

Spotlight: Artist Tan Mu Replicates Photos of Deep Space and Microscopic Cells in an Evocative New Berlin Show

The artist's most recent paintings are currently on view at Peres Projects in Berlin.

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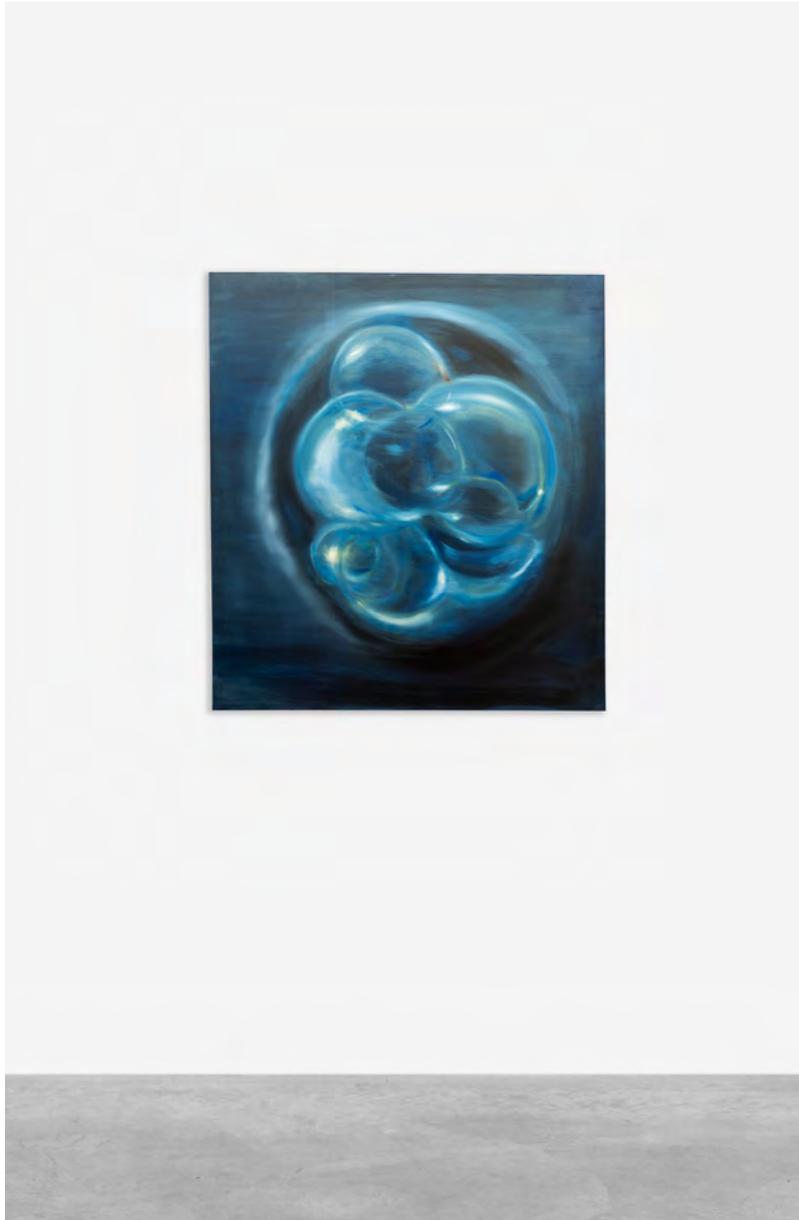
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About the Artist: Chinese-born artist Tan Mu (b. 1991) explores the history of humankind's evolution and technological advancements in her luminous oil paintings which she bases on found and taken photographs. Right now, the artist's works are on view in "DAWN" at Peres Projects in Berlin, marking the artist's second exhibition with the gallery, and a continuation of her first solo exhibition, "Signal," at its Milan space. The exhibition includes 13 works made over the past three years, including two group paintings that each address important cultural markers—an embryo, the atomic bomb, and even the earth itself.

Why We Like It: Tan Mu's paintings alternately zoom into the human body and expand outwards, stretching toward the far reaches of the visible universe. The photographs she bases her paintings on have often been

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made possible by microscopes or satellites. In her painting *Peek* (2021), for instance, she renders her version of a 1946 black-and-white photograph that showed the Earth from space for the first time. In the work *TRINITY TESTING* (2020), Mu has carefully made a group of paintings based on photographs of atomic bomb testing, their repetition imbuing these works with a sense of spiritual mystification. Alternately, in the work *Embryo* (2020), the artist zooms into the basis of human life. In her works *Silicon* (2021) and *Logic Circuit* (2022), meanwhile, the artist alludes to the design and mechanics of our information age, alluding to the significant impact elemental silicon has had in the contemporary world. These works hint, in their subtle way, at the mechanics behind our contemporary crises with privacy and energy, considering that technologies that superficially benefit our lives may also belie their much greater environmental consequences.



According to the Gallery: “The artist’s primary sources are both archival and cutting edge, examining life through the lens of the history of humankind’s evolution and endeavors. She explores the cycles and pursuit of incremental developments in the lives of humans... Ultimately, Tan Mu’s works are as much a celebration of the handmade qualities of painting techniques as they are an examination of life through the lens of the history of technology... Like the cellular biologist rendering the most complex parts of the body visible, ‘DAWN’ contends with the pace of the humanities—ever striving, pushing, and reaching into the unknown.”

“*Tan Mu: DAWN*” is on view at Peres Projects through October 7, 2022.