

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ling Jian – Between Figure and Fracture

398 West Street, New York, NY 10014

December 13, 2025 – February 7, 2026

Opening Reception with the artist: Saturday, December 13, 2025 | 6-8 PM

Eli Klein Gallery is pleased to present *Ling Jian: Between Figure and Fracture*, the artist's second solo exhibition with the gallery. The exhibition traces Ling's ongoing inquiry into the convergence of realism and surrealism, the fragility of the human spirit, and the estrangement of our digital age.

Ling Jian is among the most technically accomplished and conceptually distinctive painters to emerge from the first internationally recognized generation of Chinese contemporary artists. Working primarily in oil on canvas, Ling combines traditional Chinese motifs with contemporary forms, using flowing blood-vessel patterns in cinnabar—a pigment symbolizing life force and spiritual energy—and precise *gongbi* brushwork to bridge tradition and innovation.



Green Mars, 2023. Oil on canvas.
54 3/8 × 46 1/2 inches (138 x 118 cm).

Ling Jian's practice can be understood as a ritual invocation of the human spirit. Ling Jian's paintings transform anxiety, tension, and uncertainty into a vivid visual language. On canvas, Ling Jian manifests fragmentation as well as reconstruction, allowing the surreal and the real to coexist and give rise to new virtualities.

Across the works, human forms obfuscate and splinter into abstraction. In *Dry Provisions and Roses*, echoes of the body refract through glass, mirroring the human relationship with digital disruptions. The series advances through *Porcelain Heart*, *Frozen Tentacles*, and *Fasting*, as dis/figuration gives way to hybrid entities hovering between the human and the divine. In *Ivory Tower*, Ling's forms mutate between anatomy and abstraction, neither fully human nor fully alien, but suspended in a state of perpetual biological reinvention.

Spring Shoots No.1 and *No. 2* turn this meditation toward regeneration. The bamboo shoot, a symbol of vitality and spiritual endurance, emerges from darkness with surgical clarity. Its pale, luminous surface and sculptural stillness suggest post-organic mutation. Vegetation thus becomes another site for exploring transformation, echoing the bodily fragments and hybrid anatomies of Ling's other works.

ELI KLEIN

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Ling Jian's fascination with surrealism can be traced back to previous hyperrealistic portraits. In *Flying Gown*, Ling extends exploration of beauty and mortality to the constructed image of the feminine. Merging the precision of gongbi brushwork with Western realist portraiture, these imagined women, conceived as representations of Eastern beauty, reflect a meditation on illusion and representation. In *Flying Gown*, the artist overlays a woman's body with imagery drawn from bird paintings found in the Forbidden City, both obscuring and revealing the subject. The female body becomes, in *Flying Fish*, a vessel for reflection on identity and illusion.



Spring Shoots, No.2, 2022. Oil on canvas.
39 3/8 x 31 1/2 inches (100 x 80 cm).

Ling Jian's "Apocalyptic Visuality" operates as an experimental lens. Rather than creating unified figures, his compositions remain incomplete, reflecting humanity's instability in a digitally fragmented age. For Ling, fragmentation does not represent an end, but a posture; a conscious rejection of the unconscious logic of algorithms, and a shining light of humanity within the alienation of technology.

About Ling Jian: Ling Jian's work has been exhibited in solo shows including *Dry Provisions*, Yuan Art Museum, Beijing (2025); *Remount to Decade*, Waldorf Astoria Beijing Art Center, Beijing (2024); *Tang Contemporary Art*, Bangkok (2019); *Tang Contemporary Art*, Hong Kong (2016); *Klein Sun Gallery*, New York (2015); *Gana Art Center*, Seoul (2014); *UCCA Center for Contemporary Art*, Beijing (2011); and *Today Art Museum*, Beijing (2010).

Group shows include *Being Art Museum*, Shanghai (2023); *Cang Art Museum*, Hangzhou (2022); *Poly Art Museum*, Beijing (2019); *Encountering Asia and Europe*, Parkview Museum, Beijing (2019); *Counterparts in Harmony*, Ludwig Museum, Koblenz, Germany (2017); *National Museum of China*, Beijing (2015); *Minsheng Modern Art Museum*, Shanghai (2012); the *2nd Beaufort Triennial*, Belgium (2006); and the *China Oil Painting Biennale*, Beijing (1993).

Ling Jian lives and works between Hong Kong, Beijing, and Berlin.

Inquiries:

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