

# WIDEWALLS

## Not to Miss at PHOTOFAIRS Shanghai - Experimental Relationship by Pixy Liao



### **Angie Kordic, September 19, 2018**

Studied Photography at IED in Milan, Italy. Passionate about art, frequent visitor of exhibitions, Widewalls photography specialist and Editor-in-Chief.

The photographic works of Shanghai-born, Brooklyn-based Pixy Liao come at a time when the balance between genders stands on a ground more vaguely defined than before. Her images would perhaps have been among the “regular” examples of contemporary photography had the roles been reversed. Instead, it is her boyfriend who is “the subversive one” in their on-camera relationship, which gives the artist plenty of material to work with, in her explorations of the nature of “the

couple” and the “female experience”.

Indeed, the way Pixy Liao deals with the stereotypes of our day and age is humorous, yet it carries a note of seriousness in regards to the questions it poses. Add to this the fact that her works will now be exhibited in her homeland China and you got yourself a project one might even call “controversial”.

Just ahead of the opening of the 5th edition of PHOTOFAIRS in Shanghai, we talk to the photographer about her participation, represented by Chambers Fine Art, and the inspiration behind the project which continues to impress art lovers and collectors alike.



Left: Pixy Liao – Hang in There, 2015. Inkjet print, Edition of 2, 200 x 150 cm (78 3/4 x 59 in) / Right: Pixy Liao 廖逸君 credit Shen Wei 摄影 沈玮. Courtesy Chambers Fine Art (New York & Beijing)

## Pixy Liao’s Experimental Relationship

**Widewalls:** What triggered you to create works based on gender dynamics?

**Pixy Liao:** The Experimental Relationship began after Moro and I dated for one year. In the beginning, I was just using him as a “prop” in my photos. Sometimes I would ask him to play dead in the bathtub or climb into a suitcase naked.

When I was showing these photos on class, my teachers and classmates’ first question would be “How can you treat your boyfriend like that?” It was quite surprising to me, because I thought it was totally normal. I asked him to pose in my photos and he did it. It was natural for us. Then I started to make photos of us together.

**Widewalls:** Like many photographers, you are the protagonist of your own work. What does seeing the work from both perspectives bring to your practice?

**PL:** Doing self-portraits is a paradox. As a photographer, you would really like to see what is it that you are taking in the photo. But when I’m shooting myself, I would never know how exactly I look or where I’m at in the frame. It’s all guess and hope. In a way, I feel there’s something else is taking the photo for us.

**Widewalls:** You seem to have a willing partner “in crime”. What are your boyfriend’s impressions of the work you’ve been doing?

**PL:** In the beginning, he was just cool with everything I do. Now, he see this as part of our life. It's just something that we do together. We are co-authors.



Pixy Liao – Moro by The Pond, 2010. Digital C-print, Edition of 2, 150 x 200 cm (59 x 78 3/4 in). Courtesy Chambers Fine Art (New York & Beijing)

## At PHOTOFAIRS Shanghai 2018

**Widewalls:** What was the response that your work had in China?

**PL:** I have shown my work much more in the west than in Asia. People from different cultures have different reactions to my work. In general, US/western audience might like my work because they think it's fresh to see some different ideas in gender identities. But for Asian audience, they feel more personal to my work, because they come from a similar cultural background.

I get the most heartfelt support from younger women in China. Because they know exactly the kind of expectation of relationship that I have experienced while growing up.

**Widewalls:** What can the visitors expect from your works on view at PHOTOFAIRS? Is this the first time that your works will be exhibited there?

**PL:** It's the 2nd time I'm in PHOTOFAIRS. Unfortunately I couldn't attend the fair both times.

**Widewalls:** How does it feel to be among the biggest names in photography?

**PL:** I definitely feel very honored and excited to be listed alongside some of my favorite artists. Hope next time I can be in Photo Shanghai in person.

**Widewalls:** What are you working on now and what is next for Pixy Liao?

**PL:** Right now, I'm working on a short 16mm black and white film. I'm also working on another conceptual work and hopefully it will premiere next year at Chambers Fine Art in New York.

Featured images: Pixy Liao – Ping Pong Balls, 2013. Digital C-print, Edition of 3, 75 x 100 cm (29 1/2 x 39 1/4 in); Golden Mouse, 2014. Digital C-print, Edition of 3, 75 x 100 cm (29 1/2 x 39 1/4 in); Kiss Exam, 2015. Inkjet print, Edition of 2, 150 x 200 cm (59 x 78 3/4 in). All images courtesy Chambers Fine Art (New York & Beijing).

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