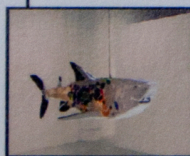


ARTISTS TO LOOK OUT FOR

VOLUME I

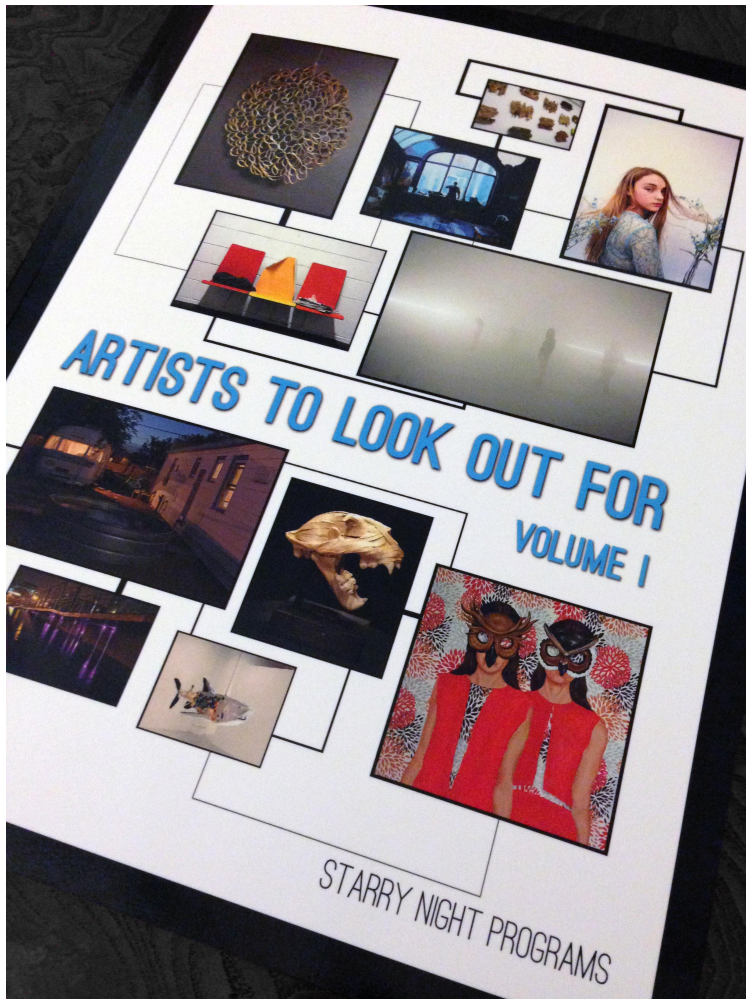


STARRY NIGHT PROGRAMS

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ELEEN LIN

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The Ark, oil and acrylic on canvas, 72" x 84"

THE PAINTINGS DEPICT THE
OBSCURITY OF CULTURAL
BOUNDARIES TODAY AND THE
EMOTIONAL JOURNEY OF NEVER
FINDING GROUND



Paradise Island, oil on canvas, 57.5" x 70"



Chasing Carp, oil and acrylic on canvas, 21" x 24"

As a Third Culture Kid and an inhabitant of non-places of generic cities, the cultural diversity of my nomadic background has shaped the way I look at the world, drifting in between various cultures and traditions, juggled between the East and the West like a touristic outsider undefined by any particular cultural identity.

From roaming through fragments of contemporary space with mixtures of historical ruins and commercial products, the paintings depict the obscurity of cultural boundaries today and the emotional journey of never finding ground. Through artificial settings and man-made islands, the idea of human isolation is constantly illustrated in my works.



**Yale
University**

**2008
MFA**

CATALOGUE of the work of Ahmed
Alsoudani², Bianca Beck¹⁰, Sascha Braunig¹⁸,
Matthew Capezuto²⁶, Lindsey Dorr-Niro³⁴,
Aaron Gilbert⁴², Jorge Gonzalez⁵⁰, Hilary
Irons⁵⁸, Khalif Kelly⁶⁶, Alexis Knowlton⁷⁴,
Andrew Lane⁸², Sarah Lasley⁹⁰, Evan
Levine⁹⁸, I-Ling Eleen Lin¹⁰⁶, Elizabeth
Livensperger¹¹⁴, Vasken Mardikian¹²², Patrick
McElnea¹³⁰, Jason Mones¹³⁸, Mira O'Brien¹⁴⁶,
Wilfredo Ortega¹⁵⁴ and Robert Vanderpool¹⁶²

**School
of Art**

**Painting &
Printmaking**



The texture of the canvas evokes haze, pools of water, or clouds in the wind; the colors blend and mix gently together to form a point of entry into the artwork. The effect is a formal technique in which I-Ling Lin dilutes the paint to create a harsh wash, but it also represents the theoretical construction of her pieces. Lin's figures and landscapes flow smoothly yet incongruously from one to another. Traditional Chinese landscapes glide into South Asian puppets and then into images of modern life. There is fluidity as well as abrupt disjunction. These hybrid cultural signifiers suggest a stream-of-consciousness composition as well as Lin's own background. Growing up in Bangkok, Thailand, in a Taiwanese family and attending college in England, Lin infuses her work with imagery of her memories and travels as well as aspects of transnational identity construction.

Lin's pieces are peppered with snippets of daily life, and to an observer who has never traveled to Bangkok or Taipei, it might be difficult to grasp their full significance. In one of her smaller pieces, depicting a puppet show, *Hand Puppet Theater*, a pair of blue and white flip-flops lie to the side of the puppet stage. During a studio visit, the flip-flops, ubiquitous in Taiwan, seemed to act as Proust's madeleine: the artist and the native-Taiwanese art historian launched into a nostalgic discussion of the sandals' cultural significance. For both, this mass-produced, inexpensive product symbolized life in Southeast Asia. In the same piece, a woman reads from *The Apple Daily*, a popular tabloid in Hong Kong and Taiwan, as the puppet show is performed. The newspaper prevents the woman from experiencing the show but also grounds the work in a particular time and place. These mundane modern objects stand in contrast to the traditional cultural figures that Lin also incorporates in her work.

The image of the puppet plays a large role in Lin's work, specifically figures from Vietnamese water puppetry, which is performed upon a water stage during the floods of the rainy season. The wooden puppets are not particularly ornate or detailed, since they quickly deteriorate from contact with the water. Likewise, in Lin's pieces, the bottom portions of the puppets dissolve into washes of color. This ephemerality appears to symbolize the experience of travel and identity-in-flux. Unlike the references to the everyday and the modern, these puppets as well as other allusions to traditional culture ring touristic. They are fleeting, fragmentary observations of a traveler, whereas the flip-flops, the newspaper, and the aspects of modern life pull the work towards nostalgic memory for a particular place and time.

These conflicts between new and old, home and travel, tradition and the modern unfold on Lin's canvases, revealing not only her own personal experience but also the effects of memory and nostalgia on individual identity. Although the viewer sees references to the artist's own life and to specific times and places, Lin's work also evokes the qualities of remembrance that we all encounter when we construct who we are. Perhaps those constructions are in fact only ephemeral puppets of the reality of self.

by Alexandra Dika
Seggerman & Yu-Hang
Cheng

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