

REVIEW: Subtle, yet Striking: Soy Dreams of Milk at Blindspot Gallery

What Do We Think?

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In a time of numerous closures, travel restrictions, and continuously learning to live with the virus (at least in most countries) it was refreshing to see a collection of work that wasn't another "creation during lockdown", or pieces "inspired by being in quarantine, etc." Don't get me wrong, I love the idea of solitude and how strongly it impacts one's creative process, but it has been a theme slightly overused during the past two years, which just started to feel ancient even in late 2020.

Blindspot Gallery's current group exhibition, *Soy Dreams of Milk* features six East Asian artists **Zadie Xa**, **Patty Chang**, **Tan Jing**, **Michael Ho**, **Lap-See Lam**, and **Xiyadie** who explore the subcultural nature, the different stories and experiences of migration, queerness and self expression (of course!). An elaborate curation by Nick Yu making great use of the space set to let you clearly hear what you see.



Zadie Xa in collaboration with Benito Mayor Vallejo, *Parade*, 2021, oil on linen, bleached and dyed denim on handmade cherrywood frames, 200x325x6cm © Blindspot Gallery



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Zadie Xa's collaboration with her partner Benito Mayor Vallejo's *Parade* (2021) is an interesting transformation of a transformation. The piece illustrates a procession of shapeshifting animals, shadowy spirits and female shaman creating a world of folkloric imagination. The five-panel folding screen holds a narrative where it unravels the belief of animals being non-human channeling the folkloric power to reveal human conditions. Using bleached, dyed denim, and linen make texture has give the work quite the right amount of 'pop', as it blends perfectly with the sunset palette, all in all creating a continuous flow that works precisely well with the material.



Patty Chang, *Invocation for a Wandering Lake*, 2016, Dual Channel video, cardboard, 12'58", Edition of 5, © Blindspot Gallery

Invocation of a Wandering Lake (2016) by Patty Chang is sorrowful and soulful in its solemnity found in its own corner of the gallery. It shows the artist ritualistically washing dead non-human beings, as an act of ablation symbolising purification and transcendence across different religions. Chang, being in the water with a massive dead animal, brings out a huge sense of humanity in which we don't seem to get too much nowadays, bringing an ineffable desolation—a desolation in both the installation itself and daily life.



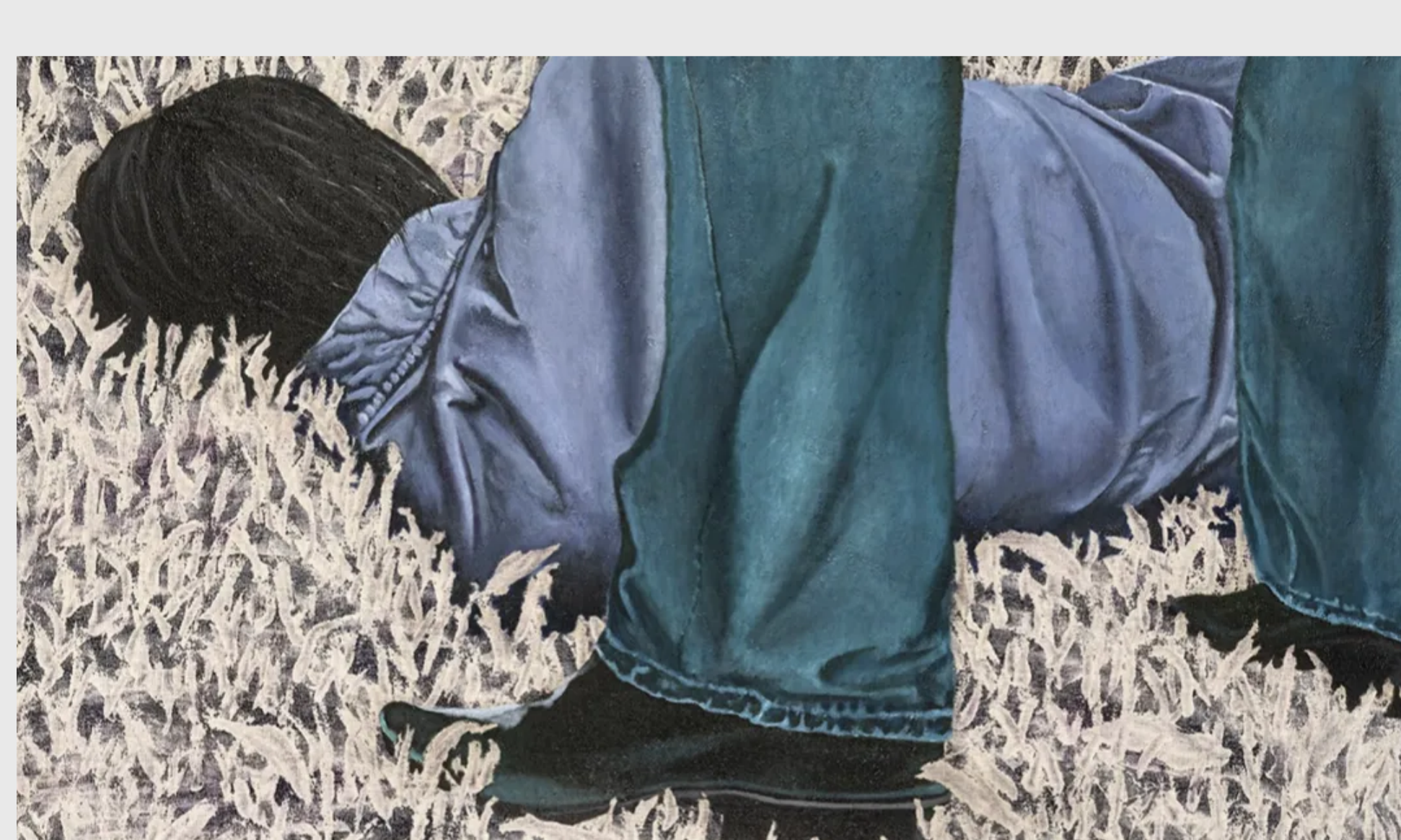
Tan Jing, *Tracing Lap Hung*, 2021, Single Channel video installation, glass, 13'9", Edition of 5 + 2AP © Blindspot Gallery

Speaking of emptiness, Tan Jing's video installation *Tracing Lap Hung* (2021) is one of the works I find particularly intriguing. She traces her grandparents' repatriation from Thailand in the 1950s under the rising anti-communist sinophobia. Tan Jing reincarnates her grandfather, Lao Hung as a dog, lost and wandering about Langan and Nanyang favouring the canine's keen olfactory that creates a site-specific multi sensorial installation while invoking subconscious memories. I always enjoy a great interactive installation, especially if they are cleverly done in terms of skill and concept or both. This definitely falls into that list.



Xiyadie, *Gate*, 2013, paper cut with water-based dye and Chinese pigments on Xuan paper, 140x140cm, framed: 172.2x172.2x3.5cm, © Blindspot Gallery

Braveness is another thing I love. seeing to in an artist's work. To create, to think, and conceptualise—to love—to hate—to feel, to make out artists from their feelings and subconscious is pretty much a 'standard' thing artists have to create their piece. But if you are an artist—a creator, you have to be brave to express—it's like the cherry on top of your icing. Xiyadie (Siberian Butterfly) is the artist's chosen name that signifies the butterfly's western, as it thrives up in the air despite the harsh environment in the West's Asian steppes of Siberia. The artist's meticulously created homoerotic papercut work are both partly autobiographical and fantasy. Xiyadie grew up in the agrarian country side of Shaanxi where the artist has longed for freedom and fearlessness. In *Gate* (2013) it depicts a scene of a gay couple pleasuring each other in front of the Tiananmen Square (I told you, brave...need I say more?)



Michael Ho, *See You When I See You*, 2022, oil on canvas, 50 x 80 x 2 cm, © Blindspot Gallery

See You When I See You (2022) by Michael Ho is another embodiment of the word striking. The artist worked with thick layers of blue and purple pigment on the back, while a pastel twilight background in the front, creating a vague moonlit paradise. The portrayal of a deceased partner projecting an unconquerable distance displayed in lasting tragedy pierces through...pierces through! It was bitter, it was painful, but at the same time it shows a rainbow after the rain—a sense of hope.

All in all I think this was a great show. We need to see more exhibitions like this in Hong Kong—something with more substance, something less shallow.

Soy Dreams of Milk will be on view through 29 October at [Blindspot Gallery](#), Hong Kong.

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