

LINHUEI
CHEN

1953

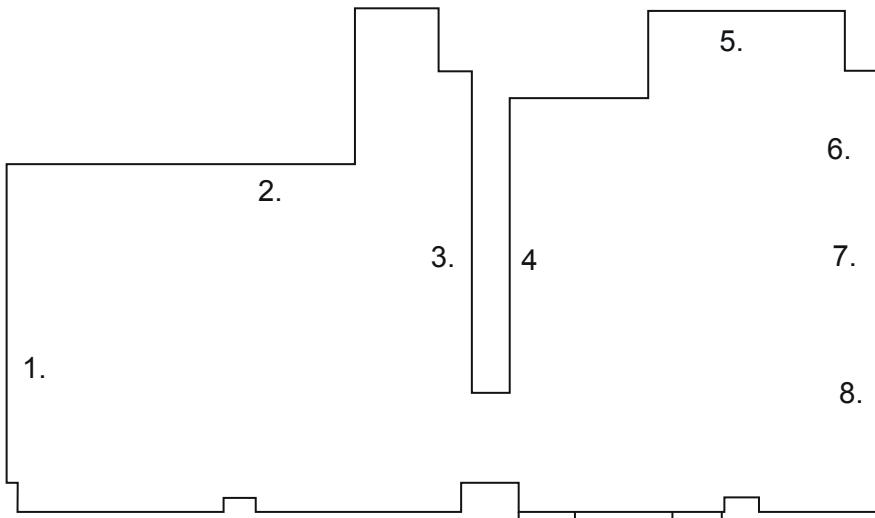
14.09-08.11.2025

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JOEY RAMONE



1. Flowers in the Greenhouse No.2
2025
Oil on linen
120x110 cm

4. Arrival of the Ark
2025
Oil, acrylic on linen
120x220 cm

2. Memory Capsule
2025
Oil on Linen
24x30cm

5. Don't Forget About 1953
2025
Oil, acrylic on linen
140x100 cm

3. Flowers in the Greenhouse No.1
2025
Oil on Linen
120x110cm

6. A Call for Action
2025
Oil on linen
24x30cm

7. Children's Parade for Love
2025
Oil on linen
15x20cm

8. Little Fire Everywhere
2025
Oil on canvas
50x20cm

Linhuei Chen (b. 1981) is a Taiwanese Dutch artist based in Rotterdam.

Chen holds a BFA degree in Fine Art (painting) from the Royal Academy of Art, The Hague in the Netherlands and other degrees in Engineering and Law in Taiwan and several European countries.

She has received various grants from Mondriaan Fund, Fund for Culture Participation, etc.

Her artworks are in the Fenix Museum of Migration and Lam Museum collections in the Netherlands.

Thank you:

Stichting Stokroos and **CBK Rotterdam**

Linhuei Chen
1953
14.09 - 08.11.2025

JOEY RAMONE is proud to open the season with the 1st solo exhibition at the gallery by Rotterdam based artist Linhuei Chen (1981, Taiwan). The exhibition entitled 1953 opens on Sunday 14 September and runs till 8 November 2025.

In Memory of the 1953 North Sea Disaster

My fascination with dunes began during a trip to **Bergen aan Zee** in the Netherlands. For a fleeting moment, I thought I was climbing a mountain, only to realize that beneath my feet was sand. That brief illusion sparked my exploration of dunes. The deeper I delved, the more I felt compelled to understand the great flood of 1953 in the Netherlands. Who would have thought that in such a highly developed country, not so long ago, a disaster claimed the lives of nearly two thousand people? From the protection of dunes to the Delta Works, Dutch culture has been profoundly shaped by this history.

Like the butterfly effect, could the flood that struck between January 31 and February 1, 1953, have been the true seed of this body of work?

While researching historical records, I came across letters written by children who were temporarily evacuated from their homes. Besides sending reassurances to loved ones, they included small drawings of the situation they experienced. Because nearly all visual records of that time were in black and white, these children's simple sketches offered rare traces of color for me to follow.

Those children of 1953 are now in their seventies or eighties. I remember when I first arrived in the Netherlands, Dutch friends and relatives would explain the dikes, the waterworks, and why all children must learn to swim. They always mentioned the history of 1953. Living in this country, we often feel secure, yet I remind myself not to forget the lessons of that history.

Linhuei Chen

Weaving Worlds

Domes, Dunes, Pods And A Greenhouse

Seedpods are launched into space to mutate under extreme conditions, so that on Earth they can grow in the more hostile environments. A bean placed on the top of a mountain, as a deity defying all odds.

A house burns at the tip of a finger. Roads take the shape of sushi conveyor belts meandering through the landscape. Soft pinks and oranges alternate with bright greens and blues, creating a childlike sense of wonder. A capsule rises toward a spaceship, while in the distance dunes glow in a pink-red haze, as though the world has already tipped into the post-apocalyptic. The last tree burns. If we continue as we are, the dunes will glow crimson, and the only path left will be away from Earth.

You can easily imagine stories unfolding just beyond the edges of the canvas: domed habitats where people live in enclosed ecosystems, vegetables grown outside in neat rows and tended remotely by robots. Inside such a dome it is warm and safe; the air smells of fresh bread, filtered water, and basil from inner gardens. A panoramic window, thick and tinted against radiation, looks out on a pink horizon, where dunes shimmer under dusty skies. You can learn how to tend tomatoes, then trade that wisdom for a hand-knitted scarf shared across the web. At the same time, a parliament of non-humans votes on a pale tomorrow. A small protest, a cry for help. Only dunes remain, dunes that once protected us from the sea, now turned into water itself, pushing forward a great ship, a shadow of an ark.

I. Possible Imaginings

The outlined scenery, are only possible imaginings, spawned from my own mind inspired by the paintings of Linhuei. Her work invites viewers to fill in their own unfolding stories, and the paintings together offer a deliberate ambiguity, an openness that resists any single "correct" version, leaving space for interpretation.

Linhuei draws from many sources, and hints can be found throughout. She layers histories and cultures, weaving them together with online gaming worlds. Linhuei's imagery is full of tributes and critiques, experiments and questions: Noah's ark, Portuguese colonizers arriving in Asia, the trade routes to and from Japan, merges with the Dutch floods from 1953.

On the night of the 31st of January to the 1st of February 1953, a deadly combination of a severe European windstorm and a high spring tide overwhelmed sea defenses along the southwestern Dutch coast, especially in Zeeland, South Holland, and North Brabant. The disaster left a deep imprint on Dutch identity and reshaped the nation's relationship with water.

In the aftermath, families torn apart by the flood found ways to stay connected - children who had lost their homes or parents wrote letters to one another, holding on to fragile bonds of memory.

These stories inspired Linhuei, who links them to imagined future landscapes where dunes take on new significance. Along the Dutch coast, sand dunes form the first natural barrier against the sea, absorbing the force of storm surges and tides before they can

reach man-made dikes and walls. The children of 1953 grew up, their memories shaping who they became, and their experiences passed into collective remembrance. It is this layering of history, cultural heritage, and memory that Linhuei distills into the Now. In light of these references, one might even sense a surreal echo of digital worlds like *Grow a Garden* (a multiplayer idle farming simulator in Roblox) - an unhurried, almost ambient loop of planting and harvesting, where progress unfolds even when you are gone. Its gentle, meditative rhythm parallels the quiet hum of Linhuei's scenes. Subtle nods to the game appear throughout the paintings, yet they're also building their own meanings within Linhuei's imagined world.

II. An Invitation

In one work, a girl avatar holds a mutated tomato plant, immediately recognizable to those who know the game. A recurring boyish avatar, carries a 'memory capsule': a form that recalls elements of the garden game but is reimagined in the painting as a vessel of memory. Bean-like in shape, this capsule gathers and preserves layers of experience - personal, historical, and collective alike.

On another level, beyond in-painting-references, games themselves play a vital role in Linhuei's universe. For Linhuei, games are a form of participation. For her, it is both a research process and a way of keeping her work contemporary. For instance, a sandbox is set up where people can create their own worlds, furnished with small elements to experiment and play with. She observes how players interact, how they build, and the visual results they produce. She observes how players interact,

how they build, and the visual results they produce. These acts of play give her valuable insights, and at times they even inspire new paintings. Each story Linhuei tells is a self-contained world, a home for herself, but also an invitation to others - to enter, to play, and to co-create meaning.

III. Inherently Fluid

Linhuei's imagination is inseparable from inquiry: scientific theories give color to her palette, social and philosophical questions stretch her canvas, and her introspection becomes the paint itself. Some say painters claim to have a fixed style, but Linhuei denies this. To her, style is inherently fluid - shaped by culture, dreams, and experience. Linhuei's formal art education was rooted in Western painting, yet as a native Taiwanese her practice is equally informed by Chinese and Japanese traditions, reflecting Taiwan's layered history as a former Japanese colony. By engaging with these diverse traditions, she explores her hybrid cultural identity, allowing it to become both subject and method in her practice.

Inquisitive minds that move within cultural fluidity sometimes feel the weight of an identity in flux, and find themselves asking: Who am I? How do I relate to my environment, my work, my or their history? How do new perspectives and influences become part of me? How do I carry impressions from the world around me, and which of them come to form my identity? How do I engage with the new knowledge I take in? These are not questions easily answered, but they press with particular intensity on a builder of worlds such as Linhuei.

During a conversation we had, she confided that in lucid dreams, she cries the question 'who am I', aloud, - but with no reveal. She then turns again to her paintings, tentatively asking the same question through her work, but the answer is never unequivocal. However, it may be precisely this restless introspection that is the source of Linhuei's unlimited imagination of possible worlds.

It is almost enviable how Linhuei moves within this unlimited mental space of places in time, her imagination governed by fluid boundaries, boundaries that shift with context, with research and reflection. Everything is interwoven, and this entanglement can make it difficult to get a hold on what a painting is telling about.

As a spectator, one might wonder: 'Who is she, the artist behind this?' Yet, any attempt to define Linhuei through her paintings will fall short and, with all respect, may not even be necessary. For as she moves fluidly between different worlds and times, her signature remains unmistakably her own, and that is enough. Her work speaks of identity without weight or heaviness; at its heart, her energy is playful. Linhuei invites us into her worlds not to observe from a distance, but to move with her, to play, to shift, and to participate alongside her.

IV. Weaving Worlds

Matter, life, and mind -non-human, human, and technological, are envisioned as interconnected and in constant exchange. Events that seem to belong to another world, another time, are brought to life anew, almost unrecognizable, in disguise in the context of Linhuei's painted world.

Cultural heritage and historical events become the building blocks of the infrastructures that shape her worlds: sand and dunes, parliaments and mountains, seed pods and spaceships, protests and conveyor belts.

Linhuei might disagree with me, but I do not see her work necessarily as a vision of the future, for futures are too intangible. Just as memory is not only in the past- because it shapes how we live now, the future is a reflection of what we hope for and fear today. In engaging with Linhuei's worlds, the question of identity, that threads through all her work, returns is no longer hers alone. It becomes ours: Not 'Who am I?', but rather, Who are you? Who are we, together, in this world we are shaping?

Sabine Winters
Space and Science Philosopher
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