

MICHAEL REID

SYDNEY

BERLIN

BEYOND

Kathy Liu

Odyssey

Michael Reid Sydney will commence our 2026 exhibitions program with the most ambitious project to date from Eora/Sydney-based contemporary painter Kathy Liu. Now available to preview digitally and in person by request, Liu's new series takes the title *Odyssey* both as a nod to the Classical Greco-Roman inflections of the curious, inchoate forms that play out within her abstract compositions – figures that slowly cohere through gossamer clouds of colour, lending her large-scale paintings the feeling of a faded fresco or timeworn tapestry – and to the open-ended process that produced them. For Liu, this approach is another odyssey of sorts, embracing the serendipitous digressions and chance encounters that emerge through her painterly wanderings.

"None were preplanned," says the artist, whose forthcoming solo exhibition will be her first to unfold across our entire flagship ground-floor space. "Instead of letting the idea lead to action, I reversed this, beginning with action, letting myself embark on a personal odyssey, a wander towards the notion of an idea. It's almost like a jack-in-the-box, full of surprises, and I enjoy surprising myself." Awash with an almost celestial luminosity, *Odyssey* represents a confident and sophisticated honing of Liu's singular vision and technique, even while her methods remain open to the unexpected, ethereal and ineffable possibilities of an intuitive abstract practice – a process likened to "a game of chance" in a 2024 *Belle* magazine profile.

"What might begin as an exercise in loose, tonal abstraction can take a delightfully unexpected turn as amorphous pools begin to coalesce and playfully enigmatic, inchoate figures emerge through diaphanous wafts of colour," noted the *Belle* story. "Redolent of hazy memories, nocturnal musings or half-remembered dreams, the resulting compositions feel alive with emotion, poeticism, a sense of magic and effervescent movement."

Discussing her *Odyssey* series, Liu says she imagines her paintings as a visual analogue to stream-of-consciousness writing – bringing another literary dimension to a series that feels imbued, albeit with delightful ambiguities, with gestures to classical tales, epic narratives and oral histories held in the mind's eye. "Just as our thought processes are very rarely linear and defined, my works, an introspective reflection of the subconscious mind, don't present clearly bound storylines," says the artist. "Instead, I would like to invite my audience to wander through the paintings, to explore the potential narratives within them."





Kathy Liu, *How to Capture a Shooting Star*, 2025, oil on linen, 140 x 240 cm (diptych), framed, \$14,500





Kathy Liu, *A Trapped Moon*, 2025, oil on linen, 130 x 170 cm, framed, \$9,500



Kathy Liu, *The First Song of Orpheus*, 2025, oil on linen, 130 x 170 cm, framed, \$9,500





Kathy Liu, *The Maze*, 2025, oil on linen, 130 x 170 cm, framed, \$9,500



Kathy Liu, *Through the Underworld*, 2025, oil on linen, 130 x 170 cm, framed, \$9,500





Kathy Liu, *Meeting Harlequin*, 2025, oil on linen, 130 x 170 cm, framed, \$9,500

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