

## Digital Drawing Room: MFA Fine Arts featuring Wendy Liang

by Hannah Lamb-Vines



Wendy Liang

Starting May 10, you can view work by students in the MFA graduating class on the website [2021.CCAMFA.art](https://2021.CCAMFA.art) and in the [Class of 2021 Showcase](#).

Works in this series were written by students in Glen Helfand and Maria Porges' respective graduate writing seminars this past fall and spring.



2020 - *The Year of Crises and Trauma*, 2021. Watercolor.

"As artists, it's our responsibility to look at the problems and to look for solutions," says Wendy Liang. Using watercolors, the realist-impressionist painter depicts scenes of systemic failure and brutality with a gentle hand. Her large-scale works, up to 13 feet wide and 6 feet high, are detailed renderings of disasters spurred by climate change and human vulnerability in the face of both such events and pandemics. Despite the dark subjects of Liang's work, she often constructs scenes washed in light. This technique lends itself to a harsh clarity, laying bare the impacts of a dry Ganges River, a melted ice cap, or a deadly virus spreading across the globe.



*The Death of Dr. Li Wenliang, the Whistleblower of COVID19*, 2020. Watercolor.

By working in a large format, Liang is able to uncover multiple angles of the scenes she paints, at times creating a collaged effect. In close collaboration with photographers around the world, she takes elements of many photographs to construct scenes which tell the painful stories of climate change, poverty, and global illness. "We understand each other," she says of the photographers who provide her with the stills that inspire her watercolors. "They really care about light, composition, color."



*Ganges River*, 2020. Watercolor.

Liang's work was both inhibited and inspired by her experiences as a girl in China, where her options were limited. Though she has long been a citizen of the United States, she often returns to China in her paintings, simultaneously expressing the beauty and the sorrow that exists in her homeland.

This simultaneous expression is key in Liang's work, and continues even in her more abstract paintings. In *Hope and Despair*, one of her darkest paintings, she uses brown cloud-like forms to illustrate a world ravaged by climate change. However, floating among the clouds are radiant streaks of light, night-blooming cereus blossoms. These flowers require darkness to bloom; their inclusion in this painting suggests that there is always hope, even in the face of all-encompassing darkness.



*Hope and Despair*, 2020. Watercolor.