

REVIEWS BOLZANO

Tranquility and Violence: Evelyn Taocheng Wang Paints Contradiction

Wang turns Agnes Martin's grids into windows on the outside world

MUSEION of Modern and Contemporary Art Bolzano

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View of "Evelyn Taocheng Wang: Sweet Landscape," 2026. Foreground: *Italian Christmas and Imitation of Agnes Martin*, 2026. Background: *Giuseppe Castiglione's White Horse with Bolzano Ice-cream and Imitation of Agnes Martin*, 2026.

Through November 8, 2026—With “Sweet Landscape,” Chinese-born, Rotterdam-based Evelyn Taocheng Wang makes a forceful impression with her first solo institutional exhibition in Italy. This presentation consists of a sculpture, two garment works, and fifteen paintings, nine of which continue her practice of appropriating or re-creating elements of the works of Agnes Martin, which Wang first knew only through reproductions. A multimedia artist best known for painting, Wang has been lauded for taking on fraught topics such as the contested nature of authenticity, cultural assimilation in immigrant experience, and slippages in communication. Yet she treats these weighty themes in simple compositions with delicate materials—sublimating loaded subject matter through understated aesthetics.

Four large paintings are installed on freestanding structures, not unlike those sometimes used by Jutta Koether, but whereas Koether’s apparatus uses transparent glass, Wang’s are covered with grids of translucent muslin. These works, each five feet square, address the theme of landscape as a visual and cultural influence, and question how architecture shapes the viewer’s experience of a given scene. Wang’s choice of muslin as a material is pointed: Woven from ultra-fine yarn, it played a leading role in cross-cultural exchange as a primary Indian export in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when it was highly desired by English aristocrats.

The painting *Italian Christmas and Imitation of Agnes Martin* (all works cited, 2026) shows a lush panettone—the seasonal Italian cake for holiday festivities—sitting in the lower-left corner of the beige canvas, adorned with sprigs of holly. A knife hovers over the fruitcake in the background, implying it has recently sliced into its center, a seemingly violent gesture that is necessary if the panettone is to be shared. Employing such pared-down imagery, Wang engages contradictions, however violent in nature, as vicissitudes of life. *Giuseppe Castiglione’s White Horse with Bolzano Ice-cream and Imitation of Agnes Martin* portrays a detail from a work by the Italian Jesuit missionary, who painted for decades at the 1700s Qing court.



Evelyn Taocheng Wang, *Giuseppe Castiglione's White Horse with Bolzano Ice-cream and Imitation of Agnes Martin I* (detail), 2026, acrylic color, pencil, pencil fixation medium, gesso on canvas, 72 7/8 × 72 7/8".



Evelyn Taocheng Wang, *Lining Painting of Bolzano Veggie and Snow Mountains*, 2026, Max Mara 101801 Icon Coat, size Women M, 85% wool 15% cashmere; acrylic, color pencil, and gesso on canvas, cotton threads, installation view.

Lining Painting of Bolzano Veggie and Snow Mountains consists of a Max Mara wool coat from Wang's personal wardrobe displayed with its panels open to expose the painted canvas inside, leaving a vague impression of Wang's internal landscape with its imagery of frosted mountain peaks and vegetables such as artichokes and tomatoes—ingredients of meals she might have enjoyed in Bolzano. *Ingres's Italian Window* shows a windowpane between two curtains, with the view beyond obscured, challenging Martin's notion that "classical artists" look inward (most defiantly asserted in the title of her 1997 painting, *With My Back to the World*). In shrouding the window, rendering it opaque and therefore more like a mirror, and painting narcissus flowers labeled in four languages on the surrounding wall, Wang suggests that there is an element of narcissism in Martin's mentality. Wang, by contrast, defends the dual function of a window—which allows for a view into a space and a view out from it—and thus upholds the value of an external artistic perspective.

Wang achieves her synthesis of dichotomies thanks to her recognition that friction and tenderness are experienced as a unity. In Bolzano, nestled in an Alpine valley, German and Italian are both official languages, making for a sort of marriage born from a history of political violence amid the region's idyllic beauty. In *Pasolini Medieval and Imitation of Agnes Martin*, stars of Florentine gold leaf dot a gray canvas alongside a sun and moon personified with sweet faces. Meanwhile, *Runkelstein Castle Fresco Theme in Delft-blue and Imitation of Agnes Martin* employs images of soldiers in battle attire. The two sets of motifs are drawn from medieval frescoes in Bolzano's Runkelstein Castle, housing tranquility and violence in one domain, enacting the broader idea of "Sweet Landscape": that disparities reflect the structure of human expression.