

For Immediate Release

Pixy Liao: Comfort Zone

23 January – 9 March 2024

Opening Reception: 20 January 2024, Saturday; 4:00-6:30pm (artist will be present)

Artist Talk: 20 January 2024, Saturday; 5:00-6:00pm (conducted in English)

Venue: Blindspot Gallery (15/F, Po Chai Industrial Building, 28 Wong Chuk Hang Road, Wong Chuk Hang, Hong Kong)

Opening Hours: Tuesday to Saturday, 10:30am to 6:30pm (Sunday and Monday, by appointment only); closed on public holidays

Blindspot Gallery is pleased to present **Pixy Liao's** first solo exhibition at Blindspot Gallery, marking her debut solo exhibition in Hong Kong. The exhibition titled "**Comfort Zone**" features selected works recently created by Liao, encompassing photography, video, and ready-made sculpture. Liao is known for carefully staged photographs of her and partner-collaborator Moro. Her works upend traditional representations of heterosexual relationships by inverting gender roles, often placing Moro as the subservient male muse and herself as the domineering artist-orchestrator. Tongue-in-cheek and imbued with a sense of humor, Liao's work straddles between the performative and the autobiographical, unfurling her and Moro's growing relationship.



Experimental Relationship is an ongoing photographic series which began in 2007, featuring Liao and Moro in quotidian everyday scenes, in various configurations and across different locations. Oftentimes Liao is captured in positions of dominance over Moro, inverting the prevalent male gaze in the history of images. In **After Psyche Revived by Cupid's Kiss** (2019), Liao holds up the camera release shutter, looking defiantly at the viewer, whilst Moro lies lifeless and vulnerable across her lap, dressed only in a maid apron. The photograph takes inspiration from the 18th century sculpture *Psyche Revived by Cupid's Kiss* by Antonio Canova, but with a twist. Liao takes on the role of Cupid, son of Venus, reenacting the moment before he revives the goddess Psyche (played by Moro).

In **Story Time** (2022), a chair-seated Liao reads *Emmanuelle*, a classic French erotica written in 1967, on female sexual exploration, to the naked Moro who kneels on the floor by her side. The scarlet red of Liao's dress, nails, and lips underscores risqué undertones, punctuating the serene afternoon with an erotic allure. In the room imbued with vintage cinematic warmth, Liao stares down at Moro, as if hinting in secrecy a seductive message...

Contrary to portrayals positioning Liao above Moro, Liao's **Bed Wrestling** series (2019) depicts the couple as equal rivals in combat. The series playfully captures the duo sporting spandex singlets, posing in choreographed wrestling stances. They fight and tackle one another, pulling each other's arms and legs. The staging of these interactions on a hotel mattress even hints at sexual connotations. In **Bed Wrestling 3014 (Rear Chin Lock)**, Liao gives Moro the neck hold, locking him powerlessly in position. She describes pro-wrestling as violent, and yet, as the fighters become entangled in combat, there is an awkward intimacy. It is akin to a relationship where two lovers are tied between the opposing forces of love and hate, struggling for power. "As we grow older together, our relationship changes... Part of it is about sharing power with him," Liao says.

The titular work of the exhibition, **Comfort Zone** (2020), shows Liao on a beach, crouched between the legs of Moro who wears a Toddland underwear, a gift from the artist, printed with a vintage-grained image of a woman and a man running hand in hand. Sarcastically objectifying Moro, the photograph closes-up on his buttocks, with a phallic toy attached to



his body dangling above Liao's head. Looking pleased, Liao peers through the gap between his legs in her girly sunglasses.



Other photographs set on Coney Island Beach in New York where the artist is based are *Two Eggs* (2020) and *Twisted Eggs* (2020), showing a white cloth pouched with a pair of eggs, a rather amusing play on male testicles. The male genitalia are historically emblematic of patriarchal power yet here we see them grabbed between the red nail-varnished hands of Liao and wittily placed over her crotch. Whereas the penis is a symbol of authority, the breast is antithetically the totem of matriarchal nurture. In *Breast Spray* (2015), Liao creates a ready-made sculpture by affixing a silicone breast to a water sprayer filled with milk. She weaponizes the female organ by altering the nipple into a nozzle. In the film, *Milking the garden* (2015), Liao activates the sculpture, spraying milk at her garden, and ultimately at Moro.

Liao's interest in film and sci-fi permeates in *Space Girl Met Earth Boy* (2022) where we are confronted with a series of cinematic tableaux portraying the close encounter between space girl and earth boy in a futuristic Zaha Hadid interior. Space girl, played by Liao, who had set out to eliminate toxic masculinity from the face of the universe ends up falling for her gentle human subject, Moro. In *Space Girl Met Earth Boy 4804*, the Astro girl gently places her hand over naked earth boy's abdomen. The room is bathed in a golden sunset glow, setting the mood for the sci-fi fantasy love story.

Embodying the most private views shared between lovers, *For Your Eyes Only* is a photographic series of bodily close-ups wherein palpable images of touch intensify sensations of intimacy. A hand with red nail varnish draws explicit attention to her fingertips over the other hand which holds onto a *Golden Mouse* (2014). The skin-to-skin contact hints at desire and sensuality. Paralleling the blanketing of hands yet disparately conveying the emotional synchrony between long lovers, *G7b9* (2021) captures a quiet moment of intimacy between "he" and "she" as they play the piano keys together. The "uncommon harmony" created from the oddest of chords, G7b9, embodies a unique synergy only the two can resonate with.



About Pixy Liao

Pixy Liao (b. 1979, Shanghai, China) is a multidisciplinary artist who works with photography, installation, video, and performance to create works that undermine patriarchal stereotypes in a heterosexual relationship, humorously revealing the multitude of ways to be together. Liao is known for her staged photography where she poses with her partner and collaborator, Moro. Her carefully constructed tableaux culminate into her long-term and on-going photographic project, *Experimental Relationship* (2007-present). These self-portraits wherein Liao intentionally subverts traditional hierarchies in gender relations, are performative and occasionally bawdy. Liao's recent solo exhibitions were held at Centre for Contemporary Photography (Melbourne, 2023), Light Work (New York, 2022), Fotografiska (Tallinn, 2022; Stockholm, 2021; New York, 2021), and The Rencontres d'Arles (Arles, 2019). Liao took part in group exhibitions at Johnson Museum of Art (New York, 2023), X Museum (Beijing, 2023), Shanghai Centre of Photography (Shanghai, 2023), Art Gallery of Western Australia (Perth, 2022), Kalamazoo Institute of Arts (Michigan, 2022), Fotomuseum (Winterthur, Switzerland, 2022), National Gallery of Australia (Sydney, 2020), and HOW Museum (Shanghai, 2020). Her work is collected by Alexander Tutsek - Stiftung (Germany), Fort Wayne Museum of Arts (USA), He Xiangning Art Museum (China), M+ (Hong Kong), Museum of Fine Arts (USA), The Center for Fine Art Photography (USA), and White Rabbit Collection (Australia), among others.

About Blindspot Gallery

Set up in 2010, Blindspot Gallery is a Hong Kong-based contemporary art gallery. The gallery began with a primary focus on contemporary photography and image-based art, and has evolved to include diverse media in contemporary art. The gallery represents both emerging and established artists, mainly from Hong Kong and the region but also beyond.

For enquiries and media interviews, please contact Ms. Edith Lu at +852 2517 6238 or by email edith@blindspotgallery.com.

Pixy Liao, *After Psyche Revived by Cupid's Kiss*, 2019, Archival inkjet print, 200 x 150 (Ed. of 1) / 150 x 112 cm (Ed. of 1) / 100 x 75 cm (Ed. of 3) / 50 x 37.5 (Ed. of 5)

Pixy Liao, *Comfort Zone*, 2020, Archival inkjet print, 200 x 150 (Ed. of 1) / 150 x 112 cm (Ed. of 1) / 100 x 75 cm (Ed. of 3) / 50 x 37.5 (Ed. of 5)

Pixy Liao, *Space Girl Met Earth Boy 4804*, 2022, Archival inkjet print, 150 x 200 cm (Ed. of 1) / 112 x 150 cm (Ed. of 1) / 75 x 100 cm (Ed. of 3) / 37.5 x 50 (Ed. of 5)

Pixy Liao, *G7b9*, 2021, Archival inkjet print, 150 x 200 cm (Ed. of 1) / 112 x 150 cm (Ed. of 1) / 75 x 100 cm (Ed. of 3) / 37.5 x 50 (Ed. of 5)

(Images courtesy of artist and Blindspot Gallery.)