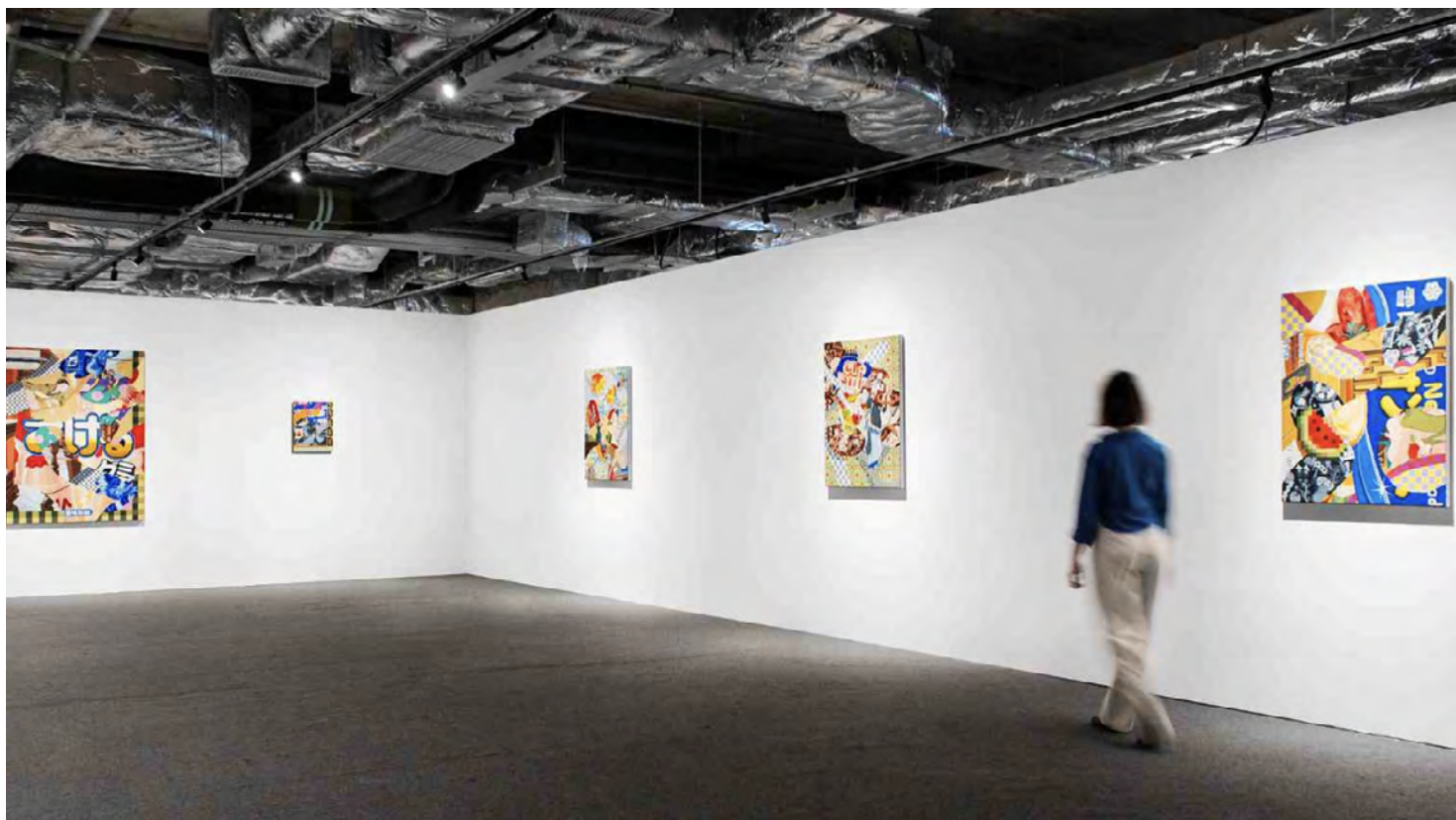


Artazine.

The impossibility of focus in Ziping Wang's

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Chinese artist Ziping Wang captures the sensory overload of the digital age
in her kaleidoscopic paintings.



At first glance, Ziping Wang's paintings confound and overwhelm. Her new exhibition, "Traces of Love and Timeless Adventure," offers a mishmash of unrelated visuals with no identifiable focal point: nostalgic snack packages, classical Chinese figures, and colorful geometric patterns all fight for space on the canvases. Yet this rush of stimuli speaks to the heart of Wang's artistic practice, which takes a sharp look at the human experience of content consumption in the digital era.

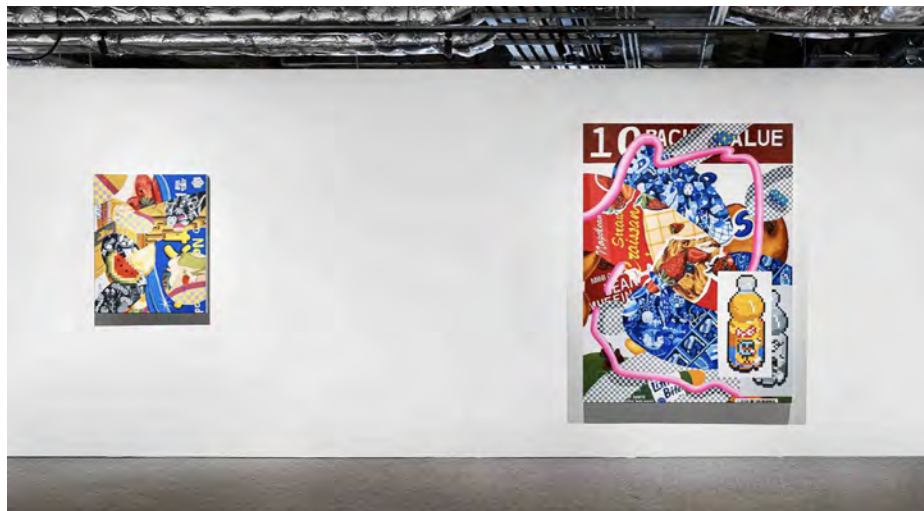
Without directly referencing any websites or social media apps, Wang's art easily conveys the claustrophobia of an "attention economy," the social phenomenon in which information overload decreases our ability to focus on any particular topic. Interspersed with logos and product designs of popular brands such as Nissin cup noodles, Calbee potato chips, and Chupa Chups lollipops, each artwork mimics the endless loop of advertisements we sift through in the form of pop-ups, notifications, reels, photos, and refreshing feeds.

Presented by Galerie Marguo, "Traces of Love and Timeless Adventure" marks Wang's first solo exhibition in Hong Kong — a fitting theme, given the city's global reputation as a consumer capital. While oil paintings are predominantly featured, the exhibition also includes ink drawings and the artist's debut stainless steel sculpture, tbc.

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In some way, the hodgepodge of elements is reflective of Wang’s multicultural artistic identity. Born in 1995 in Shenyang, China as the daughter of a professional artist, Wang pursued her arts education in the United States, earning a BFA at the Rhode Island School of Design followed by an MFA at the Pratt Institute. Now based in her home city, the young artist has embarked on a number of shows in Seoul, London, New York, and Houston, as well as Shenyang and Beijing.

Wang speaks with Artazine on the seeds of thought that sparked her career and her latest exhibition.



What inspired you to embark on an artist’s career?

Growing up, I always felt the urge to express myself. As an introvert, I found that the most comfortable way to connect with the outside world was to express myself through art. I enjoyed drawing on textbooks and illustrating stories written by my friends. I was definitely the “art kid” in my class!

Would you describe your paintings as collages? How do you plan each artwork — is there a theme, motif, or object to which the other images respond?

While my paintings are a mixture of various things, I personally don’t see them as collages, but rather as abstract paintings. Each element is taken out of its original context and exists on the canvas merely as fragments or motifs. I focus more on the relationship between shapes, lines, and colors, all of which are related in the realm of abstract painting.

However, when I start the sketching process, I create collages to quickly generate different compositions. So I guess collages are part of my practice. I purposefully leave some empty space in the original sketches for improvising in the painting process.

How do you ensure each element stands independently while maintaining a balance in the composition, without having one object as the focal point?

Actually, it’s quite instinctive. I’m always looking at the bigger picture when I design an artwork, making sure objects are emphasized or are scaled back enough to avoid anything being overshadowed. If a certain element is too dominant (for example, a snack package), I have a tendency to move it out of the center or break it up into pieces, and perhaps remove the most recognizable parts.

Your artwork titles are often whimsical, yet often with a hint of tongue-in-cheek humor (e.g. Tutorials

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of becoming a tree) or intimacy (e.g. *Missing the smell of your skin*; I don't understand the concept of regret). Tell us more about these titles. Are there any personal stories behind them?

The titles are random! I don't have a name in mind when I decide to create a painting, but I do have this notebook that contains all painting titles. After I finish preparing for an exhibition, I will spend some time in my studio, look at each painting as if I've never seen them before, and pair the painting with a title from the notebook. The selection is not based on image appropriation, but chosen to purposely mislead the viewer, so that it adds another layer of fragmented information.



Along with a mix of inspirations, your paintings reflect a variety of artistic styles, such as Chinese classical art and 20th-century pop art. As a Chinese-born artist with an American art education, how would you describe your artistic style? What schools of art have influenced your practice?

I don't think I fit into any school of art, as I take inspiration from a wide range of sources. My interpretations are quite nomadic. I think my experience at Rhode Island School of Designs and Pratt Institute enriched my understanding of art and sharpened my technical skills. Instead of representing a certain group of people, I want to share my unique experience of searching for identity and balancing between cultures. The process of searching is what shapes my identity and style as an artist.

What was your thought process behind your choice of artistic medium? Why did you use paintings, illustrations, and sculptures to depict the attention economy in our digital age, as opposed to other forms of media (e.g. video, photo collage)?

I use oil painting as my predominant medium. Oil dries very slowly, allowing me some time to question my original design. For me, painting is like having a conversation with a friend. Oil painting allows me to record the countless conscious decisions in the painting process. I also want the painting to show the evidence of human craftsmanship. Rather than a flawlessly smooth piece of art, I want the imperfections in my paintings to resemble artifacts — excessive paint accumulated on the edges, pencil marks bleeding through thin layers, even rough brush marks under the glare of the gallery light. Such details remind viewers that these are paintings produced by a human being, establishing a warmer relationship between the artwork and the audience.

After paintings, illustrations, and now sculptures, what medium would you like to explore next?

I think there is still a lot of space to explore in the sculpture room, and I do have an interest in site-specific installations. I would say I'm very interested in the concept of embodiment and the relationship between body and space in this digital age.