



# Art and film collide in Yoora Lee's cinematic oil paintings



The painter and film fanatic watches movies before starting a new work, evoking the on-screen “moving image” through delicate horizontal brushstrokes.



Yoor Lee paints memories and emotions as if she were viewing them at a “movie theatre” – “a drama with evocative music and melancholic colours.” Fascinated by the unique viewpoints, compositions and colours which abound in the world of cinema, the artist will often watch films in her studio before beginning a new piece. Later, she’ll make copious sketches before settling on a composition and then articulating it in oil paint, using her unique style of horizontal strokes to compose forms. Through this delicate layering of thin oil paint, her artworks seem to tremble with momentum, “like a video on a TV screen”.

Beginning her technical training in South Korea where she was born and raised, Yoor moved to Chicago to continue developing her personal style: “Instead of just painting subjects from reference, I’ve graduated to telling stories through my work.” The kind of story that Yoor likes to portray are often ones that are hard to describe simply. For example, recent experimentations have led her to depict the “love encounter”; “a painful collision of different things and at the same time a mixture of ecstasy”.

The “love encounter” in films is often captured as a dizzy sensory overload. But Yoor points out that this “passionate type of love often feels unrealistic compared to what really happens in life”. In her painting *Poom*, she captures the sadness of separation towards the end of a relationship. Expertly evoking the overwhelming emotions that

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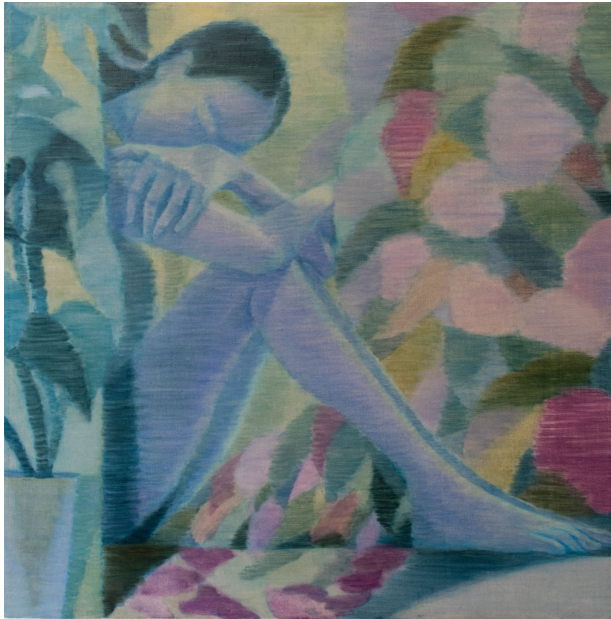
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become attached to our sense of smell, the painting describes “the longing for a loved one as a scent”, she tells us. In pale, melancholic hues, a seated figure emerges from textured brushstrokes. Leaning into their folded arms, the figure takes a deep breath in as they remember a loved one through their lingering scent.



Above Yoora Lee: Poom (Copyright © Yoora Lee, 2022)

The influence of cinematic language on Yoora’s work is beautifully articulated in *Prologue*. In films, impossible viewpoints can be created by splicing different perspectives together, altering the passing of time or colour grading the moving image. In lieu of studio lights and a team of editors, Yoora uses just her paintbrush to collage multiple memories together. Like a “single large self-portrait”, this painting compresses multiple perspectives, her “reality, fantasy and memories juxtaposed in one space”.

When she’s not looking to films for inspiration, Yoora will chase fleeting inspiration from song lyrics or interpret

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compositions from her own writing. *Mirror room* is a direct response to one of these musings. Before picking up the paintbrush, she noted down the strange feeling of witnessing her multiple “egos” appear before her, “both lost in memory and drifting in different spaces”. The finished piece interprets the artists internal emotional landscape into an exterior space – “my various selves reflected through the inner mirror”.

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Elfie joined It’s Nice That as an editorial assistant in November 2021 after finishing an art history degree at Sussex University. She is particularly interested in creative projects which shed light on histories that have been traditionally overlooked or misrepresented.

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