



One Kind Voice

Interview
May 2026



Judy



Maggie

FEATURED GUEST

Judy Gee

Judy is a Taiwanese-American painter who has made Hong Kong her home. A local artist painting about local topics, social and cultural observations. Her paintings reflect on heritage, culture, identity, and transformation.

HOST

Maggie

Founder of onekindvoice.com, a platform for mindfulness and meditation



Judy Gee

INTRODUCTION

Dear art lovers and introspection lovers,

This essay is of conversational nature, remaining true in nature to our couple of dialogues with Judy Gee, a painter rediscovering life, patterns in life and in our society, through the lenses of many cultures we live in. Judy reveals to us that she sees her paintings as questions, and that art is indeed about connection and that behind all the themes, the patterns that we try to inquire about, art ultimately transcends culture.

We will find so many introspections about Judy's process as an artist and general observations about the cultures that form us till the questions about ourselves now, what can we uncover, what layers can we peel off and reach our essence. Among the key words transpiring is transformation, temptation, choice, labels. Taking all that apart, who are we inside? Judy asks all of us really. The reflections on the glaze of the intriguing object of the exhibition, the delicious "donut", lead us to how our very identity melts.

"What is left once we strip all that away? We have to keep asking?"

We would never see a donut again that same way. An object of desire, an object offering a fleeting moment of satisfaction. A very tempting object. We can now see our connections with art, culture, language, though a new perspective altogether and keep asking, how do we make a choice to transform our lives.

"So, while you're here and you are interacting with everybody, and your art again, also as an observer, not as a painter, you are already forming something, and like—like you mentioned, you know, there is no— there is no beginning and there is no end, whatever we are doing as artists, we are always creating something, we have some idea. There is a seed and there is this kind of bridge from our idea to how we are going to deliver—deliver in the sense how we are going to actually manifest it into a real, you know, artwork and start working on it, and I think that's a different kind of perseverance that is needed to do that and a lot of patience as well, I think."

I concluded that we all have the capacity for us to—to be reflexive about that, but also to choose joy at the end of the day, and, you know, not to feel so much hardship about that, no matter where our deep dive into the nature of our human nature takes us.

Thank you so much for taking the time to hear us out and observe and take in Judy's insights.

Kindest wishes with many more kind voices,
Maggie

01

Maggie: Hello, I'm Maggie. I'm the founder of One Kind Voice, a platform for mindfulness and meditation, but also for art, creativity, and journeys that transform our lives. So, I would like to have a chat today with a painter I discovered recently in Hong Kong, and she just held her exhibition in Hong Kong at PMQ. Her name is Judy Gee. I will invite now her to introduce herself, and then we will go a little bit through the idea and the concept of the exhibition, and life in general—how did we come to this topic which, you will understand soon, is quite intriguing in itself. So, I leave now the mic with Judy. Yes.

Judy: Hi everyone, I'm Judy Gee. I'm a Hong Kong-based artist. I'm primarily an oil painter. I have one sculpture—my first sculpture in this exhibition—but my past, my past experience is mostly oil and acrylics. This is maybe my—this is my second solo exhibition in Hong Kong. I've had two group shows before that.



Exhibition - “Underneath the glaze”

March-April 2026 | PMQ

Maggie: Yeah, that's—that's fantastic. That's great. So, when I met you first—because I always like to recollect how we met—luckily for us, we met recently, so I still have the full memory. You've mentioned you actually have an entire exhibition around the topic of donuts! Which is quite, you know, tempting, it's related to what we are attracted to and how we perceive things. So, would you like to give us maybe an insight on how did you come first to this idea, and then how you developed it? I remember you said you worked on it for around ten years or—or more. So, it's quite something, you know, that you put a lot of thought into.

Judy: Yeah, so this exhibition is a series of donuts. It's—I think the total is fifteen paintings, and it's pretty much three series within one series, all on donuts. The title is **Underneath the Glaze**.

Judy: Which kind of implies that it's something more than donuts, because really, it's *an exhibition about donuts that's not really about donuts.*

Maggie: That's right.

Judy: So, the idea came from—and Maggie—as you said, I was—I've been painting this series over a span of ten years, on and off. Just when I have an idea, I'll come back to it. I don't paint just to paint something; *I'll paint something if I have a thought or idea, I feel inspired, and just this inner need to get out and get it on canvas. So, that's how I work.*



So, it began with the idea where—I was living in Shanghai from '05 to maybe '15, 2015. And at that period, Shanghai was expanding and progressing at a lightning speed. Most obviously in a materialistic sense, and that they were just making so much money so quickly, and it was at a shocking pace. Uh, I had a previous series about Shanghai where I would use the word “chai”, which is the character for "demolish." And that was, you know, observing the transformation of the city where they would just tear down buildings so quickly. It would be blocks—blocks would disappear in maybe a week. And they tore down buildings so quickly that they had to write this character in red on the buildings so they didn't tear down the wrong buildings. That's how fast they were progressing.

So, that series was about transformation of urban landscape of a city, the history, all the layers, and then maybe personal transformation of what we go through. That was, in conjunction to the donuts, but a—a little bit prior, but really kind of in conjunction with the donuts. And I mean, they're all about transformation. I think *the running theme in my work is about transformation and is about layers—uncovering layers.*



Transformation No.2

2015 | Oil on canvas | 130 x 100 cm

Judy Gee

Judy: And so, the donut—it started with the idea of what does temptation look like visually. Because I was seeing so much indulgence, everything was so tempting. Uh, as I mentioned, people would go into a Louis Vuitton store and buy a whole wall. Not one bag, but a wall, like 30 bags. And to me, that was just an insane amount of money. And so, I think as artists, what we do is observe. We observe what is happening in society, what is happening in history, and I think meaningful art records your time. And so, that was my time in Shanghai, what I was observing.

So, I thought, what is—what's a good visual for temptation? And I thought donuts. Donuts are juicy, they're colorful, they're seductive, they're voluptuous, they're beautiful—which temptation is beautiful—and they can get really messy, like temptation. And so, *if you see the donuts, I purposely paint them as a whole donut.* No crumbs, no bites, nothing—perfectly whole. And that is because I'm trying to highlight the moment of choice. That lingering space between when you have the thought to do the thing, and then you're deciding whether or not to do the thing, because that choice could change your life, take you on a completely different path. So, I'm trying to *remind people about our choices and how— how conscious are they, how intentional are they, is really the moment I'm focusing on.*

But then as I painted more of these temptation donuts—which were originally just huge donuts, 100 by 100 centimeters, which is pretty obnoxiously big if you see them—and it was on purpose. It was—I'm purposely trying to be obnoxious and in your face to show the temptation. And so, they're just sprinkles, the temptation donuts.



**Temptation:
Blue Donut**

2019 | Oil on Canvas | 100 x 100 cm
Judy Gee



**Temptation:
Chocolate Donut**

2018 | Oil on Canvas | 100 x 100 cm
Judy Gee

Judy: And then I thought, well if temptation goes unmanaged, what does that become? And it becomes addiction. And I started thinking of other things to sprinkle on donuts, so I began with pills—pharmaceutical pills specifically, because when I painted it at the time, there was all this discussion about um, addiction to pharmaceuticals. This was many years ago. Like Ambien, things like that, painkillers. You—you see—you read a lot of celebrities who accidentally overdose because they're mixing things, and you know, it made me question the responsibility of society, responsibility of the medical system that we put our trust in, and our own responsibility. Are we expected to manage these things when we go to, you know, the system to try to help us, and instead we get hurt? And *this isn't about blame or judgment or anything, it's observation, and it's about intentional conscious choices again. Whose responsibility is that?*

So, I saw a trend in society along with the pharmaceuticals, along with social media, about how we are just kind of getting into an addiction society. It's becoming an addiction culture, and it creeps up on you out of nowhere because it could come in any form, like overworking, over-exercising, and a lot of mothers over-giving, over-loving to the point where you're empty. You have nothing inside. So, that's—that's where that came from.



Addiction:
White Donut Addiction

2023 | Oil on Canvas | 100 x 100 cm
Judy Gee



Addiction:
Pink Donut Addiction

2022 | Oil on Canvas | 100 x 100 cm
Judy Gee

Judy: And then I went on to putting crypto on a donut, so greed; bullets, violence—which I think is has been relevant and will continue to be relevant, as we can see today what's going on in the world; social media, I have an emoji donut. And then—and then I went on further to *explore where does our behavior come from, how are our choices formed.*



**Addiction:
Crypto Donut Addition**

2022 | Oil on Canvas | 100 x 100 cm

Judy Gee

At some point we leave our parents' house, we leave our home, we become our own independent people, we—we continue to make choices. Where—where does that come from? So, I started learning about behavioral sciences, uh, where does addiction come from, trauma, things like that. I'm just, you know, curious about humans.



**Addiction:
Gold Bullet Donut Addition**

2022 | Oil on Canvas | 100 x 100 cm

Judy Gee



**Addiction:
Emoji Donut Addition**

2024 | Oil on Canvas | 100 x 100 cm

Judy Gee

Judy: And I concluded that it comes from conditioning from maybe childhood, environments, in combination with our unique personalities, our unique um, I guess formula of how we react to our environment. And so, I started kind of uncovering my own layers of how I've been affected by the way I was raised or the places I lived. I grew up in Taiwan and the US, pretty much equal parts during my formative years. And I think that really shaped me in that I had this sense of not really belonging anywhere for the majority of my life growing up, where I felt not enough this way, not enough that way. People would be confused about, you know, who I am, what I am, because you couldn't quite put me in a box. And that's not just me. I think that's a lot of people feel that way who are third-culture kids or who moved around as adults. And in the end, I just figured, well, I belong everywhere and nowhere, and I'm the one who determines where I belong, ultimately. I think that's what we need to come to.

And so, I started painting donuts with uh, Chinese motifs. So, it's a Chinese motif on a donut which is Western. The Chinese is clearly my culture. So, this —this one, you can't see it but the blue, it's like blue peonies on a white donut glaze.

Maggie: Glaze.

Judy: Glaze, yeah.



**Porcelain Donuts:
Blue on White**

2023 | Oil on Canvas | 50 x 50 cm

Judy Gee



**Porcelain Donuts:
White on Blue**

2023 | Oil on Canvas | 50 x 50 cm

Judy Gee

Judy: And it's—I purposely painted so it—it's kind of, you question is it porcelain or is it glaze. You're not really sure, because identity is blurry. You don't really know, and it's always morphing, and we're always changing, and I think we're always questioning. And then porcelain is interesting because it's a very ancient traditional Chinese craft art form. And here I put it on a donut, and you're combining the two cultures.

But also, the history is that it was purely Chinese, then Westerners came to China and liked it, and they took it and kind of made it their own. And now say the Danish are very famous in porcelain, but it's wholly made in Europe, but it's still called China.

Maggie: And also, white and blue.

Judy: Yes, and also white and blue. But they've kind of tweaked the motifs so they're a little bit more mixed, not the traditional traditional Chinese motifs. So, they've made it their own. And I find that interesting *how cultures will just naturally blend like that, organically blend like that, to a point where I don't think either side can claim it anymore.* It just is what it is. And I think we are—we are what we are also.



Porcelain Donuts: No end and no beginning

2024 | Oil on Canvas | 50 x 50 cm

Judy Gee

Judy: And—and then so I started exploring that more. I have a yellow and turquoise one. Those are, you know, you see that kind of porcelain. It used to be, you know, reserved for the emperors' porcelain. And nowadays, this kind of porcelain you see a lot in North America in like casual Chinese dim sum restaurants, things like that. So, we're talking about breaking the—maybe that kind of a—a class barrier, socio-economic barrier through porcelain, also cultural barrier where we're kind of redefining, re-doing the narrative about our own culture, our own history, and making it our own stories. It's kind of how I see these donuts morphing into it.



Judy: And then my last one, I ended up in a sculpture piece, which is a pretty large, I think the donut measures 100 centimeters by 100 centimeters. It's a stainless steel sculpture piece with melting drips on the bottom. It's called **Melting Reflections**. Now, at first glance, because I've painted my balcony space all pink and sprinkles on purpose so it would reflect off the donut, because the donut is highly reflective, very mirrored. And the reason is because I want the reflection to come out. And at first glance you think, "Oh, what a cute selfie thing." Because you can, you know, walk around it, depending on what you're wearing, it's going to reflect in different ways, distort it. But really, the meaning of it is distortion—distortion of how you see yourself, how the world sees you, your place in the world, what you think your place is in the world, or how the world has labeled you. *Everything changes all the time—perspective, perception, our realities are constantly changing.*



Melting Reflections

Stainless Steel Sculpture Piece with Melting Drips | 100 x 100 cm

Judy Gee

Judy: And the shape of the donut lends itself perfectly to this distortion where you really do see yourself clearly. And ultimately, the question is, if you take all your labels away, for—I'll use myself as an example for, a long time I was a daughter, then I became a wife and then a mother, and that was my label. That was my face. I'm an artist, I swim, I love the open water swim, so that's another label. **But take all these labels aside, off, and who are you? Who are you inside? That is the question this—this sculpture piece is asking.**



Open Water: Swimmer 1

2024 | Oil on Canvas | 92 x 62 cm

Judy Gee

02

Maggie: Yeah, thank you so much. I mean, it was, really, you know, a dense and very interesting presentation of—of your works. And of course, this, you know, gives us also some further material into some questions. So, I would like to go a little bit back to when you started actually this series, if you could remember your intention. Because we are talking about, you know, intention overall when we are doing anything. We are talking about choice, which I think is, again, a very interesting topic, as all of them. But I'm always, I'm very intrigued by the first moment that made you decide on it. I understood the backdrop, you know, with Shanghai and the indulgence and how we were consuming, but also like when you started your first painting on that, how did you perceive this intention, you know? Because, of course, after you worked for ten years, you have a much more complete kind of overview of what has transformed into this work. But in your first painting, which was—which one?

Judy: It was a pink donut sprinkles, but that one's been sold. Uh, yeah, so it's not—it's not here. Okay.

Maggie: So, in that one, did you have all these layers that you went through, or it was something just temptation—you look at it and I want to grab it and this represents consumption or, you know? I let you disclose the intention with that first, first, you know, seed of the—of the series.

Judy: I think, uh, painting, art in general is a very interesting process. At least for me, I—I can only speak from my experience, but I suspect this happens a lot with creatives in general. You have an idea, a thought, and then you have a—a vision of where it could end up, but you're not always in control of that is exactly where it's going to go. You just think, "Oh, I want to get there," and then you try to start the steps in between here and there. But you don't really have control and you got—*it's kind of a dance between what comes to you and how it forms versus you trying to control the art of the piece. So, so art's always interesting and surprising in that that it does not always come out how you envision.*

So, the pink donut I was talking about—you see them now, they're very juicy, very in your face, really three-dimensional. The very first pink one I painted was actually very flat, because I used to do graphic design.

Maggie: Right, right.



Temptation: Pink Donut

2018 | Oil on Canvas | 100 x 100 cm

Judy Gee

Judy: A lot of artists will do graphic design when they're early in their career because they're avoiding actually jumping in and being a painter, because that's too scary. It's too—*it's too scary and vulnerable to do the thing you love to do, so you'll dance around in other things that are close to it before you do the thing you love to do.* So, it came out very graphic, very flat, but it just didn't feel right.

But going back to the intention of the painting, I think the intention of pretty much all my paintings or why I paint is it comes from a—it's a question. **My paintings are questions. I'm asking the viewer, "Do you see what I feel, what I see? Do you feel what I feel?" Because art, to me, is about connection.** It's—it's its own language, and I think that's why art is so powerful, because it transcends culture, language, upbringing, everything. Now, at the PMQ, I have a lot of different kind of people coming in—tourists, locals, old, young, little kids—and I see the—the way they react to my art, and it's always positive. But they always have kind of their own thing, and the different donuts speak to each person differently, which to me just reinforces the idea of how our environment and how we react, our personality, we—we're all very unique. And that's why some people get drawn to certain donuts and not others.

So, I find that fascinating. And also the way they interact with the sculpture piece, you know, everyone interacts with it differently, which is really lovely to see. But going back to intention again, it's really a question where I'm just posing a question, "Do you feel what I feel?" because I think art ultimately should trigger feelings. And that's something the mind can't do. And art, I think, is its own language, it's like a soul-to-soul language. So, yeah.

03

Maggie: Yeah, and I—I think, you know, if I can go through a little bit maybe, it's when you are creating anything or any form is also like a sort of surrendering. So, like I just want to link it with the fact that you said you don't have really control. It can start with something, but actually you don't really have control in the process. You don't know how it's going to end, you don't know—and you started, you know, with graphic flat 2D, and you are moving into 3D. It was something that was evolving differently for you. But do you have the sense of like, when you're in the middle of it, when you're in the middle of painting anything that you actually maybe you are not there sometimes? I have this vision that I'm—I see myself from somewhere else, you know, and it's just a sign for me that I'm totally surrendered to the moment of of creating.

Judy: Yeah, I find when I start new series, because I have a few series that I've been working on, and whenever I start the very first painting of that series, because I haven't done it before, there's a discovery process in the technique and everything. It's all kind of, you know, I'm trying to figure it out too. And it seems that my pattern seems to be in the beginning, it's really fast. I'm in a flow, it comes out. Then I'll hit a point where I'm just hitting a wall, and I'll get really frustrated for a little bit, and I'll feel lost, and I'll feel kind of annoyed. But I also know if I push through it, I'll get there, which is usually what happens. But that seems to be in general my pattern—flow, then you hit a wall, and then you get through it, and then you complete it and it becomes this thing that you didn't imagine, and then you feel amazing. I can say that when I finish a painting, the only other thing that has felt more fulfilling to me is when I had my children.

Maggie: Right, right, right.

Judy: But each painting is like giving birth to me. They do feel like my children, and when I sell a piece, I love selling a piece, but I also feel a little—

Maggie: Yeah, you are separating.

Judy: My baby's leaving. But say for the donuts, I've been painting for ten years and I, you know, I have a system down. So, by the, you know, third, fourth donut, I'll have it, and it'll just be flow.

So, at this point, yeah, these come out pretty—pretty flowy with ease, not much resistance.



Mr Softee Truck Pawn shop

2023 | Oil on Canvas | 50 x 40 cm

Judy Gee

04

Maggie: Right, right. It is absolutely very—very interesting. And when you are talking about, you know, the different kind of themes that you kind of layered on the—on the donut, you know, you mentioned crypto, we mentioned bullets, we mentioned Chinese art, we mentioned emoji. Um, is it something that—um, you know, I assume you saw in your immediate let's say society, and that was something that you linked immediately, right? So, would you like to talk a little bit about the emoji, because of course, you know, it's something so common and everybody knows—

Judy: Yeah.

Maggie: —about the painting with the emojis.

Judy: This one was actually painted a few years ago. I can't remember actually which year, but it's a few years ago. And that's when, you know, Instagram and everything, it had already kind of taken on, but it was really at its height. And the emoji thing, it—you could see people were almost taking it like a new language, like a challenge where let me use as few words as possible and just communicate with emojis. And I thought, "Well, isn't that interesting?" you know, and it's cute, and I do that too. I challenge myself by only communicating with emojis. So, I thought, hey, that'd be a really cute thing to put on um, on a donut. So, yeah, that's where the emojis came out. And really the underlying, yeah, dark, shadowy side is social media addiction.

Maggie: Right, right, right. Yeah, very interesting. I just remember—if I can find any image, I will try to send you later—I attended a lecture of, I think, an art professor, from a different university, I think maybe in China, I can't remember exactly. But actually, he picked up on a similar topic, I didn't realize before, and then he used this form to write actually some letters to see if people can transform the emoji, so rather than from a short text to take it to a longer text, and for people trying to understand, to communicate or make sense of the entire sentence. So, it looks stunning and also it's kind of intriguing because you want to still figure it out, but it's puzzling and maybe at the end you will lose your patience with doing so, right, in a longer text?

I think in a shorter text it's different.

But um, yeah, I like that as well. And I know this is also one of the pieces, I think when we were sitting last night here, that a lot of people were coming and they were attracted to, but I also remember last time when we sat and we had a little chat, I think somebody came and went directly to the bullets one, and we were both of us a little bit surprised, because, you know, it's not something that you will also understand there are bullets at first sight.

Judy: Right.

Maggie: So, for me, I didn't realize actually we are talking about bullets until I got closer. As you mentioned, when people come and interact, sometimes, you know, they are just called(drawn) to a particular donut.

Judy: Yeah, actually the emoji one, I had a conversation with someone yesterday who made a good point, I felt, is they're talking about the language of communication and where it started from and where the alphabet started from was actually just from people, I guess in Egypt, who are trying to figure out how to—how to simplify hieroglyphics. Not everyone could read hieroglyphics back then.

Judy: So, symbols of blah blah blah, and then I was like, "Well, isn't that funny, because aren't emojis kind of hieroglyphics too, our modern hieroglyphics?" And then also the way—the other thing as you were talking that reminded me was—you talked about the professor, is how people combine emojis now to imply a whole sentence. It's similar to Chinese poetry. If you study Chinese poetry, you could have just four characters, but within those four characters is a whole two-five page concept of some super deep meaning that not regular people can understand because it's highly intellectual.

Judy: But you only—you really only need four characters, and emojis, I feel like, kind of have that aspect to them where you could— it's a simplified language.

But the other side of emojis too, which is originally where it came from, is yes, I said social media, but really it goes back down to the—the basic human thing that I'm talking about, that could be greed, violence, or vanity. Social media is, at the base of it, the root of it, is vanity. And at the end, I think human beings are vain, and all of this is ego stuff. And the other thing I'm getting to is uh, I guess *I'm touching on the idea of stripping away the ego*. That's incredibly hard to do, near impossible, but I think that's the path that I'm looking into with these too, is unmasking, like you said layers, there are a lot of layers to the donuts, like physical layers, intellectual, psychological layers, there are a lot of layers, and emotionally with us. If you keep digging and asking questions and keep digging, there are so many layers. With the bullets, yeah, I find there are some people that go directly to the bullets. Some people think they're lipstick.

Maggie: Yes. That was—unfortunate, my first impression too.

Judy: Which I find so interesting. Which I need to correct. And I think, no, but I think it's because, one, the shapes, yeah, they do look a little lipstick-like. And also because it's golden. Everything's golden, the bullets are golden, the lips—everything is golden. You'd automatically think it's some glamorous thing, your mind will just immediately put meaning on it as some glamorous thing. But the interesting thing is, bullets and lipstick have something in common, I think, in that they're both about power. So, bullets are about power, right? For sure it's about power. So is lipstick, in a way the feminine uses makeup or glossy exteriors as a form of empowerment. And the donuts, the other layer in the meaning of it is also about what is under glossiness, which is why it's called Underneath the Glaze.

Maggie: That's right.

Judy: Under our glossiness, what's going on in there. We don't always know.

Maggie: Yeah, and if I may just mention, like think this is the thing with, you know, when—I'm coming back to the concept of choice, and I think maybe sometimes our first reaction will be to pick up something shiny. But I think if we understand, not necessarily, you know, super shiny in the real terms, but something that on paper or visually is some sort of more attractive. But actually, when we sit back and we take a break, and we maybe we need to like go through two choices that we have in front of us, we kind of understand that actually, oh, this was not so glossy but it gave me much more let's say right information, right kind of feeling. But the other one was very glossy, but, you know, was missing so many kind of points that would be important for us right now. But if we don't take that time to sit back and reflect, I think our—it's temptation, and is also our reactivity, our reaction is just to say maybe yes to a choice that very shiny.

Judy: Right.

Maggie: And I think, I think this is one of the ideas I really liked about this work, because maybe we don't talk about so much about this moment of, you know, taking an important decision in our life. I'm not talking now about, you know, career or something completely different. It's just simply that in our life sometimes we take a decision just because it just looks glossy, and we, maybe we were not, you know, taught to evaluate any of this, and I think we touched last time, you know, like we are taught in school or else very little, we just figure a lot of things on our own.

Judy: What—what society wants. What, yeah. That's the other thing that I'm—I'm curious about now is like, you know, Michelle Obama has that book *Becoming*, with the and "becoming" this, "becoming" that, which I totally understand, but I think another question could be unlearning. What am I unlearning? And that does go with the choices that you're referring to, because I think a lot of the choices we make, I'm not sure we're even aware are those really our choices or is it someone else's choices—the voices in our head, the way we were raised, you know, our parents, society, what people expect of us. Is that really our choice or other people's choice? In order to know that, you need to uncover a lot of layers in yourself to get down to who you are, hence how I ended up with the self-reflection pieces. And the donut is, I'm trying to get down to that layer too, myself.

Maggie: Yeah.

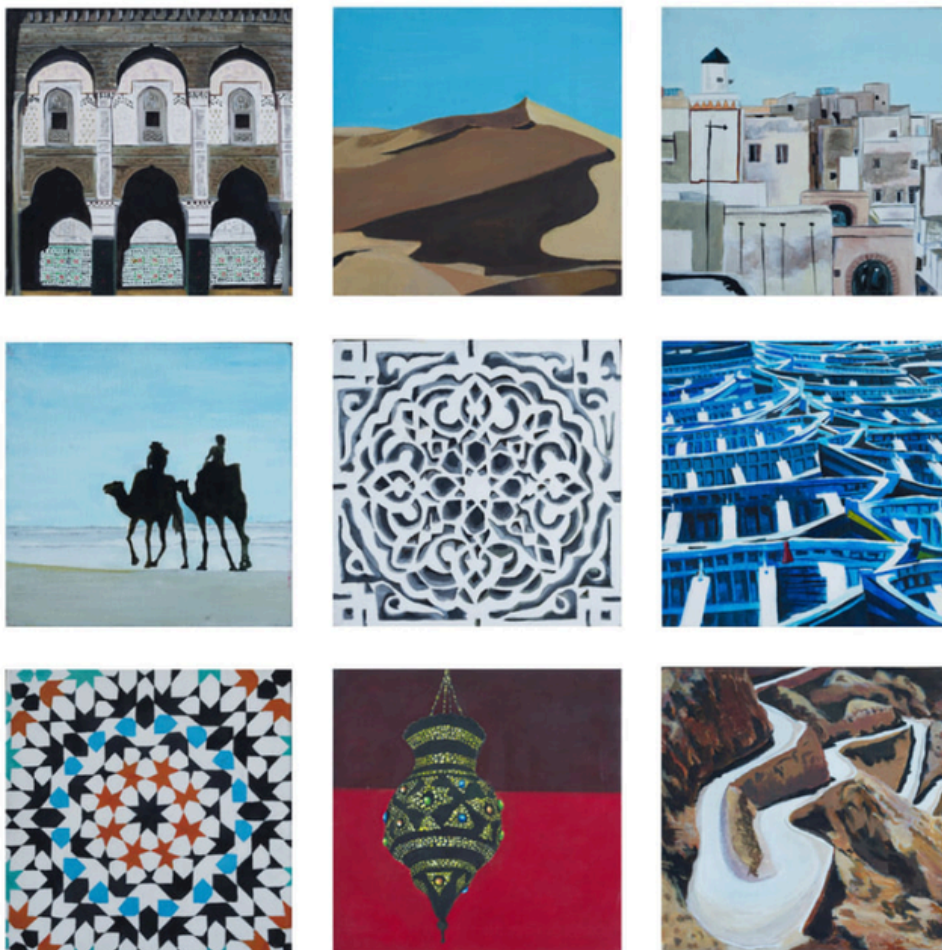
Judy: Who am I? What are my choices? What is really mine and what is really someone else's? It's a very difficult thing to untangle.

Maggie: Yeah, and takes a lot of a lot of years. And I—I, you know, when you mention ten years, I'm still stuck with the process. Of course, I know a lot of paintings take a lot of years. But I think it was such a journey of transformation for yourself also, you know, starting from the first one and the glimpse of the idea that I think it's very intriguing, and then going every year and delivering something more, and now here interacting with people that actually come and see.

05

Maggie: And I'm sure you had already so many talks with, you know, with a lot of people. Did you find a lot of common themes when you talked with people and you asked them how they align with what you were trying to express?

Judy: Yeah. So, that was a really interesting thing for me and that I do get a lot of tourists from all over the world, like every corner of the world, and children and adults. And they—they each think—they get it. I can do the explanation and I can see if I take the time to explain, their eyes will light up and they'll connect to it even more. But even before I do that, I can see they're already getting it in their own way. It's already speaking to them. And I found that fascinating that I feel like my hypothesis is right, that at the end of the day, we're all the same.



Morocco: 9 panels

2006 | Acrylic | 20 x 20 cm

Judy Gee

Judy: It doesn't matter where you come from, how you were raised, people want the same things. They want to be seen, they want to be validated, you know, and I think ultimately— yeah, people just want to feel connected. And I think that's what we're greatly missing in this world. And if we want to go on further, me, I think about the future, everyone's talking about AI. I think about my role as a creative in the AI world. I—I'm not against it, but how I—how I paint, I will probably paint more traditional sense, in that I feel that I'm on the side of championing the traditional arts, keeping the human touch. That's something AI cannot replace. Keeping that human-ness, the human quality of painting, of doing art, creating. I think that's my role, and that's the—the thing that I'm going to champion. But I do plan to work with AI. I think that artists can work with AI as a collaboration, as a collaborative—

Maggie: Right.

Judy: —partnership, which I think will be very interesting. Even the donut, I used AI to help me with that, right, that sculpture. Yeah, it's not that I couldn't have gotten there, it's just I got there so much quicker with the help of AI. So, that was another interesting layer to creating that piece. So, yeah, I think it will be a collaboration in the future. But I think keeping the creative arts alive is very important. Things like ballet, music, you know.

Maggie: Absolutely.



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Maggie: And we are coming back to exactly what you mentioned—to the connection. We will all need this connection with actually physical things, and everything. Not everything will be digital or, you know, shown on the screen. Uh, we need to still engage with artists, we still need to engage with art, and I think this is how we also kind of thrive, and we can create more. And for sure, as you mentioned, you know, AI will bring some tools, and we don't know what it will bring in the next ten years or so, but it will bring some tools that will just enhance some of this part that might be, you know, taking longer in different forms.

I will come back a little bit on the sculpture, um, which I enjoy thoroughly. And, of course, this is not, you know, a—a documentary or a video recording, we are not going to show, but we will show some photos. I enjoy so much like just going around the stainless steel surface, the mirror, and seeing how this reflection of me was transformed. So, at some moment in time sitting at the back, I just became aligned, you know, my dress was pink, I just became a complete circle, uh, integrated in the donut, so my physical appearance disappeared completely. I just was transformed in this full pink circle inside the donut. And it was so nice to take different angles, and also I think you mentioned because this is not a perfect—you know, first of all, it is not a perfect circle, it has some bends or it has some different shape, and is this combination between mirror, perfection, and imperfection. Would you like to add some more on that, because I found that very, you know, very interesting. You didn't aim to have like the perfect—and also like the—the trips, right, they are quite expressive.

Judy: Yeah. Well, I think you said it pretty well. Just pointing out how—

Maggie: Through the artist's voice.

Judy: I mean, yeah, it—the difficulty in creating this piece was finding someone who understood that um, where I want it to be imperfect but not perfectly imperfect, because there is a way you can make imperfections look perfect also—look contrived, look forced, and just not what I wanted. I want it to look really organic. It's a very hard material, which is not donut-like. Donuts are soft with dimples and curves and creases, but how do you make this very hard material mimic that? So, I was lucky in that I found someone who could do this, you know, he understood my vision. So, that was me and this person working together that created this piece. But yeah, I mean, it is about imperfection, even though it's a circle, and you can say a lot of philosophical points about what a circle means and culturally and everything and blah blah with the circle and the hole and the endless hole, all those things. There's all that. But I think that's why the donut is such a great vehicle, because it's trying to be perfect, but it's clearly not. And I think we are too.

Maggie: Yeah, and I loved it um, you know, when we were watching right, like how kids are attracted to that, and how they want—of course, we don't want to touch the donut per se, but at the end, it was a lot of interaction, suddenly. So, it became just this amazing kind of, uh, you know, attraction point which links exactly with the entire theme, right—the temptation when you see something like this, you want immediately to touch. This is, again, something for me when we go anywhere, when we go to a gallery, our first somehow instinct is to touch something. But actually, we shouldn't. But a lot of people cannot resist it or even myself, right, sometimes I just want to feel if it's wood structure or something, I would like to feel the structure, and I would like to understand, or if it's something with fabric, and even in the the recent, I think we mentioned last time, in the recent Art Basel, there was a lot of art embedding textile and fabrics, you know, over the layers, and I saw so many people getting so close and almost touching or really wanting to touch every single art piece. But there was so much temptation around that. I think it's less, you know, over a painting, but when there is a harder material or something they can feel, and this comes again with how we, you know, cannot just sit back. It's also something very—very instinctive.

Judy: Yeah. Well, I mean, kids do try to touch my paintings because it's pretty thick. The white part is pretty goopy and pretty thick, thick, and it is very, yeah, touchable. I would probably want to touch it too. Yes. And the donut is particularly interesting because little kids will go up and try to milk— Right, right, right, yeah. It's cute because from their perspective, they're that height, and that is their perspective. That's right. Which is just what the donut is about. You see everyone's perspective is different, everyone's interaction with it is different. That's right. And yeah, I don't like people touching and scratching it, but I also love to see the interaction, because art comes more alive when we have interaction. Art comes more alive when you have viewers viewing it. It's like— it becomes more powerful, the more people view it, the more people interact and see it and it has meaning. That gives me so much joy and meaning to see that it meant something to someone, you know, and hearing the feedback gives me so much encouragement, because it's a crazy thing to be an artist, because why would you— why would you want to paint something and put your heart and soul on canvas for random people you don't even know to judge? It's insanity. But somehow, artists want to do that. I don't know where that comes from either, I can't answer that. But when I see people interacting and feeling and getting, and yeah, wanting to touch—don't touch it, but I like that you want to touch it—that gives me a lot of joy and fulfillment.

And going back to the textures, I think—I think *the reason why people want to touch the textures and feel the paint is precisely the connection aspect, that you know it's not a machine.* You know that's human-made, and yeah, you can do textiles through a loom or through, you know, machinery and stuff, but something when you take it to an art form, usually, usually it is human-made, and you can see it because it's so imperfect.

Maggie: Yes, and somebody spent this time over that art piece.

Judy: It's quite complicated to think of something, to visualize it in your head, to make all the micro-decisions of the color, the textile—there's a lot of micro-decisions that come into art. And then execute it. Then after you execute it, have the audacity and confidence to display it. There's a lot that goes on with creating a piece of art.



Maggie: Yeah, and I think this touches on you were saying something earlier that reminded me, so—

Judy: Please, please, please. Is the epidemic of loneliness. And that's also what the donuts talk about too. Addiction is tied hand-and-hand with loneliness, for sure. You know, I mean, we are getting more and more lonely with the social media, with all the apps and everything. Something that was supposed to help us with connection in a more convenient way is now dividing us, I think. And so, my—*my point of this is can we—can we take back control? Can we take back control and manage ourselves, you know?*

Maggie: Yeah, and also, uh, manage ourselves and start looking for joy, like you know visiting an art gallery. I'm so actually happy you decided to have this in a special place. You know, PMQ is a great environment for that. It's not always busy. Of course, I'm sure it has its moments. It is like it's an individual gallery where you can take your time to look around, and there is not always a huge, you know, crowd. So, you know, as an observer, uh, you can take the time to actually look at every piece and sit a little bit with this, because uh, for me, I think, again, we were mentioning last time, in the art shows, we go, but it's so crowded, and actually you just run through everything trying to make the best of the show. I'm sure we would need more days, which we don't have, to go to every single artist. And every time I find something that resonates with my heart, I actually have no idea how I find them, because somehow like you were just mentioning about this moment when there is something, I just glimpse and I feel there is a connection with it, and then I go inside and I spend more time. But there is this— this contrast between missing a lot, you know, it can be a lot of things that maybe I have missed, that were so nice, and on the contrast, when I come here, is all dedicated to one artist. It's your place, I think we can also feel is yours, is not like a big gallery with representatives and somebody trying— I mean, it's such a, for me, it's such a privilege that I can sit, you know, with you, for sure, and you know learn about all this thinking process and your—, you know, how you poured your heart into this work. I mean, this is such an amazing and whoever comes here and gets to talk to you and, you know, you explain where it is coming from, this is such a special moment.

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Maggie: And do you see like, have you been to—because I just in my mind like to compare if you've exhibited somewhere else more crowded, and how did you feel, or do you always chose a more secluded location—I mean, not secluded, but PMQ is not secluded, but more individual?

Judy: I haven't really gone full-time like attacking this full-time until six years ago when we moved to Hong Kong, even though I've been painting my whole life. Like I said, it takes a long time for you to decide, "I'm going to do this" and call yourself an artist. There's all this stuff that happens before you—

Maggie: Absolutely.

Judy: —actually—

Maggie: But that's all the raw material that builds so much of you, right?

Judy: Yeah, I mean, also I dedicated a lot of my earlier years as a mother. That was my first dream is to be a mother, and my second is an artist, and as people say, well, women can have everything but not at the same time.

Maggie: Right, right, right.

Judy: And that is the thing about being a woman artist. It is inevitably harder. It is inevitably more difficult for us, especially at a later—later age where we don't get the opportunities say, and I'm not trying to whine or whatever, this is just the way it is, it's just reality that a lot of the opportunities are for younger artists.

And the art world has long been known to not be so supportive of women artists as well. I don't know why, but now I think it's changing. I think that women artists are getting more attention. And me personally, my view is it be a miss if the art world dismissed a woman like me, because I have lived and I have—I haven't done art, but I've always been doing art. If you ask me, "How long does it take to paint a donut?" I could say you two weeks, a month. Reality, a lifetime. Why? Because I've lived, because I've observed, I have opinions, and now I know who I am, and I think that makes my voice very powerful. And it would be a miss for the art world not to notice women, I think, who are older, have something to say, and now I have fire, I have urgency, and now I have the time, you know, which is— yeah, good, it's great for me now.



Hong Kong Taxi (Sheung Wan)

2024 | Oil on canvas | 16 x 20 in

Judy Gee

Judy: And the PMQ is a public space, so it is different than say the art fairs where there's a lot of um transaction going on and you feel that kind of urgency and anxiety in the air. So, the—the atmosphere is a little bit different.

Maggie: Yeah, exactly.

Judy: Perhaps it's not as calm. And there's a lot of art, a lot of really great art, it's very overwhelming, so yeah, you're right, it's a different experience on how to view art versus here where, you know, it's the PMQ, anyone can come in. There's no judgment here. There's—you don't need an art background, you don't need a degree, you don't need to be in the art world to come here. You know, anyone is welcome, everyone is welcome to look at it, to have an opinion—love it, hate it—it's open.

And yeah, so the two group shows I did previously was at a gallery—it's like an underground gallery um in Sham Shui Po. It was called Parallel Space, and it was a pretty well-known like underground gallery. But so I did the shows there, and um so that had a little more um traction, but like I said, because that gallery's not mainstream, they're purposely a little bit anti—

Maggie: Yeah, it's quite an interesting, yeah, concept as well.

Judy: Yeah, it's a very cool gallery, cool underground.

Maggie: Right, right.

Judy: But yeah, so that—you know, the art world has different sectors for different kinds of viewers and clients and stuff, so that's another thing. I think the— maybe more challenging part is to find out where you fit in. In the market, in the whatever, as an artist, where do you fit in, where is your voice most, you know, well expressed and well communicated. You'll—you'll find your people. Not everyone's going to like your art but there will be a few who will, and those are your people.

Maggie: Oh, absolutely.

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Maggie: Exactly, exactly. And I want to add that, you know, this space here after the, you know, the exhibition will close, then it becomes your workshop. It becomes your space where you paint, and this is your studio. And um, when you kind of finish with, you know, with a show, do you need some time to reset or —because for me, anytime I finish something or editing something, you know, I can't function for a period of time. Of course, I don't compare in any way, it's a different thing. But especially if I work on something that's a bit more important for me, but I cannot jump right away into the same area. So, would you take some time off, or you're already boiling some ideas that you want to go back to?

Judy: So, last year, I also had a show at the PMQ, but it wasn't open as long. It's only for two weeks.

And this one is a bit longer, it's like a month and a half, and I find it quite tiring, actually. To be a gallery person, I think it's pretty exhausting.

Maggie: Because you have to be present, right?

Judy: Yeah, you have to be present, you have to be on call and ready to present and talk. And then there are gaps where there's nobody comes in, and that's just how it is. And for me, I—at the end of it, I have an urgency to paint, where I have all these ideas and I'm kind of eager, but I can't paint while you're showing.

So, right now, I'm feeling that eagerness to paint. But yeah, I probably will need a day or two off just to reset and get back into painter mode, and then, yeah, get into it.

Maggie: Yeah, but it's—it's quite interesting as well, right? So, while you're here and you are interacting with everybody, and your art again, also as an observer, not as a painter, you are already forming something, and like—like you mentioned, you know, there is no— there is no beginning and there is no end, whatever we are doing as artists, we are always creating something, we have some idea. There is a seed and there is this kind of bridge from our idea to how we are going to deliver—deliver in the sense how we are going to actually manifest it into a real, you know, artwork and start working on it, and I think that's a different kind of perseverance that is needed to do that and a lot of patience as well, I think.

Judy: Yeah, it requires dedication. Creativity, because no—there no one's giving you a deadline, you're giving your deadline to yourself. It's difficult. You need, I mean, people think oh, it's so open. But actually, no. To be good at your craft, you need discipline. You need consistency. You need to just show up.

Maggie: Yourself, and I think it's quite difficult. And really do it continuously, you know, no doubt. I would like to maybe end on a note of joy, because, you know, we mentioned that, and we touched on that, and of course, again, it's coming back to the idea of the glaze, the idea of donuts, which they also bring joy, no, you know, of course, and a lot of people I think they are so tempted because they also bring joy. Um, but it's not necessarily about the temptation here, I think I just want to talk overall about the joy of, you know, creating this and showing and having this, you know, I don't know what—what I'm trying to say most is like feeling this empowerment for yourself as an artist to get it together with joy. I think that also brought you a lot of joy, not on—only to us as observers, but I think as an artist it also brought you a lot of joy.

Judy: For sure. And I think that touches on a point about where I was saying where I fit in in the art world. I feel like, and I have nothing to confirm this, this is just my opinion, that the donuts at least are a little bit unclassifiable, uncategorizable because of that. On a superficial level, you look at, "Oh, cute, colorful donuts. Isn't that cute?" and yeah, it makes people smile, it makes people happy, but the sneaky side of it is I'm delivering a darker subject on a joyful vehicle.

Maggie: Yes.



Judy: Where you—it's kind of like a Trojan Horse, where I'm delivering this something in a sneaky way, and you kind of don't know what hit you, like the emoji.

Maggie: Yes, you open the door, then you don't know what's come out from the—from inside of the [Trojan] horse, right?

Judy: So, the—the benefit of that is, I think it's flexible art in that way, that you could look at it as a superficial thing and get enough joy out of it, and that's fine. That's fine for me, that's fine for you, whatever works. Art is art.

Maggie: Yes.

Judy: Or if you're the kind of viewer who wants to look deeper, there is a deeper meaning, like that sculpture piece is a very good example. Clearly, it's very good as a selfie thing, clearly it's wow, oh, so reflective, but if you look deeper and dig deeper, there is a, you know, a much more powerful message. It's just whether or not you want to see it, so it becomes, yeah, interactive, it becomes multi-layered, or it could just become superficial. And ultimately, I do want to bring joy, you know, and I do like color. Either way, on a superficial, I enjoy the color, it's not that I don't think about, "Well, how would this look in your house?" I do, you know, so.

Maggie: But I think it's also like, in a way, a reflection of our life, right? I mean, no matter that we know of course some choices are more difficult or challenging, or our intention one day it's a good intention or maybe it's not good, but the idea that **we can still have the capacity for us to—to be reflexive about that, but also to choose joy at the end of the day, and, you know, not to feel so much hardship about that.**

Judy: Yeah, I think—I think you're—you're hitting—you're hitting it in that situations can be what they are. You can have war, and it can be ugly, but it's up to us how we show up, hence the donut has bullets, but it's a golden donut. The golden bullets, which makes you feel— happy. Gold is a happy color, it's a, you know, wealth color. So, I think, yeah, there can be darkness, but it's how you show up and it's a choice, yeah.

Maggie: All right, thank you so much, really appreciate it. It's very kind of you.