023, Oil on canvas, 27 x 30 in. (68.7 x 76.2 cm).

Yun-Fei Ji

From One Place to Another

48 WALKER ST | MAY 11 – JUN 15, 2024

James Cohan is pleased to present *From One Place to Another*, an exhibition of new paintings by Yun-Fei Ji, on view from May 11 - June 15, 2024. This is the artist's sixth solo exhibition with the gallery. The gallery will host a conversation with the artist and poet, critic, and curator John Yau on Saturday, May 11 at 3 PM, followed by an opening reception from 4-6 PM.

From One Place to Another features oil paintings and acrylic on paper studies that chart a material exploration for the artist while expanding upon his longstanding interest in issues of migration and labor, both in the US and China. Ji brings a poetic visual sensibility to his depictions of the lived realities of communities and individuals often absent from mainstream narratives of China's development. Each composition is an act of resistance against erasure grounded in the artist's profound empathy for his subjects.

Ji's paintings unfold episodic vignettes populated by figures and objects enmeshed within the painting conditions that suspend them. These interlocking compositional arrangements, which impose a flattened, vertically stacked perspective on scenes of migration and displacement, are rendered with subtle tonal variations that cast the aesthetics of the ordinary into an imaginative space of possibility. The artist's application of complex, varied perspectival strategies within a single painting draws the eye of the viewer on a meandering path through each work, an invitation to slow looking and sustained contemplation in an era defined by an immediacy of image consumption.

In these works, Ji paints landscapes and interior spaces marked by human presence, yet often absent of figures themselves. When people do appear in these compositions, it is obliquely—their backs to us, depicted in profile and rarely gazing directly at the viewer. Ji builds this sense of inhabited space through the accumulation of everyday objects that together tell the stories of lives lived in motion. Large-scale works like *The Dancing Aunties of Sunset Park*, 2024, and *The Chess Player of Columbus Park*, 2024, are a celebration of the moments of joy and togetherness that immigrant communities have built here in New York City, a tender echo of the artist's own migration journey from China to the United States. In works including *At the Sewing Floor*, 2023, Ji makes visible the unseen labor that powers the machine of capitalism, a potent reminder of the many human hands undergirding the global supply chain.

In a reversal of the colonial gaze of the early Modernists, who often drew upon Chinese painting's stylistic conventions and motifs to depict bourgeois existence, Ji synthesizes the influence of a wide array of European artists with his training in classical Chinese landscape painting. He draws deeply from the well of Western art history to build a painterly language all his own that centers resolutely contemporary migrant stories.

John Yau writes:

“Yun-Fei Ji evokes the continuing migration and reconfiguration of art styles, while also making them into something that is his own. We can think of what French artists absorbed from Japanese woodcuts, the juxtaposition of pattern set against pattern, and how this manifests itself in his work. Ji’s position is that of a sympathetic witness. He understands that many people’s identity is inextricable from the few material possessions they have, and these things help them survive.”

Yun-Fei Ji (b. 1963, Beijing, China) earned his BFA from the Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing, and his MFA from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville in Fayetteville, Arkansas. Prizes and residencies include Yale University Artist-in-Residence (2005), American Academy Prix de Rome Fellowship and Residency (2006), and the Parasol Unit Foundation for Contemporary Art Artist-in-Residence (2007). Major solo exhibitions include *Ji Yun-Fei: Last Days of Village Wen* at the Cleveland Museum of Art; *Yun-Fei Ji: The Intimate Universe* at the Ruth and Elmer Wellin Museum of Art at Hamilton College, which traveled to the Honolulu Museum of Art (2016); and *Yun-Fei Ji: Waterworks* at the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art in Beijing (2013). Ji has been the subject of further solo exhibitions at the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts, Kalamazoo, MI; Paul and Lulu Hilliard Museum of Art, University of Louisiana, Lafayette, LA; University Museum of Contemporary Art, UMASS Amherst, MA; Contemporary Art Museum, St. Louis; Rose Museum at Brandeis University, Waltham; Peeler Art Center, DePauw University, Greencastle; and the Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.

Ji's work has been widely exhibited throughout the United States and Europe, including the 2002 Whitney Biennial, 2011 Lyon Biennale, 2012 Biennale of Sydney, and Prospect.3 New Orleans in 2014. The artist has been the subject of several monographs, including *Yun-Fei Ji: The Intimate Universe* (2016, co-published by Delmonico and the Wellin Museum of Art) and *Yun-Fei Ji: Water Work* (2013, published by UCCA Books). Ji's work is included in the permanent collections of major public institutions including the Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY; Asia Society Museum, New York, NY; Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore; MD; Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, VA; British Museum, London, United Kingdom; Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon, Portugal; Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, PA; Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, OH; Norton Museum of Art, West Palm Beach, FL; Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge, MA; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA; Nasher Museum at Duke University, Durham, NC; Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT, and the Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY. Yun-Fei Ji currently lives and works in New York.

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