

# Sherman Jiang

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*To resist commercial influence.*

*To provoke thought.*

*To open up new possibilities.*



*Sherman Jiang in her studio, 2024*

Sherman Jiang was born in 1977 in Fujian, China.

She studied fine arts at Fujian Normal University, where she developed the wide-ranging technical proficiency that would become a hallmark of her later work. She graduated in 2000, just as China's contemporary art scene was gaining prominence on the global stage.

For the next several years, Jiang continued living and working in China, moving to Shanghai in 2006 and then Beijing in 2011, setting up studios in well-known artist communities. During this time, she produced several series including *The Makeup Artist*, *Everything is Well*, and *Award Certificate* etc. These early works are energized with the contemporary social issues that would become a signature focus of her

overall body of work and represent her first attempts to use art as a way to “reconstruct reality.”

In 2009, Jiang’s artistic output took on a new direction and vitality with the series *Red Light, Green Light*. It marked a formal break with traditional painting and the beginning of her experiments in creating new artistic methods. In 2012, she relocated to California, where she remains to this day. This cross-continent move sparked an awareness of cultural frictions, as well as a vision of global unification.

This notion of breaking down borders is a recurrent focus in both the form and content of Jiang’s work. She resists being tied to a single genre or medium, with her work spanning conceptual paintings, installations, videos, photography, performances, and other diverse media. She also rejects labels that categorize her work as feminist, in favor of a broader, more inclusive approach that seeks to “dissolve gender equality issues.”

Her works are highly personal but also have a universal quality, engaging with the major questions and themes that animate a life. From birth and growth to death and loss. From the physical experiences of body, gender, and sexuality to the intangible matters of religion and spirituality. This focus on life and its meaning forms the common thread that runs throughout her large and varied body of work.

*Float* (2024) is a series inspired by the death of her father and the existential questions it provoked in her. Surreal images of floating bodies invite the viewer to consider the relationship between life and death, our origins and destination, and the transience of our own existence.

*Untitled* (2022-2023) is a response to the world-shifting events of war, economic crisis, and pandemic and the role that religion and spirituality play as balms to these societal wounds. Through images of religious iconography like Jesus and the cross, rendered in unconventional cute, cartoon-like style, the series poses the question “What’s the medicine to cure the world?”

*Masks* (2021) explores the body, gender, and sexuality through still-life inspired photographs, rendered in the negative on canvas. In a reversal of expectation, the subjects' faces are covered by a mask while the body is exposed. Enigmatic and full of tension, these images represent the artist's attempts to "influence a new order in the world."

*Life Cycle* (ongoing) is her longest running series, ten years in the making and counting. Through the lens of her own experience, it considers pregnancy, childbirth, and growth through sketches, paintings, photographs, and performance art. The works chart the course of a human life that, like a kaleidoscope, shifts with each new vantage point gained by age, life experience, and developing wisdom.

In all of Jiang's work, there is an underlying urgency. To reject mainstream conventions and limitations. To resist commercial influence. To provoke thought. To open up new possibilities. That urgency is expressed in Jiang's own reflection on the role of the artist: "An artist is never satisfied. She doubts, questions, wonders, and dreams. She creates."

Jiang has had numerous solo and group exhibitions in China and the US. Her works can be found in the Fujian Provincial Art Museum/Painting Academy in China, as well as in the private collections of individuals and institutions in the United States, Canada, the Netherlands, Australia, China, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia.

Select works can be viewed at the artist's website at [jiangxueman.com](http://jiangxueman.com).