

# ELEEN LIN



*Wu Song Fights Tiger*, 2010, oil in canvas, 22 x 33 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

Please give us a sense of your background — what brought you to this point?

I was born in Taiwan and grew up in Bangkok, Thailand, where I studied at an international school. Later, I went to London for my undergraduate studies, and then to the United States for an MFA at Yale School of Art. My nomadic background has shaped the way I look at the world; drifting between various cultures and traditions, a kind of touristic outsider undefined by any particular identity. As a result, cultural hybridity has been the subject of my work. I decided to stay in New York after my studies; the city serves as new ground for me to search for more conflicting inspirations.

What are you working on at the moment?

I'm currently working on two series of paintings; one that is part of the "Pet" series, which recasts traditional Chinese tales incorporating mystical animals and re-represents the human-animal relationships as they relate to current trends of pet companionship. The second is a series of drawings and paintings around a literal interpretation of a drifter, floating in an unknown water world, surrounded by cultural debris with no ground to set foot on.

What should we know about your practice today that might not be visible in the work?

All of the drawings started off without pre-compositional planning. I begin with a single image or wash of color, and the drawing sprawls out into

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various imageries. The narrative unfolds through the process of making, with the images being mapped out intuitively. Consequently, the sequence of events is arbitrary, but it becomes a more honest depiction of my collective experience and visual journey, illustrating collisions of different cultures, conflicts of perspective, and the mixture of traditions with modern intervention. The drawing therefore becomes a preliminary sketch for scenes that might be later developed into paintings.

I usually work on different pieces at the same time; drawings evoke inspiration in a more automatic mode, documenting travel and movements, while the paintings are more focused on reiterating certain traditional narratives, using symbolism to exhibit a specific context and ideas.

### Who are your influences, your artistic family tree?

I travel between the United States and Asia at least twice a year, and during these trips I find most of my inspiration. The rapid changes and developments in Asia make it a new experience on every visit. And it is in subtle, quirky transformations in social behavior and everyday life that I am most interested.

As for influences from other artists, I am especially attached to figurative painters who combine mysticism with everyday experience, artists who challenge visual complexity and, at the same time, respond to political and social conditions of their time. These artists include old masters such as Hieronymus Bosch and Hogarth; German Expressionists such as Max Beckmann, George Grosz, and Otto Dix; as well as contemporary artists like Paula Rego, Neo Rauch, Nancy Spero, Yun-Fei Ji, Daniel Richter and Raymond Pettibon. In addition to Western art, I am fascinated with perspectives and compositions found in traditional Chinese ink paintings, much of which documents travel.

Eleen Lin (b. 1982, Taipei, Taiwan) holds an M.F.A. in Painting and Printmaking from Yale University School of Art, and a B.A. in Painting from the Slade School of Fine Art, London, UK. Her work has been exhibited at Thierry Goldberg Projects, New York; SaLon Gallery, London; Gwangju Museum of Art, Korea; and Gallery 543m3, Austria, among others. Lin has had solo exhibitions in Taiwan and Thailand. She lives and works in Astoria.

