

Press Release

July 5, 2016

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JESSICA TAM: GRAPPLING, FALLING, WINNING, LOSING

On View: July 5 – August 31, 2016

<http://www.wmingart.com/exhibitions/grappling-falling-winning-losing>



Jessica Tam, Detail of *Welcome to the Jungle*, 2015, Site-specific ink paintings, 40 x 960 inches (102 x 2438 cm), Exhibited at Oxbow Gallery, Northampton, Massachusetts (*Welcome to the Jungle*, Jun 4-28, 2015)

New York, US – July 5, 2016 – W.Ming is pleased to present “grappling, falling, winning, losing,” an exhibition of work from a five-year span (2010-2015) by Jessica Tam.

Tam begins making a painting by closely observing scenes from professional wrestling and then processes them through a series of mutating images, wherein performances of struggle become abstract forms. The emphasis on series stemmed, originally, from Tam’s printmaking process and a general interest in the variety that can result from reworking any single image. The sport becomes a matter of form, movement, and shape.

The exhibition “*grappling, falling, winning, losing*” features paintings, drawings, prints, and two site-specific paintings, *Welcome to the Jungle* (2015) and *Leglocked* (2016). This exhibition’s title is

borrowed from David W. Pritchard¹ and A.B. Robinson²'s essay on Tam's site-specific painting *Welcome to the Jungle*, which wrapped around the gallery walls like a black and white filmstrip surrounding the viewer. As Pritchard and Robinson write:

The photographs Tam paints from or with are immaterial to the figures she derives from them, many of which are recognizable as visual tropes of wrestling: the iconic square rings surrounded by ropes, the referees clad in striped shirts, the contorted and bulging bodies and faces of muscular men in the middle of grappling, falling, winning, losing, wrestling.

Pritchard and Robinson also discuss the importance of humor in Tam's work, specifically in *Welcome to the Jungle*:

This, perhaps, is Tam's greatest achievement: to pursue humor in painting without relying on someone somewhere else to serve as the dupe at whose expense we laugh. This means that what humor we find in these paintings is never primarily ironic, nor is it some sort of satire either of its materials or of the history of painting. Through the repetition of figures composed of mutilated and recombined bodies, themselves twisted and distorted into all kinds of strange and remarkable (and, yes, funny) positions, we see not only the negation of pictorial accuracy but also a Utopian proposition about the future. Tam uses the flexions and contortions of wrestling figures to wonder, in painting, whether or not we might remake the world instead of destroying it. It's a question worth asking, and—in these paintings—worth seeing.

Tam also embeds humor in titles of the serial work featured in “grappling, falling, winning, losing.” *Welcome to the Jungle* (2015) refers to the familiar Guns N' Roses song title and dense tropical vegetation, *Periscope Periscope* (2013) alludes to a period when the artist was undergoing periodontal surgery and thinking of submarines, and *Colossus* (2014) simultaneously references the legendary bronze statue of Helios at Rhodes and the fictional Marvel Comics superhero also known as Piotr Nikolaievitch Rasputin. The humor derived from doubling in the titles similarly mimics the humor arising from the shifting forms and imagery hinging between figuration and abstraction.

¹ A. B. Robinson is the author of the chapbook *Thirty-Six Stop Motion Films of the Summer* (Industrial Lunch Press). Her poetry has appeared in *TINGE*, Lady Churchill's Rosebud Wristlet, *N/A Magazine*, and elsewhere. She is one of the editors of *Industrial Lunch* magazine. In the fall she will attend UC Davis to pursue her MA in Creative Writing.

² David W. Pritchard is a member of the editorial Central Committee of *Industrial Lunch*, a magazine of poetry and visual art. He is the author, with Greg Purcell, of *More Fresh Air* (Industrial Lunch Press) and, with Kay Gabriel, *Impropria Persona* (Damask Press, forthcoming). Recent writings (prose and poetry) can be found or are forthcoming in *Tripwire*, *The Brasilia Review*, *Tammy*, and elsewhere. He studies poetry, political economy, and Utopia as an MA/PhD student at UMass Amherst.

Jessica Tam

Jessica Tam was born in Sacramento, California and has exhibited work in New York at Schroeder Romero, The Painting Center, and Slag Gallery as well as in Chicago at LG Space. She has been an NEA Fellowship Recipient at the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts and was the AI Held Affiliated Fellow at the American Academy in Rome. Most recently, she has shown at The Box at Knox College, the Oxbow Gallery in Northampton, and the Joanne Toor Cummings Gallery at Connecticut College. She received a BA from Dartmouth College, a BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and an MFA from the Yale School of Art in 2010. More images of her work can be seen here: www.jessicajtam.com

W.Ming Art

W. Ming is a private art advisory and consulting company founded in 2010 by Xiaoming Zhang. W. Ming represents artists for exhibitions and sales, and provides private sales and art advisory services for private and institutional clients globally. W. Ming has professional team members in Europe, America, and Asia; the company specializes in modern and contemporary art, especially in the field of Asian modern and contemporary works. W. Ming has two office spaces, one in Beijing and the other in New York.

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