

Carpenter Center



Installation view of *Candice Lin: Sleeping, Rotting, Resting, Weeping* at Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, 2021
Photo: Awa Mally, courtesy of Walker Art Center

PRESS RELEASE

Candice Lin: Sleeping, Rotting, Resting, Weeping
February 4–April 10, 2022
Level 3

Opening Reception:

Per Harvard University guidance related to escalating COVID-19 case levels, there will be no opening reception for this exhibition. Please consult the Carpenter Center's website for future programs related to the exhibition.

The Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts is pleased to present the solo exhibition *Sleeping, Rotting, Resting, Weeping* by Los Angeles–based artist Candice Lin (b. 1979). Lin creates multisensory environments that combine ceramics, textiles, drawing, video animation, and other art forms. She often investigates the legacies of colonialism by tracing the trade routes and material histories of a range of colonial goods, layering her work with cross-cultural imagery from this research.

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Offering a richly tactile and open gathering place, *Seeping, Rotting, Resting, Weeping* is composed of elements the artist created while sheltering at her home studio during the pandemic. Using visceral and evocative words, the title references the hands-on nature of her art-making—in particular, the process of fermenting indigo plants to make blue dye. Lin has devised a set of experiences, choreographed by participatory sculpture, installation, and video, that take us through rituals of moving our bodies, touching, and gathering in physical proximity. Each work features imagery of anxiety and hope, intimacy and estrangement, and an excess of bodily mutations, hybrid states, transformations, and relationships that combine animal species in ways that are by turn comic, tragic, and cathartic. This softening, and often complete erasure, of interspecies boundaries combined with Lin's use of materials—such as dyed fabric, carpets, and plaster sculptures designed to be touched—reintroduces and reimagines the ways in which we can be together after nearly two years of isolation and loss. Ultimately, the exhibition encourages us to collectively question our precarious present and future, and to embrace new ways of understanding the world.



Millifree Work Weary™ Free Video (Qi Gong), 2021
Photo: Awa Mally, courtesy of Walker Art Center

Cats abound in the space in forms ranging from ceramic pillows to a video's animated cat demon. At times grotesque, intriguing, surreal, or mischievous, these feline figures invite us to imagine a world in which humans no longer play a central role and animals or other nonhuman actors reign. Greeting visitors at the gallery entrance is Lin's video *Millifree Work Weary™ Free Video (Qi Gong)*. In it, an unearthly feline figure moves serenely. The cat demon character—sculpted in clay, then 3D-scanned and animated—is practicing qigong. In this ancient Chinese health practice, a series of slow movements are combined with breathwork and meditation to cultivate the vital energy, or qi, in a person's body and keep it flowing. As the scene unfolds, text and images from an internet bot appear, much like pop-up ads or spam texts, conflating health and wellness culture, online scams and memes, and

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(Left) *Seeping, Rotting, Resting, Weeping*, 2021; (Right) *A Journal of the Plague Year (Cat Demon Diary)*, 2021
Photo: Awa Mally, courtesy of Walker Art Center

a range of environmental issues. Visitors are encouraged to move along with the cat demon.

At the center of the exhibition, Lin has constructed an intricately designed tent that functions as both a temporary shelter and a sacred gathering place. The structure and the objects inside reference elements from a range of sources, both real and imagined. Lin hand-dyed and hand-printed each fabric panel using traditional Japanese techniques. The indigo designs also recall Nigerian *adire* cloths from the early twentieth century when parts of western Africa were under British colonial rule. These *adire* cloths combined abstract, geometric, and stylistic representations of nature with imagery of European kings and queens. The figures recall ancient Zhenmushou tomb guardians from the Tang Dynasty (China, 618–906 CE) that were intended to protect the deceased from evil. They also reference an idolatrous devil statue invented by an eighteenth-century European, George Psalmanazar, who claimed to be from Formosa (present-day Taiwan).

Along with *Seeping, Rotting, Resting, Weeping* is a handmade book, *A Journal of the Plague Year (Cat Demon Diary)*. Bound by the artist, the journal features drawings, fabric samples, and writings that mix materials tests with surreal and sometimes harrowing drawings and writing alongside passages of tender reflection and vulnerability. Visitors may carefully flip through the pages of this book, which contains many of the exhibition's central themes and imagery.

Lin has also made two sculptures that are “tactile theaters,” experiences of multisensory discovery meant to be shared with a partner. Roughly the size of a café table, two people sit facing each other on either side of each sculpture. Together, they navigate with their hands the crevices and terrains of the surfaces. Embedded in these miniature landscapes are molds of different body parts. In one of the sculptures, Lin has obscured the forms from sight using

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(Left) *Tactile Theater #1* (after Noguchi), 2021; (Right) *Tactile Theater #2* (after Švankmajer), 2021
Photo: Awa Mally, courtesy of Walker Art Center

a traditional Italian technique of faux marbling called scagliola. With the visibility of the shapes obscured, the distinct parts can only be fully revealed through touch. The artist was inspired by models of playgrounds and touchable sculptures by artists Isamu Noguchi (American, 1904–1988) and Jan Švankmajer (Czech, b. 1934).



Verdant Curtain, 2020. Photo: Sang Tae Kim for Gwangju Biennale, courtesy the Artist and François Ghebaly Gallery

Verdant Curtain debuted at the 13th Gwangju Biennale, *Minds Rising, Spirits Tuning*, in 2021 and was made separately from the works in this exhibition. Lin chose to include it in the Carpenter Center's iteration of *Seeping, Rotting, Resting, Weeping*. *Verdant Curtain*'s imagery of animal and plant life flourishing amidst a toxic, human-centered system, grounded in the real political and ecological context of

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North and South Korea, complements the imaginary of post-human realms pictured throughout *Seeping, Rotting, Resting, Weeping*. Lin coaxes viewers to consider the enmeshed lives and ecosystems of all living things, and to participate in healing activities grounded in the senses that consider experience and consciousnesses beyond our human perspective.

The exhibition *Candice Lin: Seeping, Rotting, Resting, Weeping* is co-organized by the Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts at Harvard University and the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, and is curated by Dan Byers, John R. and Barbara Robinson Family Director at the Carpenter Center, and Victoria Sung, Associate Curator of Visual Arts at the Walker Art Center, with Sir Porte, Curatorial and Public Programs Assistant at the Carpenter Center.

PUBLICATION

Candice Lin: Seeping, Rotting, Resting, Weeping

Edited with text by Dan Byers and Victoria Sung. Texts by Julia Bryan-Wilson, Mel Y. Chen, and Sir Porte.

This book chronicles the creation of this newly commissioned body of work. New texts by the publication's authors join a fully illustrated plates section that documents the artist's process of research and making, and an annotated selection of Lin's major past exhibitions, which provides important context for works made over the last decade. *Candice Lin: Seeping, Rotting, Resting, Weeping* is co-published by the Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts and the Walker Art Center, and is distributed by D.A.P.

CANDICE LIN

Candice Lin is an interdisciplinary artist who works with installation, drawing, video, and living materials and processes, such as mold, mushrooms, bacteria, fermentation, and stains. She addresses themes of race, gender, and sexuality in relationship to material histories of colonialism, slavery, and diaspora. Lin has had recent solo exhibitions at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN; Pitzer College Art Galleries, Claremont, CA; Walter Phillips Gallery at Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, Alberta, Canada; Ludlow 38, New York; François Ghebaly, Los Angeles; Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts, Chicago; Portikus, Frankfurt; Bétonsalon, Paris; and Gasworks, London; as well as group exhibitions and biennials at the 13th Gwangju Biennale, Gwangju (2021); Institute of Contemporary Arts, London (2019); Para Site, Hong Kong (2019); Beirut Art Center (2019); Taipei Fine Arts Museum (2018); Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2018); Moderna Museet, Stockholm (2017); the New Museum, New York (2017); and SculptureCenter, New York (2017). She is the recipient of several residencies, grants, and fellowships, including a Painters &

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Sculptors Grant from the Joan Mitchell Foundation (2019), Davidoff Art Residency (2018), Louis Comfort Tiffany Award (2017), Delfina Foundation residency (2014), Fine Arts Work Center residency (2012), and a Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship (2009). She is Assistant Professor of Art at UCLA and lives and works in Los Angeles.

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Masking and COVID-19 Vaccination Guidance:

To ensure all of our visitors have a safe and enjoyable experience, masks, as well as proof of full COVID-19 vaccination or a negative COVID-19 PCR test administered within the previous 72 hours will be required for visiting the exhibition.

CARPENTER CENTER FOR THE VISUAL ARTS

Free and open to the public, the Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts is the center for contemporary art and artists at Harvard University. Through exhibitions, new commissions, public events, publications, and residencies, the Carpenter Center is dedicated to artist-centered programming and to building a vibrant community around contemporary art. This community is defined by an ethos of experimentation, diverse perspectives, and making connections across disciplines and fields. Housed within Le Corbusier's only building in North America, the Carpenter Center's projects are enriched by the educational mission of the Department of Art, Film, and Visual Studies, and the cultural resources of a large research university.

Generous support for Carpenter Center programming is provided by The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts.



A large, stylized, handwritten signature of Andy Warhol in black ink, written in a cursive, flowing script.

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