

BECOMING



BECOMING

A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty

of

Laguna College of Art & Design

by

XIXI (KACY) YU

In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree

of

Master of Fine Arts

May 2023

Laguna College of Art and Design
Master of Fine Arts Thesis Approval
Signature Page

Thesis Title: Becoming

MFA Candidate: Xixi (Kacy) Yu

Thesis Advisor: Susan M. King, PhD

MFA Program Chair: Peter Zokosky

Dean MFA Program: Vice President of Academic Affairs

LCAD President: Steven J. Brittan

Date Approved: _____

©2023 by Xixi (Kacy) Yu

No part of this work can be reproduced without permission except as indicated by the “Fair Use” clause of the copyright law. Passages, images, or ideas taken from this work must be properly credited in any written or published materials.

ABSTRACT

The scenes in my surrealist paintings are derived from literature, movies, past experiences, and places that I visited, dreamt of, and imagined. I seek to paint interiors and landscapes that will evoke a sense of *déjà vu* in my audience. My works elicit the light and mood of seemingly familiar architectural and natural spaces, even if a viewer has never seen them or they don't actually exist. I am fascinated by the natural environment, clouds, and changes in climate. I combine real things such as a window or a desert scene from my past experiences with unreal natural events like a choreographed lightning storm. To represent shifts in light, I carefully control the color temperature to make the image look more neutral and to arouse subtle associations in viewers. I paint soft materials, like bed sheets and curtains, to make the spaces feel comfortable, even if the weather or scene is disquieting in other ways. Solid objects such as arched walls balance and unify the images. The paintings hold psychological power for me and in some cases reflect on various states of life. I think of the characters, landscapes, and still-life elements in my paintings as clues to open infinite possibilities. Romance and nostalgia are the sensations I intend to imply in each painting. However, I prefer my audience develops their own stories about the paintings' meaning. I remind myself, and hopefully them, to be touched by what we encounter.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my special thanks to my mentors Kenny Harris, Natalia Fabia, Matt Talbert, and my advisors Judy Nimtz, Luis Serrano, and Suzanne Shifflett for providing me with the most valuable guidance and support. Their knowledge and insight helped me a lot in achieving my goals. They showed me what true artists look like. I will endeavor to be as excellent an artist as they are.

I would like to acknowledge my professors, Susan King, Anna Meliksetian, Ananda Featherston, and Matt Frantz for their engaging classes that navigated me in my artistic journey.

I would also like to thank Peter Zokosky who has been a tremendous support throughout my MFA candidacy. I am beyond grateful that you shared with me your insightful suggestions and knowledge.

Lastly, I would like to thank my peers and my family for being a part of my inspiration. Because of you, this experience has enriched my life far beyond what I thought possible.

DEDICATION

For my family.

EPIGRAPH

No man ever steps in the same river twice.

For it is not the same river and he is not the same man.

-Greek philosopher Heraclitus

TABLE OF CONTENTS

BECOMING	1
DESCRIPTION	1
RESEARCH.....	8
METHODOLOGY	13
CONCLUSION.....	18
WORKS CITED	20
APPENDIX	21
ARTIST'S NOTE	31

TABLE OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1	<i>Intimate</i> , Kacy Yu, 2021	2
FIGURE 2	<i>Facing the Sea</i> , Kacy Yu, 2022	3
FIGURE 3	<i>Cumulonimbus</i> , Kacy Yu, 2022	4
FIGURE 4	<i>Self-portrait</i> , Kacy Yu, 2022	5
FIGURE 5	<i>Rewind</i> , Kacy Yu, 2021	6
FIGURE 6	<i>The Magic Paintbrush</i> , Kacy Yu, 2021	7
FIGURE 7	<i>The Lovers</i> , René Magritte, 1928	8
FIGURE 8	<i>Wrapped Up</i> , Kacy Yu, 2023	9
FIGURE 9	<i>Wrapped Chair</i> , Christo and Jeanne- Claude, 1961	10
FIGURE 10	<i>Interior with Lilies, Pink Wall, and Matisse</i> , Bruce Cohen, 2021	11
FIGURE 11	First Draft of <i>Wrapped Up</i> , Kacy Yu, 2022	14
FIGURE 12	Second Draft of <i>Wrapped Up</i> , Kacy Yu, 2022	14
FIGURE 13	Color Study of <i>Wrapped Up</i> , Kacy Yu, 2022	15
FIGURE 14	Sketch of <i>Cumulonimbus</i> , Kacy Yu, 2022	16
FIGURE 15	<i>Wrapped Up II</i> , Kacy Yu, 2023	17
FIGURE 16	Surface for <i>Wrapped Up II</i> , Kacy Yu, 2023	17
FIGURE 17	Sketch of <i>Wrapped Up II</i> , Kacy Yu, 2023	18

TABLE OF PLATES

PLATE 1	<i>Intimate</i> , 2021	21
PLATE 2	<i>Facing the Sea</i> , 2022	22
PLATE 3	<i>Cumulonimbus</i> , 2022	23
PLATE 4	<i>Self-portrait</i> , 2022	24
PLATE 5	<i>Rewind</i> , 2021	25
PLATE 6	<i>The Magic Paintbrush</i> , 2021	26
PLATE 7	<i>Wrapped Up</i> , 2023	27
PLATE 8	<i>Wrapped Up II</i> , 2023	28
PLATE 9	<i>Tomatoes</i> , 2023	39
PLATE 10	<i>Trust</i> , 2022	30

BECOMING

DESCRIPTION

Life has a flowing beauty, time moves with us, and past experiences refine the present. Painting is a universal language of self-expression that transcends time and place. I paint concepts that are difficult to express in language. For example, I want to elicit the psychological concept of *déjà vu* when people meet something or someone new, and they know it is a first-time experience, but the experience feels familiar. I hope viewers will resonate with scenes and colors that may look new to them but evoke their memories. Because I migrated from China and enjoy international travel, I have a nostalgic feeling for faraway landscapes. I use these landscapes along with interior spaces to create a dreamy feeling in my paintings. My objective is to give viewers from different cultures a sense of familiarity with an invented space that does not exist but might hold deep psychological associations for them. The interlacing spaces that I create to provoke a sense of *déjà vu* may be relaxing or discomfoting, depending on viewers' point of view.

I want my paintings to convey a neutral interplay of soft tones, solid structures, and natural light and shadow. I appreciate the interpenetration of these things, so they do not stand alone but play harmoniously together.

In the first painting related to *déjà vu* that I completed, *Intimate* (Fig. 1), I incorporated a surreal bedroom interior with a desert landscape to create a dreamy scene. Painting light from different times of the day, I provide viewers with a contrasting sense of familiarity and strangeness. A Joshua tree stands beyond the interior windowsill. I have been

to Joshua Tree National Park many times. The desert tends to make me feel hopeless because there is no urban prosperity in the desert, and the dry climate has limited the growth of many plants. However, the oldest Joshua tree is estimated to be approximately 1000 years old. Its ability to grow in such a harsh and unforgiving terrain brings me hope and neutralizes my forlorn feelings about the desert. I used a clean bed, and my palette includes peach pink with blue to



Fig. 1. Kacy Yu, *Intimate*, 2021, Oil on canvas, 30" x 40".

allow my audience to feel relaxed and to provoke their unconscious thoughts because the bed is often the place where we dream. However, it can also be understood differently. I believe viewers' feelings originate from their minds and are amplified by what they see in the painting. The painting gives us a peaceful feeling because as humans, we look for solace from time to time.

I tend to create spaces to resonate with romantic and nostalgic sentiments because when individuals engage in nostalgic reflection, we are not hiding in the past. I prefer to believe we are accessing meaningful memories to approach the future. Another painting



Fig. 2. Kacy Yu, *Facing the Sea*, 2022, Oil on canvas, 24'' x 36''.

turquoise, lavenders, warm rose, and peach colors create a serene atmosphere of mystery and tranquility that will hopefully evoke some association with viewers.

related to *déjà vu*, *Facing the Sea* (Fig. 2), portrays a daydream about sunlight over the sea and an architectural space. In this painting, the reflection of the sunlight on the floor of the room is flat and graphic. These large areas of sunlight and empty ground evoke stillness for me. The subtle rosy light shed onto the bed and placid water convey an expressive warmth. I included transparent curtains in the foreground to enhance the spatial depth. The light

My painting *Cumulonimbus* (Fig. 3) takes a different approach to the concept of *déjà vu*. I used a dark interior space to exaggerate the effect of light. The bedroom interior is



Fig. 3. Kacy Yu, *Cumulonimbus*, 2022, Oil on canvas, 30'' x 40''.

peaceful and restful, with a warm standing lamp and reflections of the setting sun. Outside a strange pink streak of lightning pierces a cumulonimbus cloud, which appears to be surprising. The blood red water below contributes to that feeling.

Cumulonimbus clouds can produce hail, thunder, and lightning. They look fluffy, like a cotton ball in the sky, yet

Cumulonimbus cloud

systems can be insidious. The ominous outdoor landscape contrasts with the warm and inviting atmosphere inside. In a comparatively dim space, with warm light and danger looming, we feel we are experiencing the calm before the storm. Sometimes, our dreams can deliver important messages, clues, or keys, as these dreams are a glimpse into the future.

Looking through art history, I have noticed that many painters have made self-portraits. I think they are precious and full of meaning no matter what form they take. In my painting *Self-portrait* (Fig. 4), I used my profile because I think a person's visage is clearest from that angle. The shadow of a person's profile contour is highly recognizable, whereas the shadow from an entire head doesn't tell us very much. My chin touches a lime slice, also in a cross-section, which represents the combination of sour and sweet qualities. I believe that people of different ages have different interpretations of life, and the lime slice is a metaphor for my growing experience. Many people record their lives through photos or diaries, while I paint myself to record my mood in the moment.



Fig. 4. Kacy Yu, *Self-portrait*, 2022, Oil on canvas, 18" x 24".

Through paintings, I also document my life. These stories are related to my personal experiences and ancient Eastern fables. In paintings like *Rewind* (Fig. 5), I re-describe family stories that I love in order to deliver insights into the fragility of life. I plunged into deep doubt and fear when my uncle left this world. Viewers can see butterflies, sketches of three children, and a gaunt figure with a turned head. Every element in this painting is meant to convey the message that childhood memories affect our personalities and are very valuable.

Though death marks an ending and is finite, it is an eternal theme. From ancient times to now, many artists have described death in their own ways. In that tradition, I use painting to



Fig. 5. Kacy Yu, *Rewind*, 2021, Oil on canvas, 18'' x 24''.

reminisce about loved ones who have passed away but stay in my heart permanently.

I like telling larger stories about Chinese culture too. I want to use characters, landscapes, and still life as clues, taking a fresh look at the Eastern culture of China that shaped my childhood. In my experience, the people and things I grew up with are the best subjects. Because I believe that art comes from life, I prefer to derive these surreal settings

from familiar scenarios. In addition, I am obsessed with how people view different cultures. There is a Chinese fable named “The Magic Paintbrush.” It is about a boy who dreamt that an old man gave him a magic paintbrush and asked him to use it to help poor people. When he awoke, he found a real magic paintbrush on his desk. From that day on, he used it whenever poor people needed help. In *The Magic Paintbrush* (Fig. 6), I depict this ancient Chinese mythology. Most plants or flowers have iconographical significance in Chinese culture. In

China, bamboo is related to nobleness, tenacity, and adaptability. The man in this work seems to be embodying these three qualities as he paints the bamboo. As a painter, I can relate to him. I hope that diverse audiences can



Fig. 6. Kacy Yu, *The Magic Paintbrush*, 2021, Oil on canvas, 18'' x 24''.

appreciate Chinese culture after viewing my painting.

My work is influenced by surrealism, a cultural movement born in Europe from the ashes of the First World War. Although the smoke of war was temporarily extinguished by the armistice, the sense of alienation between people and disillusionment with the ideal of humanity could not be erased. When I first saw René Magritte's surrealist paintings from the 1920s and 1930s, I felt like I was in a dream state, seeing something between reality and illusion. The experience was fabulous, and I have grown to love painting the mystery of dreams on canvas as I believe he did.

I attempt to depict quiet scenarios, maybe without people or many elements, but reminiscent of our moments of solitude. Giorgio de Chirico and Edward Hopper have inspired my approach to creating this type of atmosphere. They come from different periods and countries, but their paintings exude the same quality of silence that I aspire to. We all

have a private piece of land in our hearts. Whenever we are painfully disappointed or depressed, we need to soothe our emotions and find inner peace and comfort. Likewise, when we are in bliss, we need unrestrained space in our hearts to experience this fleeting moment. This piece of land hidden in everyone's heart is our own “mystery garden.” By making art, I hope to open this intimate inner world to viewers.

RESEARCH

Art is proof of our attentive observation of life. Like the old saying “A picture is worth a thousand words,” I convey ideas about life without relying on words. While I use painting to communicate to the audience abstract concepts that are difficult to convey in words, my works are influenced by many artists and writers who have changed my understanding of the world and the abstract concepts that I paint.



Fig. 7. René Magritte, *The Lovers*, 1928, Oil on canvas, 54cm x 73.4cm, MoMA, New York

Magritte

presented two figures, a man in a business suit and a woman in a sleeveless dress, with their faces covered in an ambiguous setting—it could be outdoors with blue sky or indoors with



Fig. 8. Kacy Yu, *Wrapped Up*, 2023, Oil on canvas, 30'' x 40''.

figure who is veiled in a deathlike shroud. Those elements are meant to pose questions to the viewer and provoke thought.

Some of my influences are indirect, but they cannot be overlooked, such as artist Christo and Jeanne-Claude's *Wrapped Chair* (Fig. 9). They seem to have wrapped this chair to deprive it of its function. Christo was born on June 13, 1935, in Gabrovo, Bulgaria. In

the crown molding and dark red wall. The man and woman appear unable to truly communicate or touch each other. Is this a kiss of denied love? The lovers are the primary subject of the painting, adding mystery and intrigue to the space that is neither interior nor exterior. In my painting *Wrapped Up* (Fig. 8), I try to convey similar mystery and intrigue surrounding an ambiguously male

1958, Christo went to Paris, where he met his wife Jeanne-Claude Denat de Guillebon, who became his life partner in creating monumental environmental works of art. They are noted for their large landmarks and landscape elements wrapped in fabric. From early objects like *Wrapped Chair* to monumental outdoor projects, Christo and Jeanne-Claude's artwork transcended the



Fig. 9. Christo and Jeanne- Claude, *Wrapped Chair*, 1961, 90cm x 42.5cm x 44cm, The Cleveland Museum of Art, Ohio

and architecture. Their approach to recasting everyday objects struck me as worth exploring. I used a similar brown wooden chair in the lower left of my painting *Wrapped Up* to help with the front-to-back relationship of the space. The composition and tones set up a mysterious atmosphere that fascinates me.

One of the challenges I faced in creating my *Déjà Vu* series was how to describe that feeling that we are in a dream world we know. I found Bruce Cohen's scenes evoke a similar feeling. He is a native Southern Californian and is known for engaging his viewers with intriguing interiors in his distinctive, crisp, realist style. His most iconic subjects are domestic interiors that contain no people but show signs of inhabitation: papers in disarray, an unmade bed, and open windows. His compositions often feature flowers from his garden. His paintings have strong light sources that were perhaps influenced by the surrealists like Magritte. For example, in his painting *Interior with Lilies, Pink Wall, and Matisse* (Fig. 10),

he used more neutral colors to depict the interior environment with strong shadows, but the pink walls outdoors break the somberness of this silent interior. Like Cohen, I use natural light and some private objects to control the atmosphere and create a sense of familiarity for the audience.

I like to paint interior spaces with furniture and drapery because my undergraduate



Fig. 10. Bruce Cohen, *Interior with Lilies, pink wall, and Matisse*, 2021, Oil on canvas, 36'' x 54''.

major was in interior design and architectural aesthetics. I sometimes use rounded-arch-shaped architecture which was

popular in ancient Israel, Iraq, and Greece to give homage to my favorite ancient art. Within those architectural spaces, I use contemporary objects to convey emotions. I rely on both preferences and experiences to express my thoughts indirectly.

As a painter who loves to travel, I am passionate about visiting various historic churches. Many churches are in the Gothic style, which developed from the mid-12th century to the 16th century in Europe. Every time I walk into such buildings with pointed arches, I feel an inexplicable sense of spirituality. I want to bring this feeling into my paintings, even though I tend to paint rounded arches over pointed ones. In *Facing the Sea* and *Wrapped Up*,

I included different geometric shapes, such as arches and squares, to help establish a symmetrical and stable space that holds spiritual value.

Reading is an invitation to travel and to accept being carried away to a world of multiple discoveries. David Hockney's book *A History of Pictures from the Cave to the Computer Screen* prompted me to express some abstract concepts and emotionally charged concepts such as *déjà vu*. Hockney and his co-author Martin Gayford explained that photography, painting, and cinema all belong to a common history that spills over the normal boundaries between high and low culture, moving images and still ones, even good and bad ones. Many of the ideas in their book are indebted to Hockney's 2001 book named *Secret Knowledge*, which controversially argued that old master painters employed various proto-photographic gadgets, such as the camera obscura and the convex mirror, to create their paintings. After reading Hockney's books, I want to create imaginary scenes that resonate readily with others and are poetic or evocative. However, I believe that cameras cannot capture uncanny settings that will evoke *déjà vu* experiences in viewers. Given the rapid development of high technology and artificial intelligence, I want to make paintings full of human emotions that bots can't experience.

I am irresistibly attracted to nature as I walk across mountain paths, meet the ocean on a sandy beach, and smell flowers and leaves that comfort my heart. The different plants and geology make me marvel at the greatness and diversity of nature, and I admire writers who can describe its beauty in words. Shepherd Nan is one of them. She was a Scottish Modernist writer and poet. Her intense, poetic prose explores and records the rocks, rivers, creatures, and hidden aspects of the Cairngorm mountains. Her book *The Living Mountain* reveals her visionary nature as an intrepid hillwalker. Sometimes she even went barefoot so

she could feel the grass, mud, and heather on her skin. *The Living Mountain* gave me a new understanding of nature. As she notes, some natural phenomena feel like dreams. I am fascinated by the sense of dreams and reality.

Whether I am in the United States or in China, I have painted in plein-air with friends and colleagues. It is good to get outside. Painting can be lonely for artists who stay in the studio in a solitary state. When I was in China, I enjoyed painting outdoors with my mentor Yao. Exploring some primitive villages or seeing mountains in nature enriched my understanding of the world outside the studio. The natural light and the presentation of color in nature invariably influenced my choice of color, even when I painted in the studio.

METHODOLOGY

艺术本来也只是一个梦，不过比权势的梦，财富的梦，情欲的梦，更美一些，更持久一些。艺术，是个最好的梦。 *Art is also a dream, but it is more beautiful and lasting than the dream of power, wealth, and lust. Art is the best dream. –Mu Xin*

Mu Xin is a Chinese writer, painter, and poet who lived in New York in the twentieth century. He believed a scene in a surrealist painting is like a dream world, and that art is more important than seeking power, wealth, or a lustful state. He has had solo exhibitions in many states in the US. He was Danqing Chen's mentor. Danqing is a well-known Chinese American painter who moved to Beijing and has filmed many art television programs in China. He was my Chinese mentor Yao's mentor. Yao was my mentor many years ago when I lived in the region of Zhejiang, China. Yao increased my knowledge and understanding of oil painting. This artist lineage has lasted for four generations and seems to bridge the

distance between the United States and China in an artistic way. I emigrated from China to the United States in 2019. Years ago, I did not expect that I would start my life in a foreign city like Los Angeles. Life sometimes does not develop in a prescribed pattern. It is unscripted. Travel has become a part of my life, and I try to visit art museums in the cities I visit. In the museums, I have found myself loving surrealist works. I enjoy the tranquility of interacting with the great works in the museums and finding inspiration for my painting.

Following the advice of my Chinese mentor, my surrealist works like *Wrapped Up*



Fig. 11. Kacy Yu, *The First Draft of Wrapped Up*, 2022, iPad.

(Fig. 8) begin simply and become more complex as I develop them. They also hint at dream states as Mu Xin suggested in his quote. Whenever I start a new work, I set a definite atmosphere, maybe eerie, maybe calm, or maybe a mix of both, which helps me develop themes. This step helps determine many following decisions in the process, including the composition and the choice of

colors. In my first version of *Wrapped Up* (Fig. 11), I made it clear that an ambiguously gendered figure stands in the center, and that it is wrapped in fabric. With infinite possibilities, it takes me a while to determine which elements to include in the final painting.

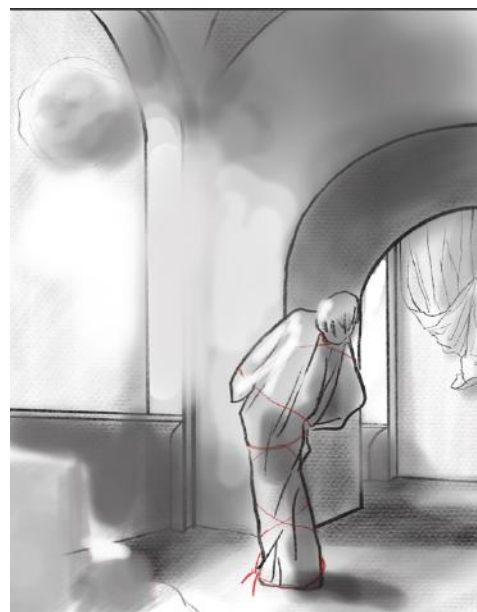


Fig. 12. Kacy Yu, *The Second Draft of Wrapped Up*, 2022, iPad.

I like to use my iPad to start my pre-sketches because I can quickly modify them in that digital format. With successive sketches, I gain a clearer idea of the overall composition



Fig. 13. Kacy Yu, *Color Study of Wrapped up*, 2022, oil on panel, 5" x 7".

and the elements to use. In the second version of *Wrapped Up* (Fig. 12), I placed a chair in the bottom left corner to help establish spatiality. I chose an indirect light source, so some very similar tones will appear in the image. After I have determined the composition for a painting, I discuss relevant considerations with my mentor and paint a color study that focuses on color variations and value. If I like the outcome of this color study, I prepare the canvas and begin my new painting. In the initial color study (Fig. 13)

for *Wrapped Up*, I expressed my pre-conceived goals for atmosphere, tone, space, and perspective on a wooden panel.

Moving my color study to a canvas for my painting *Wrapped Up*, I made more decisions to account for the change in scale. For example, adjusting the proportions of the elements or lowering the horizon line for perspective, etc. Every durable painting is the result of countless improvements and investigations.

Another example of going from simplicity to complexity is in my work is *Cumulonimbus* (Fig. 3). As I began to design this painting to fit in my *Déjà Vu* series, I first set the mood, starting with black and white sketches, and added elements to achieve the ideal composition. The compositions of my initial sketches generally are dominated by large

shapes. I use these large shapes to balance the proportions of the interior environment and the exterior landscape. In a sketch of my painting *Cumulonimbus* (Fig. 14), my composition is divided in a very generic graphic way. I retained a large area for the bed sheets because it would reinforce the intimate feel of my *Déjà Vu* series. When I created the sketch, I wanted to design an interior with a dimly lit room. Oftentimes my sketches and the finished painting are quite different. I left this sketch as it was for a while so that I could think about which elements were significant and changeable.



Fig. 14. Kacy Yu, *Sketch of Cumulonimbus*, 2022, iPad

Value and color contrast are two aspects that I consider in the early stages of a painting. For example, in *Cumulonimbus*, I chose purple and orange as the main hues for the interior environment, while orange also played a key role in the exterior landscape. With such a color design, I aimed to better unify the painting. The dimly lit environment and low-saturation sky were meant to set off the painting's vibrant orange and pink colors. Each new stage of the painting is based on the last one, and they all support each other.

After attending to color and value, I try to make the interior space more intriguing and spatial. This sometimes requires negating a lot of the original design. For example, in

Cumulonimbus, I enlarged the scale and changed the shape of the window from rectangular to arched. These changes enhanced a dreamy atmosphere and made the exterior space more striking. I added monstera deliciosa leaves next to the lamp. Those green elements gave the space liveliness and intimacy. The plant's shadow was hidden in the dim space, making the

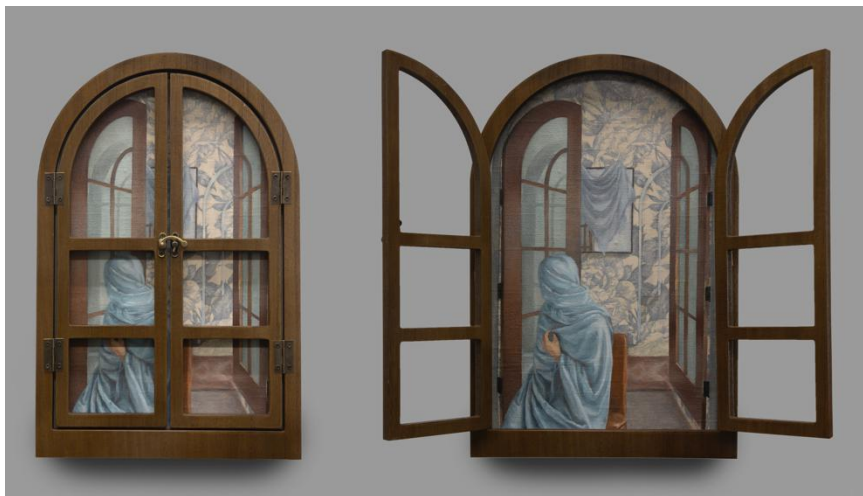


Fig. 15. Kacy Yu, *Wrapped Up II*, 2023, Oil on Panel, 11.5" x 16.5".

scene seem mysterious too. I developed the specific meaning of the clouds in this painting. The word *cumulonimbus* has a meaning that implies the arrival of a storm. I

used the pink lightning as a metaphor for this seemingly fascinating but dangerous phenomenon. All the elements were added to accomplish a specific goal.

My painting *Wrapped Up II* (Fig. 15) is an important turning point from painting a surface to look like fabric to incorporating real fabric into the image. In one class, my program chair, Peter Zokosky demonstrated how to use a patterned fabric as a surface for painting, thus creating more possibilities in the early stages. He was kind enough to give me some of the fabric. I glued the patterned fabric to my



Fig. 16. *Surface for Wrapped Up II*, 2023

arch-shaped wooden panel (Fig. 16). I also used multiple layers of clear gesso to make the fabric more compatible with paints.

Framing the fabric panel before painting it added to the surreal quality of *Wrapped Up II*. After a discussion with my mentor, I decided on my iPad draft composition shown in Fig. 17. This painting is a completely new experiment because an actual window covers the arched wooden panel, which is covered with fabric. I painted a wooden arched door that opens inward to form an echo of the actual window, which opens outward. Furthermore,

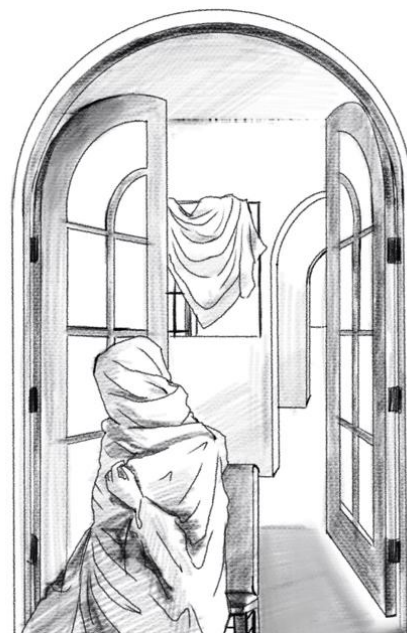


Fig. 17. Kacy Yu, *Sketch of Wrapped Up II*, 2023, iPad.

I hope that my viewers will go beyond just viewing the painting to open or close the window.

Each painting needs to be refined repeatedly to find the best solution. How do I know a painting is complete? I go back to my initial intention. The final painting needs to make my original message clear and have depth. I believe if I am excited about my own work, it is more likely to touch the audience.

CONCLUSION

The decision to pursue MFA at LCAD reinforced my own belief in the lifelong pursuit of art. For two years, I spent a lot of time learning to use traditional oil painting as a vehicle to visualize the imagery in my mind. I feel that my process of inventing space has led to a deeper observation of both light and color that has given me a stronger desire to explore the mysteries of nature. The ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus states that everything is in a constant state of becoming rather than being. Many of my paintings capture the transition

between reality and dreams. In the process of refining my thesis, I am becoming a painter who is honest with my soul. The continual improvement of my painting technique is my constant goal. As stories of our lives continue to unfold, my next body of work will incorporate more of my favorite figures and convey more narrative. What exactly does the completion of a degree count for an artist? There is no finality in the pursuit of art. There is more to become.

WORKS CITED

Hockney, David, and Martin Gayford. *A History of Pictures from the Cave to the Computer Screen*. Thames and Hudson, 2016.

Hurt, Avery. "What's Really Happening When You Experience Déjà vu?" *Discover Magazine*, 18 June 2021, <https://www.discovermagazine.com/mind/whats-really-happening-when-you-experience-deja-vu>

Shepherd, Nan. *The Living Mountain: A Celebration of the Cairngorm Mountains of Scotland*. Canongate United Kingdom, 2011.

Stanska, Zuzanna. "Rene Magritte: Lovers in Separation." *Daily Art*, 30 March 2020, <https://www.dailyartmagazine.com/rene-magritte-lovers-in-separation/>

Spanswick, Valerie. "Gothic Architecture, an Introduction." *Smarthistory*, 8 August 2015, <https://smarthistory.org/gothic-architecture-an-introduction/>

Zelazko, Alicja. "Christo and Jeanne- Claude Environmental Sculptors." *Britannica*, 7 March 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Christo-and-Jeanne-Claude>

APPENDIX



Plate 1. *Intimate*, 2021, Oil on canvas, 30" x 40".



Plate 2. *Facing the Sea*, 2022, Oil on canvas, 24" x 36".



Plate 3. *Cumulonimbus*, 2022, Oil on canvas, 30" x 40".



Plate 4. *Self-portrait*, 2022, Oil on canvas, 18" x 24".



Plate 5. *Rewind*, 2021, Oil on canvas, 18" x 24".



Plate 6. *The Magic Paintbrush*, 2021, Oil on canvas, 18" x 24".



Plate 7. *Wrapped Up*, 2023, Oil on canvas, 30" x 40".

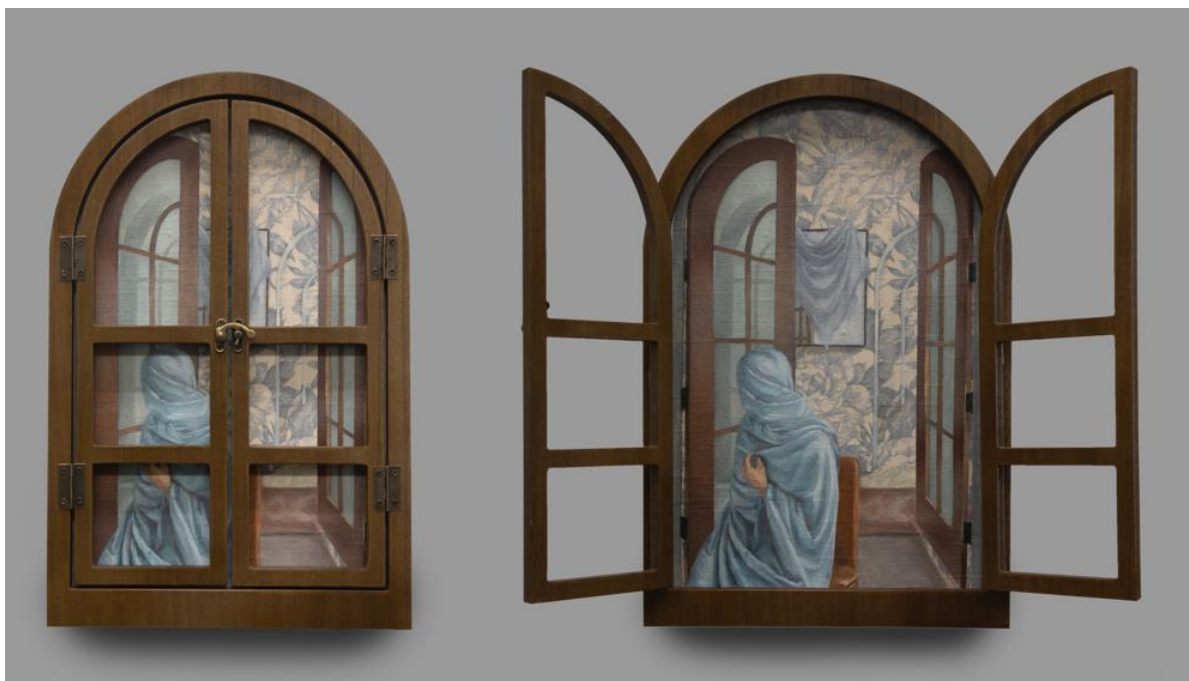


Plate 8. *Wrapped Up II*, 2023, Oil on Panel, 11.5" x 16.5".



Plate 9. *Tomatoes*, 2023, Oil on Panel, 12" x 14".



Plate 10. *Trust*, 2022, Oil on Panel, 24" x 30".

ARTIST'S NOTE

www.kacyyu.com

Instagram: [kacy_yux](https://www.instagram.com/kacy_yux)

