

Yikui (Coy) Gu

Saying The Quiet Parts Out Loud

April 23 - May 21, 2021

Chinese American Arts Council/ Gallery 456

Gallery 456 is pleased to present Yikui (Coy) Gu's first New York solo exhibit *Saying The Quiet Parts Out Loud*. The fifteen works in this exhibit are all from his series Classic Yellow, made between 2018 to 2021. The mixed media works on paper in Classic Yellow are autobiographical, using the artist and his wife as subject matter. In probing the specificity, both lived and imagined, of their immigrant Chinese-German marriage, universal truths and absurdities are revealed. The spaces between order and chaos, sincerity and irony, or design and chance are explored using visual elements from the internet, pop culture, and art history. The combination of painting, drawing, and collage, alongside materials ranging from chopsticks to bodily fluids, juxtapose against each other, echoing their relationship and serving as a metaphor for it. Through this combination of political, cultural, and domestic imagery, Gu hopes to affirm and subvert the contemporary human condition through a Yellow lens.

Many of the works in this exhibit take a varied approach in terms of materials and aesthetics. In the same piece viewers may find passages classically rendered in charcoal, splashy gestural abstraction, found internet images, and ready-made materials such as the plastic bag for Wonder Bread. Combining such disparate approaches in the same artwork both highlights and subverts his academic training. It reflects the interconnected, pluralistic world today.

Another approach often found in Gu's works is the usage of photographs of electronic devices as a painting surface. A number of works use found internet stock photos of devices such as a smartphone to then be painted on. This creates a conceptual and visual tension as the stock photo is infinitely reproducible, while the painting on its surface is a one-of-one image. The contrast between the crisply photographic, against a painterly image, is Gu's attempt as an artist at processing today's consumption of materials, information, and culture.

About the Artist

Yikui (Coy) Gu was born in Nantong, China and immigrated to the United States at the age of seven, growing up in Albany, NY. He holds an MFA from the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, and a BFA from Long Island University.

He has exhibited his work nationally in New York, Miami, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., Boston, and St. Louis; and internationally in London, Berlin, and Siena, Italy. He has been an artist in residence at the School of Visual Arts and the Asian American Arts Alliance. He has been reviewed in the Washington Post, KunstForum International, the Philadelphia Inquirer, and

the Yale Daily News. His work has appeared on the cover of the *Lower East Side Review*, and in *Fresh Paint* and *Art Maze*. His work is held in the permanent collections of Wheaton College, the Siena Art Institute, Camden County College, and numerous private collections.

He resides in Philadelphia and teaches as Associate Professor of Art at the College of Southern Maryland. In his time off he enjoys traveling, Belgian beers, and keeping up to date as a sneakerhead. The bulk of his time, however, is spent in the studio where he is currently plotting his takeover of the international art world, while remaining mostly harmless.

Opening Reception: Friday, April 23, 2021, 6 - 8pm