

GLADSTONE

Andrew Witt, "Brook Hsu," *Artforum*, October 2021

ARTFORUM



Brook Hsu, *Vicky*, 2021, ink on canvas, 78 3/4 x 63".
BERLIN

Brook Hsu

KRAUPA-TUSKANY ZEIDLER

Kohlfurter Straße 41/43

September 16–November 1, 2021

The faces that greet us in Brook Hsu's exhibition "Fictions" glow as if animated by some phosphorescent substance. If they seem eerily familiar, it's because the artist has borrowed her subjects from the films of Takeshi Kitano, Hou Hsiao-hsien, and Tsai Ming-liang, transforming these characters into specters who seem to float on the ambient green ground of the canvas. In *Nishi* and *Vicky*, all works 2021, Kitano's jaded detective from *Hana-bi* (1997) and the entrancing hostess from *Millennium Mambo* (2001), respectively, stare as if they were standing outside of time. Articulated through a slight application of shellac, they dissolve into phantoms of their former selves, unmoored from scene or story. Hsu is known for her paintings of skeletons often shown in comical scenarios: sex in a library, fingering a pond, drinkin' their worries away. In this presentation there is only a single skull, stretched and warped to fit the edges of the support (*Untitled*). This material investigation is echoed in her reinterpretation of Titian's *Flaying of Marsyas*, 1570–76, in two small oil-on-wood sketches, each a swamp-colored churn of limbs that threatens to sink into a blur of abstraction. The specters, skulls, and satyrs who haunt Hsu's "Fictions" speak without speaking of how the dead may endure in the world of painting, where the shadows of life and death dwindle before the precious flame of belief.

— Andrew Witt