

Chloë Ashby

## Fast-rising painter Xiyao Wang tackles the infinite

Her vibrant abstractions stage boundlessness on an epic scale

Stand in front of Xiyao Wang's sprawling canvases and you'll find your eyes flicking back and forth between the brightly colored marks splashed across the surface. At times, you'll land on a solid single line, an anchor of sorts. At others, there are masses of red, yellow, or blue: bold in the center, fuzzy at the edges. The Berlin-based artist finds freedom in working on a large scale. 'I love that feeling of boundlessness,' she tells me. 'When I can't reach the edges of the canvas. It's like, instead of swimming in a pool, I'm swimming in the sea.'



Xiyao Wang. Photo by Tizian Baldinger. Courtesy of MassimoDeCarlo.

Her desire to break free stems from her early arts education. Born in Chongqing, Wang completed her undergraduate studies at Sichuan Fine Arts Institute, where she felt restricted by the traditional atmosphere and rigorous approach to art-making. 'I learned important skills: making portraits and still lifes, going outdoors to paint the mountains and people and buildings,' she says. 'I learned how to see the world around me, and how to transfer it to a painting. But I also wanted to transfer my own feelings and thoughts to the canvas.' In 2014, she moved to Germany, where she continued her studies at the University of Fine Arts of Hamburg and found solace in contemporary art. Inspired by abstract painters like **Cy Twombly**, as well as by memories of her hometown surrounded by mountains on the Yangtze River, she landed on her loose, spontaneous style.



Xiyao Wang, *Like a Firefly Chasing the Waves no.3* (left) and *The Crystalline Moon Palace no. 6* (right), 2022. Courtesy of the artist and MassimoDeCarlo.

Wang paints with oil sticks atop a layer of primer mixed with acrylic, creating vibrant strokes on subtly hued grounds. At Art Basel Hong Kong, she's showing three works with three galleries, including *Carve the time in the palm of your hand no. 2* (2022), a summery canvas of zesty orange lines at MassimoDeCarlo, with whom she currently has a solo show, 'A Carnival in the Forest,' in London. 'When I find a painting I like in a gallery or a museum, I take my time to observe it: one hour, sometimes two, enjoying the work and the atmosphere and the stories it tells,' she says. 'I hope that when people see my paintings, they have a similar experience.'

Xiyao Wang is represented by **König Galerie** (Berlin, Seoul); **MassimoDeCarlo** (Beijing, Hong Kong, Milan, London, and Paris); **Perrotin** (Paris, Hong Kong, New York, Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai, and Dubai); and **Tang Contemporary Art** (Beijing, Hong Kong, Bangkok, Seoul). 'A Carnival in the Forest' is on view at MassimoDeCarlo in London until March 11, 2023.

Chloë Ashby is an author and arts journalist based in London. Her first novel, *Wet Paint*, was published in April 2022.

Published on February 27, 2023.

Caption for full-bleed image: Xiyao Wang in her studio. Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin. A dark filter

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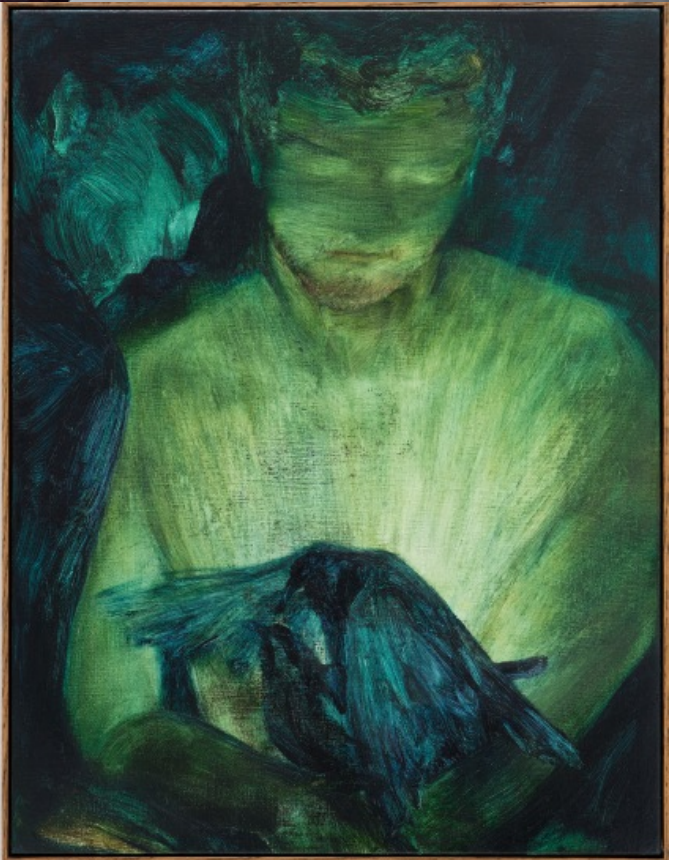


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