

# HYPERALLERGIC

"Guimi You Finds the Poetic Possibilities of Paint"

By Alex Paik

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Guimi You, "Still Books" (2023), oil on linen, 79 7/8 x 65 inches (all photos Alex Paik/Hyperallergic)

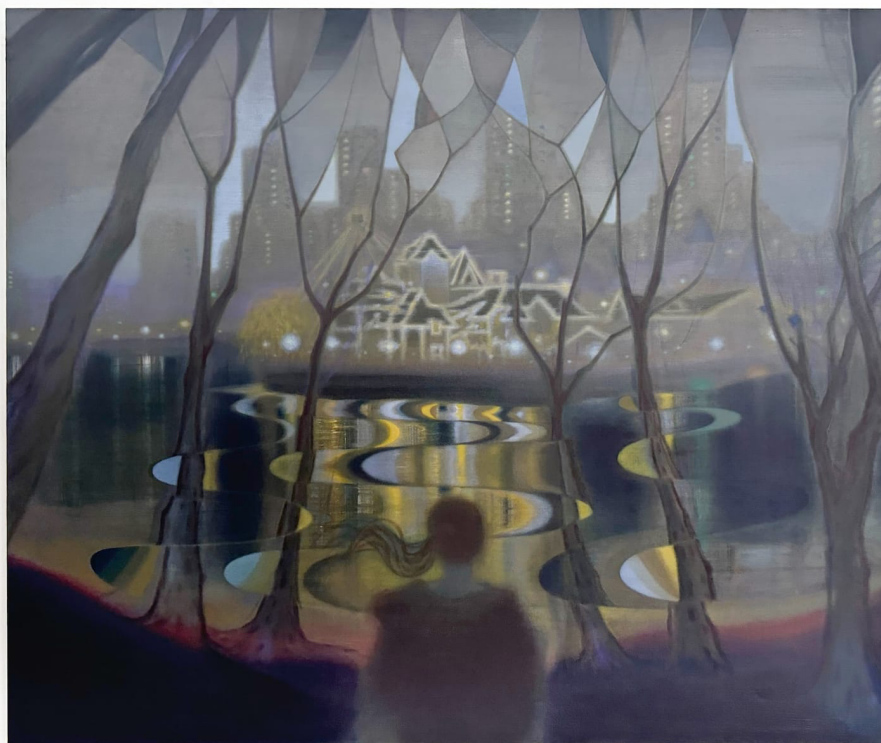
Your paintings exude a sense of sweet, childlike wonder, where each moment is filled with possibility.

LOS ANGELES — Guimi You is quickly becoming one of my favorite contemporary figurative painters. Trained in both traditional Korean and Western techniques, her work is a unique synthesis that combines elements and influences from Symbolist and Surrealist art, Korean landscape painting, and even children's book illustrations. Her solo show at Make Room, entitled *Winter Blossom*, features eight new works that sprinkle moments of transformation and poetic possibility into everyday scenes.

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One of the most fascinating aspects of You's art is her color sensibility. The Western influence is evident in her use of highly mixed colors and passages of slight temperature and value shifts, as in "Magic Island" (2023). A Korean approach to color that is more symbolic manifests visually as highly saturated and contrasting hues placed next to each other (in the traditional Korean palette, each color represents a different element or cardinal direction). For example, the spines of the books in "Still Books" (2023) and the bottom half of "Orange Studio" (2023) recall the vibrant color combinations of traditional Korean *hanbok* and *bojagi*.



Guimi You, "Magic Island" (2023), oil on linen, 70 7/8 x 59 inches

The artist often uses the edges of the canvas or a structural element within the image to build out the rest of each piece. The entire composition of "Blessed Blossom" (2023) riffs on the angle created by a painting leaning in the foreground against the left edge of the picture plane. In "Still Books" the table and stack of books form an L shape that runs along the edge of the canvas, while the curtain that bisects it mimics the shape of the trees. You's paintings are filled with visual rhymes and echoes like these.

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Viewing *Winter Blossom* feels like entering the artist's private daydreams. In "Sketch in the Cafe" (2023) it appears as if You has just looked up from drawing at a coffee shop. The table in the foreground is tipped forward à la Cezanne, and as we follow the floor tiles into the background, they transform, along with the perspective, into an entirely different painting, from a fuller palette that includes flesh tones, browns, and reds, into a dreamy, minty blue monochrome.

These carefully constructed works remind me of the magical realism found in children's book illustrations. They exude a sense of sweet, childlike wonder, where each moment is filled with possibility, and remind us that plenty of beauty and magic can be found in even the most mundane moments.



Guimi You, "Sketch in the Cafe" (2023), oil on linen, 76 x 57 1/8 inches

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Guimi You, "Spring in the Forest" (2023), oil on linen, 76 x 57 1/8 inches



Guimi You, "Blessed Blossom" (2023), oil on linen, 48 x 41 3/4 inches

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Guimi You, "Orange Studio" (2023), oil on linen, 63 7/8 x 51 1/4 inches



Guimi You, "Sunset in California" (2022), oil on linen, 80 x 66 inches

Guimi You: Winter Blossom continues at Make Room (6361 Waring Ave, Hollywood, Los Angeles) through December 2. The exhibition was organized by the gallery.

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