

LIU SHIMING

**BREATH IS EVERYWHERE**

LINNÉA GAD



## **Foreword**

The Liu Shiming Art Gallery is pleased to present the exhibition ***Breath is Everywhere***, bringing together the works of Liu Shiming and Linnéa Gad from November 12 to December 19, 2025. This exhibition explores matter, gesture, and the living as vectors of memory, narrative, and transformation. It maps an intuitive cartography of art, where volumes and forms respond to one another in a living rhythm.

For Liu Shiming and Linnéa Gad, every material becomes an arrative instrument, revealing through various media physical, symbolic, and expressive qualities. Traces and gestures are readable in volumes and textures, transforming bronze, metal, clay, wood, or porcelain into metaphorical extensions of a discourse oriented toward interconnectedness.

The singularity of this exhibition lies in the resonance between their practices. Despite differing aesthetics and temporalities, Liu Shiming and Linnéa Gad share common concerns. Their works engage in dialogue through matter and gesture: both explore life, nature, balance, and human impact. Linnéa Gad's sculptures extend Liu Shiming's logic without replicating his style, highlighting principles of structure, gesture, and narrative, and reinterpreting the presence of the living. This interaction transcends the visible to unfold within intellectual intent, creating a true conversation between tradition and modernity.

This dialogue continues in their approach to form and the invisible. A porosity emerges between the two practices, perceptible in the way the works respond to one another. Linnéa Gad's sculptures explore the same tensions as Liu Shiming's: fragility and strength, observation and action. Figuration and abstraction merge within the exhibition space, dissolving boundaries between their practices.

In a video interview made for the exhibition, Linnéa Gad notes that her attention was first drawn not to the figures themselves but to Liu Shiming's sensitivity in handling his subjects and materials. Rough finishes, cracks, and fingerprints become markers of a shared sculptural approach, highlighting a lineage between the two artists.

The activation of the works by the viewer is another point of convergence between their practices. The works of Liu Shiming and Linnéa Gad engage the visitor's attention, inviting them to perceive these resonances and grasp their

formal significance. Two works particularly illustrate this dialogue: *Looking at Each Other Through the Cage* by Liu Shiming, in which a clay bird trapped in a metal cage is observed by its mother, and *Glowpress* by Linnéa Gad, a blown glass piece seemingly striving to escape its steel armor. In both works, confinement and distance resonate, and the viewer becomes the observer linking the two practices. Figuration gradually dissolves into abstraction. Thus, the reading of the works becomes both physical and transformative, placing the viewer at the center of a space shaped by materiality. The conversation between the practices demonstrates how a contemporary approach can extend tradition while preserving the symbolic and emotional potential of sculpture. The interpretation of the works grows through observation: the materials speak, they breathe.

In conclusion, ***Breath is Everywhere*** reveals sculpture's ability to create a network of correspondences, where the works resonate beyond their mere presence. The exhibition illustrates the continuity between traditional approach and material exploration, between body and form, memory and contemporaneity, offering the viewer an experience that is both aesthetic and contemplative.

**Maëlle Ebelle**

Gallery Director - Curator



## ***Breath is Everywhere***

Linnéa Gad

*"I want my life to be present in all my works, so that after my death, my friends could still dialogue in silence simply by casting their eyes on my art". – Liu Shiming*

There's an openness in Liu's sculptures that I relate to. We both seek a porous quality in the materials and expression—a belief that the life of the work comes from the breath that remains in the material, from leaving the work in a state of becoming.

In China, the love for stones is called Gongshi, meaning "respected stones." Gongshi, also called scholar's rocks, are often formed from karstic limestone and prized for the astonishing ways water and time have sculpted or eroded them. Sometimes these stones are pierced with hollows and pitted holes that resemble birds in flight, a waterfall, or a rising wave; other times their smoothness suggests a veiled mountain or silky folds of the sea.

Liu Shiming's sculptures remind me of scholar stones in how they are suggestive in their figuration and feel alive through the artist's gestures. I connect Gongshi to the landscapes from which Liu's work also emerges.

*Guangling San* is the work of Shiming that most recalls a scholar's stone for me. This large bronze sculpture feels like a figure carved from the mountain itself—still partly mountain, partly human: wise, yet terrifying.

I feel a strong kinship between the Eastern tradition of Gongshi and my own relationship with stones. I tend to attribute character and presence to islands, stones, and mountains. I can recall certain meetings with stones as if they were encounters with a new friend or peer. As a child, my imaginative gaze could see a wind-struck pine as a camel or a lounging islet as a whale. This way of seeing translates into my work as a visual artist: my sculptures and images are often nearly abstract but carry suggestive traits that invite interpretation.

The works of Liu Shiming that resonate most with me are those where figurative subjects begin to dissolve into abstraction. Some of Liu's figures merge into one another, as in *Wrestling*, or seem to lose themselves in each other, as in *In Love*. Many of his sculptures move me with their scrappiness and the way they feel both ancient and immediate.

My own works lean toward abstraction yet often echo landscapes or living forms. I'm drawn to the way time erodes representation—like prehistoric sculptures that, after centuries of weathering, become almost abstract stones.

Across the different mediums I work in, I often start from something existing and then apply layers and processes that push the form further away from the original image or idea, until I arrive at something that feels both mysterious and familiar—almost like unearthing something I made in another life.

When casting bronze or firing ceramics, works take on a life of their own; *Corrodes*, is a sculpture that was once cardboard and through a lost form process has been replaced by bronze and painted with bismuth patina. Its base, formed out of porcelain, has been fired in a wood-burning kiln where the ash of embers has glazed it. I am interested in losing control and yielding to the agency of the material. In this way, fire and molten metal can collaborate, or elaborate.

When I look at Liu Shiming's works, I don't see the figure first—I see the shape, gesture, and character of the sculpture itself, and then the figure might emerge. It seems like Liu made works depicting the perceived essence of his subjects. Even when Liu depicts a rowboat, as in *Boatman on the Yellow River*, the vessel carries a personality, as much as the figure. Many of his sculptures were first made in clay, plaster, or wood, later cast in bronze, yet they retain the gesture and liveliness of their making. The group I've gathered for this exhibition shares a sense of openness and immediacy that still bears the artist's hand.

Both Liu's work and my own in clay and bronze has made me think of ceramics as a kind of compressed performance of how stones are formed and weathered over time. Clay, being sediment, can be shaped as if it were molten rock, smoothed with water as if worn by thousands of years of erosion, and finally fired until it vitrifies into a stone-like structure. In this way, working with clay can feel like simulating time itself—experiencing geological processes such as the weathering of rock by water or the solidifying of minerals through heat.

I find solace in thinking that my artworks are temporary forms within a larger geological journey, envisioning their eventual decomposition, transformation, or reemergence. I like to imagine that my metal sculptures could be melted down to find other forms and my lime sculptures could become reef structures for marine organisms.

Perhaps the clay Liu Shiming worked with was derived from river beds whose streams shaped scholar rocks; the water carved the shape of a bird out of the stone, and out of the clay, Liu sculpted two birds facing each other.





Linnéa Gad  
***Bumling***, 2024  
Lime mortar, oyster shells, goat hair, welded steel  
18 x 15 x 9 in.



Linnéa Gad  
***Corrodes***, 2024  
Bronze with bismuth patina, woodfired porcelain base  
15 x 8 ¼ x 6 ½ in.



Linnéa Gad  
***Balmed***, 2021  
Lime mortar, oyster shells, lapis lazuli  
9 ¼ x 4 x 2 ½ in.



Linnéa Gad  
***Hasar***, 2022  
Ceramic, steel  
11 ½ x 7 ¼ x 3 ¼ in.



Linnéa Gad  
*Do do Tell*, 2025  
Ceramic, steel  
22 ½ x 27 ½ x 9 ¼ in.





Linnéa Gad  
***Creamer***, 2025  
Porcelain  
15 ¼ x 6 ½ x 6 in.



Linnéa Gad  
***Islet ramp***, 2024  
Wood-fired porcelain with glaze  
4 ½ x 16 ½ x 4 in.



Linnéa Gad  
*Float*, 2024  
Cardboard, paperpulp  
9 x 22 x 7 ½ in.



Linnéa Gad  
**Koja**, 2025  
Glazed ceramics  
9 x 22 x 7 ½ in.



Linnéa Gad  
***Sun Trap II***, 2025  
Welded steel, amber glass  
16 ¼ x 4 ½ x 5 ½ in.



Linnéa Gad  
***Crescent spike***, 2024  
Welded steel  
11 x 14 x 3 ½ in.



Linnéa Gad  
***Lean-to***, 2024  
Cardboard, paper pulp  
9 x 20 x 7 ½ in.



Linnéa Gad  
***Eon Scape III***, 2023  
Oil and toner on wood panel  
40 ½ x 55 ½ in.





Linnéa Gad  
***Glowpress***, 2024  
Welded metal with amber glass  
9 ½ x 9 x 6 ½ in.



Linnéa Gad  
***Pilasters***, 2025  
Cardboard, paperpulp, nails  
Left: 92 ½ x 9 ½ x 1 ½ in. / Right: 93 x 8 ½ x 2 in.



Linnéa Gad  
***Funneling***, 2025  
Cardboard, paper pulp, welded steel  
66 ½ x 18 x 32 in.





Liu Shiming  
***Avalokiteśvara Inside the Ear*** 耳内观音, ca.2005  
Bronze  
4 ½ x 4 ½ x 9 ¼ in.  
Edition



Liu Shiming  
***Boatman on the Yellow River*** 黄河船工, 1990  
Bronze  
5 ¾ × 23 ½ × 8 in.  
Edition



Liu Shiming  
**Court Musician** 宫廷琴师, 1997  
Bronze  
7¼ x 5 ½ x 3 ⅝ in.  
Edition





Liu Shiming  
***Cowherd Riding an Ox*** 牧童骑黄牛, 1981  
Bronze  
6  $\frac{3}{8}$  x 8 x 9  $\frac{3}{8}$  in.  
Edition





Liu Shiming  
***Dream to Fly 2*** 想飞的人 2, 1982  
Bronze  
4  $\frac{3}{4}$  x 7  $\frac{1}{4}$  x 3  $\frac{1}{8}$  in.  
Edition



Liu Shiming  
***Guangling San*** 广陵散, 1987  
Bronze  
29  $\frac{3}{4}$   $\times$  25  $\frac{1}{2}$   $\times$  14  $\frac{3}{8}$  in.  
Edition



Liu Shiming  
***Human-shaped Jar*** 人形陶罐, 1988  
Ceramic  
10  $\frac{3}{8}$  x 4  $\frac{3}{4}$  x 5 in.



Liu Shiming  
*Human-shaped Jar* 人形陶罐, 2002  
Ceramic  
13  $\frac{3}{8}$  x 6  $\frac{3}{4}$  x 5  $\frac{7}{8}$  in.



Liu Shiming  
***In Love*** 热恋, 1983  
Bronze  
3 ¼ × 3 ⅞ × 2 ½ in.  
Edition



Liu Shiming  
*Looking at Each Other Through the Cage* 隔笼相望, 1990  
Ceramic  
5  $\frac{3}{8}$   $\times$  7  $\frac{1}{2}$   $\times$  3  $\frac{1}{8}$  in.





Liu Shiming  
**Silk Road** 丝绸之路, 1986  
Bronze  
23  $\frac{3}{8}$  x 22  $\frac{1}{8}$  x 9  $\frac{1}{2}$  in.  
Edition



Liu Shiming  
**Wrestling** 摔跤, 1988  
Bronze  
14  $\frac{1}{8}$  × 11 × 13 in.  
Edition







## **Linnéa Gad**

Linnéa Gad is a visual artist from Stockholm, Sweden. She received her MFA from Columbia University in 2022. Selected solo projects include *Return of the Mollusk* at Astor Weeks, New York (2024); *Shoals with Billion Oyster Project* (2023); and *Erratics* at Spencer Brownstone, New York (2019). She has participated in group exhibitions at The Jewish Museum, New York (2022); the Lenfest Center for the Arts, New York (2021); and SixtyEight Art Institute, Copenhagen (2021). Gad has also recently exhibited at HESSE FLATOW in New York, *Beau Travail* in Stockholm, *sharp* projects in Copenhagen, and *Issues* Gallery in Stockholm. Earlier this year, River Valley Arts Collective presented *Peelings*, an exhibition of newly commissioned works by Gad, installed within the landscape surrounding the Al Held Foundation studio complex in upstate New York. She is the recipient of multiple grants from the Swedish Arts Grants Committee and was shortlisted for the Frankenthaler Climate Art Awards in 2022.





# Liu Shiming

Liu Shiming (1926-2010) studied at the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing. In his works, he skillfully blended Chinese tradition with European modernist influences. Deeply rooted in the everyday life and cultural heritage, Liu Shiming is recognized as a visionary figure with a very distinct humanist style. Exhibited worldwide, his legacy continues through the Liu Shiming Sculpture Museum in Beijing and the Liu Shiming Art Foundation in New York.



