



galleryHOUSE

Jess Riva Cooper

Viral Series

Jeffrey Chong Wang

The Night of South Peking



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The Night of South Peking

September 9 - October 12, 2017

Jess Riva Cooper

Viral Series

Jess Riva Cooper is an artist and educator based in Toronto who integrates color, drawing, and clay to create sculptures and installation-based artworks. She received her MFA in Ceramic Sculpture from the Rhode Island School of Design, and her BFA from The Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. She has exhibited her works throughout Europe and North America and has participated in numerous artist residencies. Cooper currently teaches at Sheridan College in the Bachelor of Craft and Design Program in Oakville, Canada.

Cooper creates installation-based artworks referencing fallen economic and environmental climates — where houses have become feral; ivy, trees

and Kudzu planted generations ago twist and obscure. Cooper sees a direct parallel between her interest in insidious plant life with the Dybbuk spirit - a malicious possessing spirit from Yiddish folklore believed to be the dislocated soul of a dead person. In both cases, a loss of control is suffered as the parasitic entity subsumes the host.

“In my sculptures, the world sprouts plant matter. Color and form burst forth from quiet gardens and bring chaos to ordered spaces. Nature undergoes a reclamation process by creeping over structures, subverting past states and creating a preternatural transformation.”

Viral Series is a continued exploration into the death and regeneration that takes place in deteriorating communities. Places and things, once bustling and animated, have succumbed to nature’s mercy. Without intervention, nature takes over and breathes new life into objects, as it does in her sculptures. Clay busts, once pure and pristine, are hardly recognizable. They become tattooed with nature. Their heads grow leaves instead of hair. Their faces scream out in pain — or perhaps pleasure — in the midst of transformation. Often used to represent life, here nature becomes a parable for an alternative state — one where life and death intersect.



Wall Piece (Detail)

3 X 5'

Porcelain paper clay, Waxed linen

Thread, welding rod

Floor Piece (Detail)

Ceramic, raw clay, acrylic ink, latex paint,
pvc tubing, plumbing tape

Price upon request





Viral Series: Ruff 1
12 x 9 x 20"
Porcelain, paper-clay slip, glaze



Viral Series: Ruff 2
12 x 9 x 20"
Porcelain, paper-clay slip, glaze



Viral Series: Ruff 3
12 x 9 x 20"
Porcelain, paper-clay slip, glaze

Not Pictured

Viral Series: Bouquet 1 & 2

12 x 9 x 20"

Porcelain, paper-clay slip, glaze, decal

Self Growers #1 & #2

3 x 3'

Hand-Built Porcelain, Underglaze, glaze, Acrylic

Ink, Paint



CV

Education

- 2010 Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI ,
MFA Ceramics (honours)
- 2009 Brown University, Providence, RI ,
University Teaching Certificate
- 2006 Sheridan School of Craft and Design, Oakville, ON
Ceramics Diploma (honours) ,
- 2004 Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Halifax, NS
BFA Interdisciplinary (honours),
Minor: Art History

Selected Exhibitions

- 2017 NCECA Annual Exhibition: The Evocative Garden,
Disjecta Contemporary Art Center, Portland, OR
- 2015 Solo Exhibition, Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery, Waterloo, ON
OFF Artfair, Espace Art 22, Brussels, Belgium
A Celebration of Women Artists NCECA Concurrent Exhibition,
Arcadia Contemporary, New York, NY
NCECA Concurrent Exhibition, RISD, Providence, RI
- 2014 Souvenirs from the Future: A Survey of Contemporary Ceramics,
Lawrence Arts Center, Lawrence, KS
RBC Emerging Artist, Gardiner Ceramic Museum, Toronto, ON
The Wassaic Project, Summer Exhibition, Wassaic, NY
Emerged: After the Residency, Lillstreet Art Center, Chicago, IL
- 2013 Faculty Exhibition, Eastern Oregon University, La Grande, OR
NCECA Projects Space, George R. Brown Convention Center,
Houston, TX
Archie Bray Resident, Artist Exhibition, 18 Hands Gallery,
Houston, TX
- 2012 Archie Bray Resident, Artist Exhibition, Kolva Sullivan Gallery,
Spokane, WA
- 2011 Sprouting at Bone Solo Exhibition, Katherine Mulherin
Contemporary Art Projects, Toronto, ON
Artist-in-Residence Group Exhibition, Lillstreet Art Center,
Chicago, IL
Artist-in-Residence Golem and Dybbuk Solo Exhibition,
Hadassah-Brandeis Institute Artist-in-Residence, Kniznick Gallery,
Women's Studies Research Center, Brandeis University,
Waltham, MA
Hidden Cities, Group Exhibition, Women's Caucus for Art,
New Century Artists Gallery, New York, NY
- 2010 Annual Graduate Thesis Exhibition, Rhode Island Convention
Center, Providence, RI
- 2009 From Beginning to End Group Exhibition, Gelman Student Gallery,
Chase Center, RISD, Providence, RI

Hi Fructose

Jess Riva Cooper's New Sculptures Explore Death and Renewal

by Caro Posted on March 22, 2016

Jess Riva Cooper explores themes of reclamation and transformation in her ceramic sculptures where nature overwhelms and takes over her subjects. Particularly inspired by invasive plant species, the Toronto based artist, featured here on our blog, uses clay to express her fascination with chaos erupting into order.

In her surrealistic busts, nature takes the form of wild foliage, fungi and vines as it grows out of her subject's orifices; eyes, noses, mouths, and even out of their scalp into Medusa-like hair. Though their expressions feel almost pained, there is a haunting beauty about their death and transformation: Cooper herself describes it as a sort of "violence", enacting itself onto the structures of her work. Cooper shared with us two of her most recent series, "Serotiny" and "Viral Series", where she further conveys ideas about death and renewal. In her own words: "Serotiny explores the themes of death and regeneration through the creation of a large-scale, site-specific installation at The Clay and Glass Gallery in Waterloo Ontario. This installation references the way that nature reclaims its place by creeping over and through the austere architecture of the gallery."

"Viral Series is a continued exploration into the death and regeneration taking place in deteriorating communities. Places and things, once bustling and animated, have succumbed to nature's mercy. Without intervention, nature takes over and breathes new life into objects, as it does in my sculptures."

"In Viral Series, the busts, once pure and pristine, are hardly recognizable. They become tattooed with nature. Their heads grow leaves instead of hair. The faces scream out in pain- or perhaps pleasure- in the midst of transformation. Often used to represent life, nature instead becomes a parable for an alternative state- one where life and death intersect."

Colossal Magazine

Haunting Ceramic Faces Overgrown with Vegetation by Jess Riva Cooper

by Christopher Jobson April 7, 2014

Toronto-based artist Jess Riva Cooper created this haunting collection of ceramic busts called her Viral Series as part of an artist residency last fall at The Kohler Factory in Sheboygan, Wisconsin. The pieces seem to lie at the peculiar intersection of life and death, as it should be given her inspiration behind the sculptures. Cooper shares about the Viral Series via email:

In my art practice I integrate colour, drawing, and clay to create installation-based artwork. I investigate fallen economic and environmental climates in regions such as Detroit, Michigan, where houses have become feral, disappearing behind ivy, trees and Kudzu vines that were planted generations ago. In my sculptures, the world sprouts plant matter. Colour and form burst forth from quiet gardens and bring chaos to ordered spaces. Nature reclaims its place by creeping over structures. Wild floral growth subverts past states, creating the preternatural from this transformation.

Several of the pieces will be on view at The Wassaic Project opening in June, and you can see much more here. If you liked this also check out the ceramic work of Mary O'Malley. (via NOTCOT)

Jeffrey Chong Wang

The Night of South Peking

Jeffrey Chong Wang moved to Canada from his native China in 1999. He earned a BA from OCADU and an MFA from the New York Academy of Art, with trips to France and Italy for off-campus study. Jeffrey's artwork is a reflection of emotions and memories and although now living in Canada, his time spent growing up in China has an important influence on his artwork. His paintings are portraits of his family at different ages as well as different locations remembered.

"Deliciously unwholesome and decadently languorous" – R.M. Vaughan, The Toronto Globe and Mail

Wang's art is opulent in a symbolism that richly references bygone centuries rendered in a classical, almost Florentine style. His work is filled with intrigue and theatrics; his paintings exist not in the landscape of the familiar but in memories of places that do not exist. Wang's work reveals an inexhaustible talent for reinventing historical models for an ahistorical age. They are strangely disquieting and expressionistic.

"All the figures that I create on canvas are myself in a way; they reflect my cultural upbringing, personal feelings, and experiences. I think of them as characters in a drama, and the canvas as a stage. My work is a response to

the imbalance between my inside feelings and the outside world. I fuse classical concepts and traditional techniques into my work using my own exaggerated figures. These figures reflect the history of western oil painting techniques but also show contemporary themes of eastern culture."using my own exaggerated figures. These figures reflect the history of western oil painting techniques but also show contemporary themes of eastern culture."



Montserrat Dream
30 x 24"
Oil on Canvas



Girl Playing With A Cat

12 x 8"

Oil on Canvas

In Front of Kali

14 x 11"

Oil on Canvas

Swordsman

14 x 11"

Oil on Canvas



Detective
24 x 24"
Oil on Canvas



Mirror
15 x 20"
Oil on Canvas



The Autumn Sonata
16 x 13"
Oil on Canvas



Meet The Legendary Monkey
16 x 13"
Oil on Canvas



Human Shape Object

48 x 36"

Oil on Canvas



The Night of South Peking
36 x 48"
Oil on Canvas



Harmony
9 x 18"
Oil on Canvas



Friends
36 x 48"
Oil on Canvas



Snowy Day
30 x 30"
Oil on Canvas
\$6,300



The Emperor
16 x 13"
Oil on Canvas



Left Wing Girl
16 x 13"
Oil on Canvas



A Buddhist and a Taoist Priest
48 x 48"
Oil on Canvas
\$10, 400

CV

Education

- 2007 - 2009 New York Academy of Art, New York, U.S.A.
Master of Fine Arts Degree
- Summer 2008 Normandy Summer Painting Residencies,
France In collaboration with the Prince of
Wales Drawing Institute, Co-ordinated by
M.F.A. program, New York Academy of Art,
Paintings collected by Christopher 'Kip'
Forbes and the Prince of Wales
- 2001 - 2006 Ontario College of Art and Design, Toronto,
Canada Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree
- 2002 - 2003 O.C.A.D. Off-Campus Program, Florence,
Italy Full school year organized by B.F.A.
program at O.C.A.D.

Exhibitions

- Oct. 2015 Solo Show, Gallery Youn, Montreal, Quebec
- Oct. 2014 Group Show, Attachment, Anger, Ignorance
Shanghai, China
- Jan. 2014 Toronto Art Council Grant for Visual Arts
- July 2013 Fellowship Award for 4-week residency
Vermont Studio Centre
- Oct. 2012 Solo Show, Engine Gallery Toronto
- June 2012 Mutual Interests, The Art College of
Shanghai University,
The New York Academy of Art Shanghai, China
- May 2012 Art Beijing, Beijing, China
- July 2011 Solo Show, Engine Gallery, Toronto
- June 2011 50 Years of Art - Retrospective Exhibition
First Canadian Place, Toronto
- Apr. 2011 Toronto Art Expo, Toronto Convention
Centre
- Feb. 2011 'Best of 2010' Featuring Award Winners
from Toronto Outdoor Art Exhibition
FCP Gallery, First Canadian Place
- Oct. 2010 International Art Fair,
- Sept. 2010 2nd Place Award, Queen West Art Crawl
Toronto
- July 2010 "Best Painting" Award, Toronto Outdoor Art
Exhibition
- Sept. 2009 2nd Place Award, Queen West Art Crawl
Toronto
- Feb. 2008 - 2009 Tribeca Ball, Artist Exhibitor
New York, U.S.A.
- Jan. - Feb. 2009 "Best of 2008" Featuring Award Winners
from Toronto Outdoor Art Exhibition
FCP Gallery, First Canadian Place
- Sept. - Oct. 2008 Solo Show, Campbell House Museum
Toronto, Canada
- July 2008 Toronto Outdoor Art Exhibition,
Nathan Phillips Square, Honorable Mention
Telford Fenton Memorial Award, Artist
Exhibitor



BOOKS
A FALL, A REVELATION. AN ATTEMPT
MARINA ENDICOTT'S STORY IS THE
OF SHORT SUMMER FICTION PAGE 1

THE GLOBE AND MAIL
WEEKEND
CANADA'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER
SATURDAY, JULY 30, 2011

THE GLOBE AND MAIL
SATURDAY, JULY 30, 2011

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VISUAL ARTS

Portraits through a funhouse mirror

Jeffrey Wang takes his subjects and reconfigures them stretching into a lurid, goofy world

R.H. VAUGHAN
THIS EXHIBITIONIST
rvvaughan@globeandmail.com

Jeffrey Wang at Engage Gallery
Until Aug. 5, 27 Mill St., Toronto;
engagegallery.ca

Jeffrey Wang paints as if he's looking at the world through a funhouse mirror — one that vertically stretches his subjects and turns them into eerily lanky, bubbled-lengths of fatty, heads arched, legs taper and bulge, hands become lobster claws, and faces appear to be pulled down by weighted chains. It's a dream world, alternating between lurid and goofy, never at ease with gravity (or reality).

For all that, Wang is still very much a genuine painter, but one less interested in capturing the particulars of individuals (many of his subjects are family members and friends) than reconfiguring said individuals to match his seen-through-a-glass-bottle-bottom world view. For instance, Wang appears to be arguing, is always filtered through some sort of lens, is a subjective response, so why fight it? The result, ensembles of models who resemble depressed noodles, complete with bodied egg rollers, are both hilarious and weirdly tragic — watch out, they're sliding off the carousel!

For ballast, Wang surrounds his characters with props, objects culled from art and pop-culture history — a menagerie of animals, luxurious drapery and rugs, stolid furniture, unremarkable trees and paintings, selling landscapes, lots of fruit. In many ways, Wang is also a classic "story painter," in that he invests each scene with allegorical elements — but equals fecundity and plenty, birds equal the human soul, dogs equal the baser desire, and on and on. If that sounds terribly precious, don't worry — Wang's playfulness makes up for his occasional tendency to overdo his bits.

For me, the most intriguing thing about Wang's work is his exploration of Asian men, especially as projected onto the Western portrait tradition. To wit, his Asian subject's epicanthic eye folds are exaggerated to double, even triple size, while mouths are small but house gaping overbites. The skin tone of his Asian subjects is at times more jaundiced than olive, and their postures and gestures — bent, stooped and shuffling — could be lifted directly from an old Charlie Chan movie.

Wang is tipping on thorny ground here, and the day I saw his work an Asian couple walked



Truth: The artist surrounds his characters with props, objects culled from art and pop culture history.

66
Portraits, Wang appears to be arguing, is always filtered through some sort of lens, is a subjective response, so why fight it?

into the gallery and immediately walked out in a huff (not that such reactions are inherently troublesome — art is not comfort food).

What viewers need to observe is that everyone in Wang's paintings is presented in an off-kilter manner. The Caucasians are lanky and dinky, made of overcooked oats and stale milk. A woman in a hijab somehow supports her huge head with baby-stood shoulders. One man wears a blue demon monkey mask, for no apparent reason, and the slobbering cavities in the paintings are lusty, feet smilling little porrets. Wang's world view is lusciously loving (although it is lovable), so his boundary-pushing representation of Asian subjects is part and parcel of an apparent message: with, and mockery of, the human body.

Deliciously unwholesome and decadently languorous, Wang's paintings are sweetly fever-dreams, slanted riddled in city bile and burnt sugar.

Greg Girard at Monte Clark Gallery
Until Aug. 15, 163 St., Toronto;
monteclarkgallery.com

While Wang populates his paintings with meek near-humans, Greg Girard's photographs of Hanoi present a cityscape almost devoid of people — a bustling, livable town.

Girard's Hanoi is obviously occupied, as the evidence of human habitation is plentiful — from empty chairs to blinking

neon signs to motorcycles. But Girard captures the city in mid-night moments, when nothing moves too fast, and the city, as all cities do, becomes a warren of closed doors and blackened windows.

Girard's imagery is unabashedly romantic (he has a fondness for long, twinkling alleyways, and light-dappled balconies), but does not romanticize. His Hanoi is one dirty, scrappy city — a city whose inhabitants build rattle-shack homes on top of former colonial buildings, employing whatever scraps they can find, and where housing and businesses sit inches away from train tracks. Everywhere you look, ingenuity makes up for lack of material goods. This is DIY, dumpster-dive culture at its most energetic, and least decorative.

Girard's detailed attention to the traces of human occupation, as opposed to actual humans, concretely gives his imagery an unexpected emotional weight and immediacy. One feels that one is observing spaces clandestinely, in peeks and glances, while the occupant's heads are turned.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in Girard's photograph of an empty bedroom. A thin mattress is propped up against a stained, mottled egg blue wall. The bed is fully made up, sporting a beaded covering. Old and new photographs of family members hang over the bed, framing the mattress and figuratively framing, one supposes, the life stories of the mattress's owners. There are enough narratives lingering in

IN OTHER VENUES

Amy Scurts at Angel Gallery
Until Aug. 20, 17 Ossington Ave., Toronto

Dead bugs with little hats!
Dead bugs with doll heads!
Dead bugs marching in formation!
Part photo taxidermist, part Picasso's fly-loving housewife, Scurts makes even the finest deaths meaningful (and, yes, morbidly funny).

This is Paradise at the Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art
Until Aug. 21, 917 Queen St. W., Toronto

A survey of Toronto's uptown Queen West scene. This is Paradise is suggesting all the usual grumbling — who and what is included, who and what isn't included — but we surely celebrate our own art history around here, so just go ahead.

R.H. Vaughan

this single image to supply a trilogy of intergenerational novels.

As Vietnam continues to shift to a market-driven economy, the hapazard, slapped-together look of Hanoi will inevitably disappear. You can't blame the residents for wanting new, shiny horses. Capitalism bring the speedy devil it is, Girard's photographs, taken just last year, are then already memento mori — which explains their dream, moonlit quality, the hint of melancholy.

I doubt, however, that many of Hanoi's actual residents will miss the traditional, chipboard-and-chicken-wire era Girard captures. Roughing it is only charming when you've got a return ticket in your backpocket.

Ilya Gelfer at Julie M. Gallery
Until Sept. 4, 10 Mill St., Toronto;
julieimgallery.com

After these two very didactic shows, Ilya Gelfer's suite of artistically delicate paintings are a quiet respite.

Gelfer's crafty focus pulling, focus releasing causes the viewer to first seek out the solid, fully materialized objects being studied, and then to drift toward the liminal spaces, the backgrounds and surfaces, all underpainted with muted colour. Absence and presence, negative and positive space, are neatly, even obsessively, balanced, but Gelfer's works are not overly painterly or forced.

Slight of hand rarely feels so honest.



galleryHOUSE

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