

HEART OF A LIONESSE

SURROUNDED BY MASS-PRODUCED TOYS AND CONSUMER GOODS DURING HER CHILDHOOD, THIS CHINESE CONTEMPORARY ARTIST DEVELOPED A FASCINATION WITH THE INTERSECTION OF CONSUMERISM AND ART - A THEME THAT PERMEATES HER WORK AND CAUGHT THE ATTENTION OF A LEGENDARY STYLE HOUSE

BY EMMA FLOYD



Sun Yitian, born in 1991 in Zhejiang, China, has rapidly emerged as a prominent figure in contemporary art. Her upbringing in Wenzhou, a city renowned for its manufacturing and trade, profoundly shaped her artistic perspective. Pursuing her passion for art, Yitian graduated from the Painting Department of the China Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA) in Beijing in 2015. She continued her studies at CAFA, earning a master's degree in 2018. Demonstrating her dedication to academic and intellectual growth, she is currently completing a doctorate in Literature at the School of Humanities at Tsinghua University in Beijing.

Yitian's artistic journey is distinguished by her hyper-realistic style, primarily executed in acrylic on canvas. Her works often depict vibrant, cartoon-like animals, decapitated Ken dolls, and human figures resembling mannequins. Meticulously rendered with invisible brushstrokes, these subjects capture the flattened experience of a superficial, consumer-driven age. Through her portrayal of mass-produced objects, Yitian explores the tension between allure and unease, prompting viewers to reconsider the societal implications of cheap labor and consumerism.

In 2024, Yitian's collaboration with luxury fashion house Louis Vuitton significantly elevated her international profile. As part of LV's Women's Pre-Fall 2024 Collection, her playful animal motifs adorned ready-to-wear garments, leather goods, trunks, accessories, and fragrances. This partnership seamlessly fused contemporary art with high fashion, injecting her youthful energy into the brand's iconic designs.

Yitian infused Louis Vuitton's classic monogram with her quirky animal figures and surrealistic designs. Handbags prominently featured her brightly colored animal motifs – cheeky pandas, mischievous rabbits, and fantastical creatures – woven seamlessly into the accessories. The brand's iconic trunks, symbols



of craftsmanship and tradition, were reimagined as canvases for her vivid narratives, blending elegance with playful modernity.

The collection celebrated Yitian's artistic vision, with bold prints bringing her paintings to life on silk and other luxurious fabrics.

Rooted in her broader commentary on consumerism, the designs felt strikingly at home in the high-fashion world. Beyond aesthetics, the collaboration was a triumph in marketing and storytelling, reinforcing the interplay between art and commerce.

For Yitian, this collaboration was far more than an expansion of her audience; it was an opportunity to challenge traditional boundaries between art and commerce. Known for her hyper-realistic paintings critiquing consumer culture, she transformed functional luxury items into wearable art, inviting customers to defy cultural norms and bring her thought-provoking, conversation-stirring pieces along on their daily jaunts and journeys.

Today, Yitian's work continues to captivate audiences. Her collaboration with Louis Vuitton expanded her reach and underscored the symbiotic relationship between art and fashion, solidifying her influence as a dynamic and innovative artist in today's global art landscape – and she's only getting started. **■**

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