



## David Castillo Gallery Showcases Asian Art Through “Alien/Λ ⊂ ΙΣΠ”



COURTESY THE ARTIST & DAVID CASTILLO  
“Alien” curated by Yesiyu Zhao @ David Castillo, installation image.

The group exhibition, Alien /Λ ⊂ ΙΣΠ, at David Castillo Gallery brings together over 40 artists from the Asian diaspora. Curated by artist Yesiyu Zhao, there is a focus on the many uses and meanings of the word *alien*. From science fiction fantasies and the contemplation of othering, to immigration and displacement, the artists in the exhibition waded through these territories with grace and unabashed fervor.

Largely highlighting paintings, a few sculptural works add a textural element to the space. Yesiyu Zhao's own *Pink Flamingo* (2024) is a rust-colored porcelain work, a bisected figure balanced on a bed of sand on a pedestal.



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Huidi Xiang, *i'm on it*, 包在我身上, 2024, 3-D Printed resin, cloth, reciprocating swing motor, 9 1/2 x 10 x 5 1/2 inch, Edition of 3 plus 1 AP (#3/3). "Alien" curated by Yesiyu Zhao @ David Castillo.

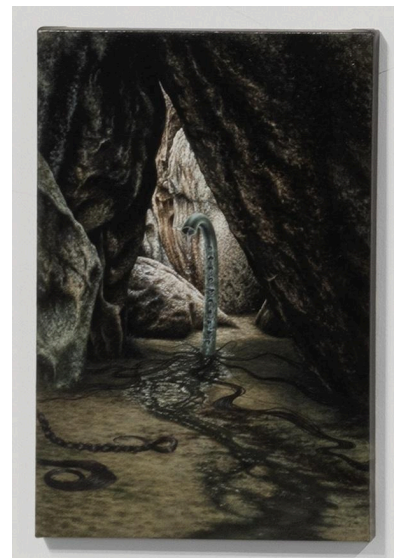
Similarly ambiguous is *Twisted bones: A hug* (2023) by Liu Xin. Xin's work hangs on the wall and includes two mouths without a face hurling bone-like tendrils made of bronze and porcelain teeth.

A third sculptural work is *i'm on it*, 包在我身上 by Huidi Xiang. While this piece has a more representational quality than the other aforementioned works, it is a disjointed cartoon-ish hand made of 3D printed resin, motorized and holding a washcloth. It emits an invisible whisper, a notation that encompasses generational labor, class structures, and care. Each of these works could have fallen out of the paintings that are present.

In *The Fifer* (피리는여인), a 2024 oil on linen work by artist Sun Woo, a lone faucet appears in a dark crevice or cave. It emerges from the ground not unlike the head of a serpent or a smaller version of the infamous sandworms of Lynch's 1984 film, *Dune*. There is an emotional current pulsating in the painted ground, but also functioning as a connector between the artists present.

Simultaneously uplifting and oppressive, dictionary.com defines the word *alien* as "a creature from outer space; extraterrestrial, a resident of one country who was born in or owes allegiance to another country and has not acquired citizenship by naturalization in the country of residence, a foreigner, a plant or animal species not originating where it is found."

Yanqing Pei seems to address this conglomerate of meanings head-on with their oil painting *TBD* (2024). The work features a softly colored, grey-toned palette and a figure buried under a plant resembling a tulip with pointed and spindly leaves.



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Sun Woo, *The Fifer* (피리는여인), 2024, Oil on linen, 16 x 10 3/4 Inches. "Alien" curated by Yesiyu Zhao @ David Castillo.

We only see one eye and the subject's nose peering skyward and wonder, "Were they transported into a land whose soil is less than accommodating?" The gaze could be read as cautious, scared, or perhaps just disillusioned.



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Lily Wong, *Arriving*, 2024, Acrylic on Paper, 13.75 x 22.5 inches. "Alien" curated by Yesiyu Zhao @ David Castillo.

Yesiyu Zhao constructs a narrative with *Alien* that is as comforting as it is disarming. Not dissimilar from the immigrant experience or that of the displaced, the work references moments of collective cultural memories, such as those represented by tea ceremonies, gardening, and mask making.

However, simmering below the surface is an uncertainty or defiance. This might be most evident in *Knockout* (2024) by Amanda Ba and *Self Portrait: Dragon Girl* (2024) by Song Kun.

Ba's *Knockout* features a female-presenting figure getting punched in the face, their left cheek red and bruised from a strike, now frozen in time.

Kun's painting features a soft glowing pink surrounding a shrouded figure, eyes peering outward, ready to strike. In one instance, it's as if the figure in *Self Portrait: Dragon Girl* exists in a moment outside the frame for *Knockout*. Each of these two figures are engaged in a battle of sorts with unseen opponents, but somehow feel like heroes.



COURTESY THE ARTIST & DAVID CASTILLO

Amanda Ba, *Knockout*, 2024. Oil on canvas, 24 x 30 inches. "Alien" curated by Yesiyu Zhao @ David Castillo.



SONG KUN, COURTESY THE ARTIST & DAVID CASTILLO, MIAMI & HIVE CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY ART, BEIJING | SHANGHAI  
Song Kun, *Self Portrait: Dragon Girl*, 2024, Oil on Canvas, 49 x 35 ½ inches. "Alien" curated by Yesiyu Zhao @ David Castillo.

Kun visage is loosely defined by an oil sketch of a dragon that appears to wrap around their body. It might be the most important work in the show, as a stance is taken, form contorted, histrionics embraced, and fortitude is presented— an unwavering strength.

This exhibition is the first of its kind in Miami and gleefully declares so by spotlighting the Asian diaspora work shipped from Antwerp, Austin, Bangkok, Beijing, Berlin, Brooklyn, Chicago, Hong Kong, Huangshan, London, Los Angeles, New York, Newark, Seoul, Shanghai, and Tokyo.

The variation and diversity of cities alone challenge the viewer to contemplate the Asian experience on a global scale. These makers have the opportunity to be part of a type of unveiling, peeling apart layers of an onion skin in order to get to the core, where unbeknownst to some, a diamond lives. Once light hits that space, all it can do is shine.