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## Mie Yim's Phantasmagorical Realms

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*Installation view, Mie Yim: Drink Me”, showing “Vinyl Raptor”, 2025, and Rhizome, 2024, at Broadway Gallery, New York*

**By EDWARD WAISNIS** April 8, 2025

Brocaded and feathery miasmas once favored by the Victorian Symbolist Gustave Moureau with an additive dose of Pop-infused noodling (synthesized in the vibrant glow of light found emitting from illuminated discotheque floor \*) is one long-winded but apt description that may be applied to Mie Yim’s practice. Surrealism ushered in by Odilon Redon, another painter who worshiped at the altar of the luxuriant, hovers about as well.

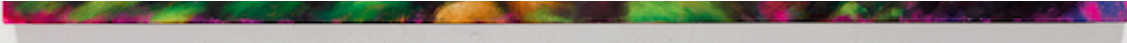
*Drink Me*, comprised of five substantial, and two of a more modest scale, canvases is the latest New York showing of Yim's output †. Conjuring reference to the elixir that led to Alice being propelled down the rabbit hole, the exhibition's title announces the artist's intent that are conveyed by her hallucinogenic visioning's.

From outcroppings to netherworld germinations, subterranean growths enliven *Rhizome*, 2024 that has all of the vibrating activity hovering around a vibrant plaid passage that appears like a beautiful quilt partially hidden by underbrush.

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*Mie Yim, "Ruby Cocktail, 2025, oil on canvas, 77 x 47 inches*

Yim's globetrotting path, departing from her native South Korea and subsequently spending time in Hawaii prior to settling in New York, that I find factoring in the mix of influences that resulted in the signature look of her work. To this point, the tropical air of *Ruby Cocktail, 2025* shows a grotto, with a lovely fiery blossoming holding the bottom center, that is as whacked out as any scene from an animated film by Hayao Miyazaki subjected to an acid-trip. From which a fuchsia sloe-eyed ophidian creature—the effervescence 'cocktail' of the title—rises from a rippling quagmire. A sense of menace might be detected, but a predominate spirit of buoyancy prevails, carrying the day, the goal of any pleasant altered experience.

Satin is the term I would ascribe to the surfaces—with that luminosity of sheen that is inherent to the nature of the fabric—to which Yim adds communion with the lushness of a bonbon.

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*Mie Yim, "Busby", 2024, oil on linen, 28 x 22 inches*

One of the smaller works, *Busby*, 2024, with its suite of cock-eyed discs jauntily carrying the upper left corner (in fact, highlights to the entire painting) offer evidence of reference to that paragon of 1930s all-singing-and-dancing extravaganzas—Busby Berkeley—while updating the sashaying to early George Condo vibes. There's also the resemblance to an errant parfait oozing with sweetness.

While there are aspects to the work that causes it veer into the territory of storybook illustration, a spirit of chaos and glut benefits the sense of mystery thus opening the door to discovery. Wrestling between the illustrative and the abstract, therefore, provides Yim with a path to her phantasmagorical realms. This hybrid exploration keeps the literal at bay.

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*Mie Yim, "Open Sesame", 2025, oil on canvas, 60 x 70 inches*

*Open Sesame*, 2025 by way of the arrangement of its chunky forms and systemic furrows befits Philip Guston's monolithic approach. Particularly evident along the left edge where the forms morph into a bent elbow with a cascade of uniform strands (curls) hovering above the cave. Whether a conscious reference, or not (admittedly, it would be an absurdity to think that Yim is not cognizant) the Modern master's 'powdered wigs'—that peek and/or rest over/on high brick walls that appear in his revered late paintings—are evoked.



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*Mie Yim, "Wotan", 2024, oil on linen, 24 x 18 inches*

Yim would benefit by painting on velvet. Just take a look at *Wotan*, 2024 as evidence towards this possibility, the bulbous forms, residing between cacti and biomorphic apartment block, emitting or absorbing fauna and human being alike—alternately a beatifically malevolent gristmill for all living things—fuzzily painted on a dark ground and named after a Norse mythological figure of power utilizing Anglo-Saxon nomenclature. I do not state this as a slight, nor as a connotation of derision, but rather acknowledging talent to take the challenge. Yim, it is my belief, would surmount the defeatist attitude accorded the utilization of materials that fall outside the elevated regards of painting, jointing the auspicious ranks who have gained respect for unconventional substrates. Running the gamut from sumptuous velours to lowly gingham and even silk and polyester, Sigmar Polke, Kim MacConnel, Julian Schnabel, Jean Michel Basquit (who enlisted an ever-widening range of grounds, beyond materials, to include doors, plywood and even fencing) are amongst these trailblazing precursors.

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*Mie Yim, "Plush Bot", 2025, oil on canvas, 70 x 60 inches*

The work might elicit responses from ravers, as well as collectors of stickers and bouquets of plushies to be dangled from their backpacks, mostly due to the inkling of

manga similitude (again, that illustrative quality)—that is if they could be convinced to look away from the glare of their over-exposure to the ether that has its eye fixed on severing † us from reality and progressive autonomy.

Yim obliquely acknowledges this demographic, in a sense, in *Plush Bot*, 2025 that titularly pays homage to this possible peripheral following through the acknowledgement of the visual wealth in these social realms, depicting fur that alternately melts into cake icing. All tripped out in the guise a psychedelic rock album cover one might imagine commissioned from James Ensor. There is an adolescence in the work that portends development of future probings via absorption, with indifference to pandering.

\* A reference claimed by the artist herself.

† Concurrently, at Smack Mellon, in Brooklyn, is an exhibition comprising nearly one-hundred pastels that Yim produced during the course of the pandemic (and has termed Quarantine Drawings) titled *Spiked Garden* (<https://www.smackmellon.org/exhibition/mie-yim-spiked-garden/#>) running thru April 27th.

‡ I have intentionally cribbed from the title of the wildly popular Apple TV+ series *Severance*, that posits the splitting of one's work and life through the deployment of technology by way of a brain implant and a mind numbing algorithm, for its applicable topicality.

**Mie Yim: *Drink Me***

**Broadway (<https://broadwaygallery.nyc/exhibitions/62-mie-yim-drink-me/>)**

**375 Broadway, New York**

**March 13–April 19, 2025**

EDWARD WAISNIS

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Edward Waisnis is an artist and filmmaker. Additionally, he is the Producer of two Quay Brothers films, *Through the Weeping Glass* and *Unmistaken Hands*, as well as having overseen the facilitation of their 2012 MoMA retrospective. His writing has appeared in Art New England, COVER, ARTextreme and STROLL.

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