

UNITITLED (SELF-PORTRAIT)

VIELA HU

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Artist Statement

To portray yourself, you must confront your own gaze and those of others questioning: who are you? The play with ambiguity continues throughout Hu's practice. Here, it is a play with femininity through the body of an Asian woman. In the return of gaze, the viewer's habitual expectation of the female subject's passivity is denied, but no answers of her identity are given. The layered, gestural brushstrokes and the dripping paint melt along with the figure. Everything about the piece is fleshy and corporeal. The square canvas is like a container for the artist's body. The artist stretched the canvas and prepared the fabric in clear gesso, so the raw, rough, imperfect, skin-like canvas would show through the paint. The piece is a visceral physicalization of the artist's inner self-examination in search for a concrete identity when faced with the task of completely a self-portrait. The palette swirls in confusion and chaos with movement in all directions. The piece is inspired by works of Willa Wasserman, Petra Schott, Jennifer Packer and Morgan Allender. Like the title suggests, the portrait invites only an exploration with the artist of her own identity. To give an answer would be restricting herself.



Viela Hu, *Untitled (Self-Portrait)* (2024)

Oil on canvas

48 × 48 in.