

MONTREAL



(</sites/default/files/images/Yu-1.popup.jpg>).

Jinny Yu: Halves (2012): Oil on aluminium, 61 x 56 x 10 cm. Images courtesy Art Mur, Montreal.

By James D. Campbell

Phenomenally restless – never one to rest on her laurels – Jinny Yu has once again demonstrated her gift for formal invention in new work that is decisively contemporary and owes

little to the language of late Modernism. In this show, titled *What Is To Be Done?*, she shows us that she can bend otherwise mute aluminium to her will in a way that invokes the anti-material and the purely liminal.

Jinny Yu
Galerie Art Mur
To November 3, 2012

These works remind us of the shotgun paintings of Margaret Evangeline, the Ville Platte, Louisiana-born, New York-based savant who literally shoots stainless steel squares with bullets that leave bevelled penetrations in the surface. Of course, there is no similarity in methodology here. These are two very different painters. And, it is difficult to envisage Yu hoisting grandpa's shotgun and bringing it to bear on mirror and aluminum. But Yu, like Evangeline, brings a lyricism and sensuous presence into play by crumpling her fields or abutting them with mirrored glass. Indeed, the spider-veined surface of a glass that has been found or broken by Yu reads as a worthy act of process art. This is more than mere novelty of facture – here is a close-quarters interrogation of what is still possible for painting now, if indeed we choose to read Yu's metal works as painting rather than sculpture per se.

There is nothing precious in these works or in their installation. They often lean up against the wall, further enabling their object status – and refusing to rest



([/sites/default/files/images/Yu-2.popup.jpg](http://sites/default/files/images/Yu-2.popup.jpg)).

Jinny Yu: Non-Painting Painting (2012): Oil on aluminium, 61 x 61 x 30 cm.

comfortably in two dimensions. Using aluminum sheet as a surrogate for canvas lends the work an objectual status soon subsumed by all that we bring to it, as observers, with a vested interest in projection and its aftermath. This subversion of painting *qua* painting has a 'flung ink' aspect to it that brings their physical geometry close to the gestural presence of the hand. In our imagination, the work takes flight. And, Yu brings a lyrical ambivalence to the paint application: sometimes, her brushwork is so much lovely tracework, at other times sumptuously self-present in its mien. It follows an intuitive path that betrays delicacy and restraint, on the one hand, and a curious literalness, or better, mindfulness, on the other. In any case, we are reminded that, in the end, Yu's first best destiny is that of painter.

Yu, an artist with deeply ingrained nomadic tendencies, pirouettes and shifts in her materials just as adroitly as she does in geographic territories. In one piece, Yu breaks the glass – and yet one is quite sure that seven years of bad luck are not in store, and yet leaves a comfortable margin for our own spectrophobia. She successfully unhinges the work from the discourse of late Modernist Painting, and the use of a plane mirror brings the spectre of the mirror image into play, as well as Lacan's famous mirror-stage and the Buddhist belief that hanging a small mirror in front of the door of a house will prevent negative spirits from entering.

Jinny Yu is a painter who wants to bring a new sense of materiality to painting. She explores her materiality with dogged perseverance from series to series. But, she is also questioning Modernist orthodoxies and intent upon conjoining material surface/support with the entirely liminal spaces that underlie, occupy and overwrite it. Finally, the works exhibited here are as much nomadic palimpsests as anything that Yu has done in the last many years. They possess an innate restlessness and a beguiling aesthetic grace that is hers alone.

Jinny Yu's work shows at General Hardward Contemporary in Toronto from October 20 to November 10, 2012.

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